

## *Publishing the Southwest*

This special issue of *Journal of the Southwest* features a translation of the book *Entre Yoris y Guarijíos: Crónicas sobre el Quehacer Antropológico*, written by Teresa Valdivia Dounce, a researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, in Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM), and published in 2007 by UNAM's Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Teresa's home department. Accompanying the issue is a portfolio of color and black-and-white photographs taken by David Burckhalter. Dave and I have been working with Teresa ("Tere") since late 2011, when I first approached her about the possibility of publishing a translated and edited version of her book in *JSW*. Years earlier, I had spotted a yellowing copy of her first publication, *Sierra de Nadie* (INI, 1994), in David Yetman's office at the Southwest Center. *Sierra* is an unflinchingly frank assessment of institutionalized, or "applied," anthropology in Mexico. It is also a deeply personal account revealing both the naïveté and courage of a young, inexperienced *indigenista* whose convictions led her to support the Guarijío people of southern Sonora in an epic struggle against exploitative landowners and corrupt government officials. That support certainly placed Teresa at odds with her superiors, but on more than one occasion it also led to death threats. The circumstances became so menacing that for a time Teresa took to walking around with a knife tucked into her belt.

Teresa began her relationship with the Makurawe (Guarijío) people of southern Sonora and southwestern Chihuahua in 1978, contracted by Mexico's Instituto Nacional Indigenista (the National Indigenist Institute, or INI) as part of a larger team of rural community development workers whose backgrounds ranged from agronomy to medicine. The Institute's core objective was to support the nation's indigenous people with a variety of social and cultural programs, to bring them basic services and "development." And the Guarijíos needed all of the help they could get.

When Tere arrived in Sonora, she found most of them suffering from starvation and forced into a condition of near enslavement by several non-Indian ranchers (whom the Makurawe and other indigenous groups



in southern Sonora refer to as *Yoris*). The Institute's approach was generally paternalistic and its objectives were often vague. Not surprisingly, the INI was paralyzed by the kind of conservatism that ensured survival in Mexico's semi-authoritarian political system of the time, while undermining the effectiveness and reach of its programs. Social activism of any kind during that period, especially if it came from within the bureaucracy, tended to be dismissed as "communist." Usually, it was met with some kind of discipline, including, of course, summary dismissal. Yet, in some instances, in some regions, the work of those associated with the now-defunct Institute could be transformative.

Such was the case with Tere in the Sierra Guarijía. Her loyalty to the Guarijíos (in most instances, over her loyalty to the Institute) showed them that people from outside the area cared about them, that there was outside concern for their plight. It gave them much-needed courage, and, as important, connections with a trustworthy interlocutor who could help them negotiate an unfathomable labyrinth of bureaucratic realpolitik, paperwork, laws, and police oppression. Certainly, Tere was no seasoned veteran of Mexican bureaucracy, but her persistent organizational efforts helped the Guarijíos win several important battles against entrenched ranchers and their government allies, people who had no reservations about resorting to violence, official and otherwise, when they deemed it necessary. Those victories ultimately allowed the Guarijíos to regain control over much of their ancestral land, build schools and health clinics, and to lift themselves, if only partially, out of the starvation conditions and stultifying poverty they had known for so long under the thumb of those local ranchers.

Yetman had translated and used excerpts from this incredible story in his own volume, *The Guarijíos of the Sierra Madre: Hidden People of Northwestern Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press, 2002). Seeing this made me realize that Teresa's work needed to be available, in its totality, to Anglophone readers. However, this translation is important for another quite pressing reason: Since late 2010, state and federal authorities, working together with agribusiness interests and construction firms, have begun building a second dam and reservoir on the Mayo River (the first dam, located more or less between Navojoa and Alamos, was completed in the mid-1950s). The Río Mayo traverses Guarijío territory, and this new reservoir, when full, would inundate their fields and some of their communities situated along the flood plain, forcing relocation. Crews contracted by the state of Sonora have already cleared

hundreds of hectares of tropical deciduous forest and begun building the relocation villages.

Many Guarijíos are against the dam. Others are in favor. As we go to press with this special issue, there has been no sincere effort on the part of officials to openly and freely consult with the Guarijíos about this project, a process nonetheless required by law under constitutional reforms ratified in 2011. Instead, what we have seen is an organized campaign of intimidation and direct threats against anyone who dares to speak out, indeed, against anyone deemed by officials (particularly at the state level) and regional business interests as standing in the project's way in any form or fashion. Guarijíos and their advocates have witnessed and been the object of the dirtiest of politics.

Once again, Tere is in the thick of the struggle. She has put together a team of researchers and consultants to assist the Guarijíos whose voices have been squelched by the stridency and aggression of state and local officials. In August 2013, authorities forced the Guarijíos' traditional governors to sign papers endorsing the project. They also forced the ouster of a traditional *gobernador* who had refused to sign, replacing him with another whom they had handpicked, and who immediately provided his signature. Shortly after that, members of the team of consultants received threats by telephone, and were forced to leave the state for several months.

The systematic intimidation that we see today might make the Guarijíos' previous struggle seem quaint by comparison. The forces now rallied against them are indeed a juggernaut, and the construction project continues to advance despite legal and other challenges. Still, there would be no resistance today without the early efforts described in the pages that follow. There would be no land to protect at all, no memories of past victories to fuel the present will to resist.

In translating and editing this special issue of *JSWI* remained as faithful as possible to the style, rhythm, and tone of the original work, including to the more colloquial Spanish of Cipriano's oral *testimonio* (in *Like a Painted Footprint*). In consultation with Teresa, however, I decided to omit the originally published section on the mechanics of oral history, which we agreed would likely not be as broadly interesting to *JSW*'s readers. We also decided to leave out two appendices: the first, a detailed bibliography on the Guarijíos; the second, a chronology of events in their struggle for land.

Following Teresa's brief introduction, the first full essay of the

translation comes from her teacher and mentor at the Universidad Veracruzana (in Jalapa, Veracruz), Andrés Medina Hernández. “The Diffuse Line: Ethnography and Literature in Mexican Anthropology,” as the title suggests, explores the articulation between scholarship and literature in Mexican anthropology, a tradition within which he situates Teresa’s work. Next is Teresa’s *Sierra de Nadie*, originally published by the INI in 1994 but revised and republished in the 2007 work (translated here), *Entre Yoris y Guarijíos*. Following that is *Like a Painted Footprint*, an oral history given to Tere by Cipriano Buitimea, one of the original Guarijío leaders of the land struggle. I have included several footnotes throughout to provide background and context for readers who are not familiar with the region of southern Sonora or with Mexico’s complicated history of agrarian struggle. Finally, we have included a scattering of the originally published photos, as well as David Burckhalter’s portfolio, which help the reader experience visually the terrain of the Sierra Guarijía, see some of the primary actors involved in the land struggle, and better understand the Guarijíos’ way of life in this isolated, “forgotten” region. This special issue of *JSW* is but a modest attempt to honor the Guarijíos and Tere, and all of those who continue in the struggle. ❖

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*Teresa Valdivia and Jeff Banister at Mesa Colorada (April 2014)*

## *Between Yoris and Guarijíos: Chronicles of Anthropology*

### INTRODUCING BETWEEN YORIS AND GUARIJÍOS

MARÍA TERESA VALDIVIA DOUNCE

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY JEFFREY M. BANISTER

I have been connected with the Guarijíos since the summer of 1978, when I was commissioned by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (the National Indigenist Institute, or INI) to introduce federal government programs into the region.<sup>1</sup> At that time the Guarijíos had nothing, and delivering the services that they were requesting was not an easy task because they did not even have access to land where we could set up our installations. It might seem an exaggeration to say that they lacked everything, but there are times when reality outstrips imagination. They had no land or homes of their own. They did not have access to potable water or medical care, and there were no roads or electricity. Nothing. Just their poverty. Some still wore loincloths and shawls and lived in caves. They were *peones acasillados*<sup>2</sup> for the large ranchos owned by *Yoris*.<sup>3</sup> And although for the average anthropologist such circumstances would in no way be surprising—and even less a reason for making snap judgments—for me they definitely were, from the very first general assembly of Guarijíos that I attended, where I was to learn about the different problems facing them. My reasons for surprise came in the form of the fetid odor of hunger that emanated from that collection of empty stomachs and which, that same year, led to the starvation and death of two adults. And so it is no exaggeration to say that in the summer of 1978 the Guarijíos had nothing. Referring to that time, Cipriano Buitimea said, “We had problems that were so great we could not see the edge.”

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I started my work as an *indigenista* with one idea in mind: to help the Guarijíos get their land. But at the first opportunity, I spread the word about the state they were in because I believed that one of the causes of their situation was the isolation in which they lived, both the Guarijíos and the Yoris. Getting into the agrarian reform process pushed me to write a short historical synthesis in order to establish their rights to the land on which they were working as peones acasillados. The document formed part of the petition we filed for the case. Needless to say, the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (SRA) did not use it in its decision even though it was required. Ultimately, the land was returned to the Guarijíos as part of a politically driven decision (absurd as it seems, according to the SRA Indians, Mexico's aboriginal population had to demonstrate that their rights were based on use of said land for a legally mandated amount of time). Nevertheless, the historical research did help me in developing a brief ethnographic essay, which the INI had requested. When I thought that we were coming close to getting the lands, José Zazueta and I designed a plan based on three types of land use: production, basic services, and homes. Yet, as land conflicts are at one and the same time juridical, economic, and political matters, they often turn into violent disputes that only the strongest win. The latter was not the case for me, and because of it I had to quit my post at the INI two years following the granting of ejidal<sup>4</sup> lands to the Guarijíos, but not without denouncing once again their desperate and critical circumstances.

In 1981, I returned to the region as a visitor and I could see that our land-use plan had become a tangible reality. And it is perhaps for this reason that I drifted away from my Guarijío friends in the following years, conducting research within different institutions. Before doing that, however, I made sure that the work we did in Sonora could be written in a way that made sense. In this case it was as my undergraduate thesis.

A short time later I returned to work for the INI, though without having set foot in Guarijío country for some time. The head of the institute's publications division had asked me to write an article on the *tuburada*<sup>5</sup> for their bulletin. I was working on the piece when I received news, quite slow to arrive and not at all good, that José Zazueta had died a year earlier, and the tribe was giving him his *tuburada* for the wake. This, then, was the reason for my return visit to Mesa Colorada in 1989. I had lost a very dear friend. The least I could do was attend his wake, to visit his grave and write a farewell letter. Regrettably, with the death of José Zazueta a good deal of the tribe's history was also lost.

Nothing could be done. This is what I was thinking about in Mesa Colorada as I was eating tortillas taken from a brimming basket. The life of José was not in vain: thanks to his courage and abilities as a leader the Guarijíos were able to close ranks in their struggle for land. Now they had it, as well as homes of their own, and they also had a small herd of cattle that they managed collectively, along with a school, a health clinic, and a cultural resource center. They even had a road from which you could at least drive to the first of their villages, and tortillas in abundance!

It seems that as I was visiting José's grave, I picked up some of his courage, because the following year I found myself writing about the part of the land struggle history to which I had been a witness and which, I thought, had ended my debts with the Guarijíos and closed that chapter of my anthropological work, and life history. And that is what gave birth to my book, *Sierra de Nadie*, which I set out to write as frank description of anthropological work carried out in the indigenista tradition. The book would also be written in first person, focusing on what I did and did not do, and why and how it was that things turned out as they did, and all with absolute honesty, as if this were indispensable for understanding the variety of doubts that can assault the mind of a field anthropologist.<sup>6</sup> *Sierra de Nadie* pushed me to organize my reflections along the lines of the different ways that field anthropologists relate to the actors and interpret and transcribe the different cultures they are researching. I then sketched some of these ideas in a presentation that I gave for the 17th Simposio de Historia y Antropología de Sonora (1992). Even though I have been interested in field methods since I was an undergraduate studying anthropology at the Universidad Veracruzana (in Jalapa, Veracruz), these interests might not have surfaced in *Sierra de Nadie* if my professor, Andrés Medina Hernández, had not suggested that I include them in the book. I confess that at the time I wrote the book, in 1990, I thought the idea of covering field methods was rather nonsensical. But, with time, I was able to revisit Medina's suggestion and recognize that this type of work is also anthropological and, therefore, should be analyzed, discussed, and reflected upon by professionals, and used for its rich insights. In this kind of material we find different responses to anthropological methods, to its techniques, and to a particular style of doing anthropology in Mexico.

Returning to those earlier years, then, I remember that following the funeral and visit to my friend José Zazueta's grave, I had to make constant

trips to Guarijío country for a variety of reasons. In 1990, I was sent by INI to carry out a study of the land struggle, which I finished that same year. Then, as I was carrying out the research, Cipriano Buitimea—one of the principal actors in the Guarijío land struggle—requested that we write a book together that would tell the story of “how we Guarijíos from here, from the sierra, suffered as we struggled to get our lands, of everything that happened and how we did it.” He was worried by the inevitable condition of human mortality and he did not want to go the way José did, without leaving a legacy for the following generations, and, overall, because he saw that the young people did not value that which their elders had achieved with such great effort: land for everyone. This worry, then, gave birth to the book, *Como una Huella Pintada* (*Like a Painted Footprint*), coming from the same stance as *Sierra de Nadie*, Cipriano Buitimea’s oral history for which the two of us—witness and interpreter—became coauthors.

With the production of *Como una Huella Pintada*, combined with *Sierra de Nadie*, we have two complementary points of view of the people involved in the research: actor and investigator. Now, the only thing missing was to get the word out among the Guarijíos about this history turned into a book. But, how were we to present it to a population that was around 90 percent illiterate? I returned to the idea of oral tradition, but with new technology, creating two audio versions of the story in the Guarijíos’ native tongue: one version for the institute’s radio station and another to be listened to on a low-tech cassette player. We gave these to each head of household. Then, I was asked to write about the experience of working together with Cipriano, which became a paper I presented in Sonora.

So it went that each time I thought I had finished the chapter of my life with the Guarijíos, for one reason or another it would open once again. On one hand, reasons for returning to the Guarijío zone continued to emerge: after the oral history won an award, Cipriano’s wife had us support a tuburada for three years, from 1992 to 1994. I also made other trips for “operations” work (as they say in the INI). On the other hand, I was asked to write four additional articles on the Guarijíos and to participate, over the course of four years running, in the Simposio de Historia y Antropología de Sonora, organized by the Universidad de Sonora, in Hermosillo.

In the following years I also worked hard to listen. That’s how I





*Meeting with Guarijíos in 1992 to hand out cassette tapes of Cipriano Buitemea's recorded oral history, Como una Huella Pintada. From Left to right (seated), Pablo Yoquibo, tribal governor, Leobardo Quiróz, director of the Centro Indigenista Coordinador, and Teresa Valvidia. (Photo by Teresa Lizárraga)*

learned that the Guarijíos felt mostly satisfied with what they now had in their possession, but that they also complained that they still worked and worked but often did not have the means to provide for their basic needs, not even for food. What could they do? What was going wrong? How could they truly become self-sufficient or at the very least develop a more solid subsistence base? To answer these questions, I put together a brief diagnostic study the results of which showed that the tribe had lost political force, and it was at a kind of impasse created by its current life conditions. It was especially paralyzed by the problem of not knowing how to organize for work in the absence of a Yori *patrón*. But if the study was useful for creating a few options—such as reinforcing the authority of Guarijío representatives—the need to do it quickly meant leaving out

important details, such as how current social and political dynamics related to control over environmental resources. And so it was that in 1992, when the government reformed Article 27 of the Constitution and approved a new agrarian law, I could not completely respond to the Guarijíos' concern over whether they should become *comuneros*.<sup>7</sup> Little by little I was coming to the realization that what was needed was a more expansive research project that could respond to these matters of vital importance, which I tried to do in my master's thesis, completed in 1995. Fortunately, around that time period it was easier to carry out research projects in greater depth because several researchers, both from Sonora and abroad, were working in the region, which meant I had access to a variety of books, published essays, theses, and press releases.<sup>8</sup> Before that time, any social scientist who wanted to work in the Guarijío region had but a few historical accounts taken from texts by Andrés Pérez de Rivas, Fernando Ocaranza, and Francisco Javier Alegre, as well as works by archaeologists like Beatriz Braniff and César Quijada, and material from pioneers who had worked in the Guarijío zone, such as Howard Scott Gentry, who was, and continues to be, one of the most important sources of information on the region.

Three years later, I found myself once again working the Guarijío material, even though my current research project focused on the Mixes of Oaxaca. This time, it was because copies of *Sierra de Nadie* had run out, yet students were still interested in reading the book. Another print run was needed. Once again I decided to heed the expert advice of my professor, Andrés Medina, who recommended combining into one book the different texts that I have developed on the Guarijíos that share a similar anthropological approach. And that is how these texts were combined to form the current publication, *Entre Yoris y Guarijíos: Crónicas sobre el Quehacer Antropológico*.<sup>9</sup> All of this together was a way to combine my work into a larger reflection on how one does, interprets, and describes fieldwork, based on an intense and deeply committed experience in the Guarijío region of Sonora.

I should clarify that this work focuses on the Guarijíos of Sonora who, in many ways, have connections with those who are referred to as the Guarojíos of Chihuahua. This is because we are talking here about two populations with common roots and history, although those of Chihuahua have received far more scholarly attention than those of Sonora. For his part, Andrés Medina Hernández was enthusiastic about

writing an introduction to this book, which quickly turned into the longer study that follows this introduction: “La Línea Difusa: Etnografía y Literatura en la Antropología Mexicana” (“The Diffuse Line: Ethnography and Literature in Mexican Anthropology”). It is an excellent essay that crosses the borders between ethnography, methods, and literature, and is in many ways unique in its discursive and informational richness.

The reader of *Among Yoris and Guarijíos* will not find here an ethnographic study of the Guarijío population, although by the end of the book he or she will be fully familiar with it. Rather, the book has a distinctive outlook—even if perhaps insufficiently documented—on the motives and perspectives that anthropologists and actors hold during the process of fieldwork.

Finally and above all, I want to thank Andrés Medina for having motivated me to work along this line of anthropology, for having read and commented on the first draft, and, moreover, for taking on the task of writing the opening essay for this new work. I also thank Mauricio López Valdés for his close attention to the minutiae of editing *Sierra de Nadie* and *Like a Painted Footprint*. He made important suggestions that improved both texts, thanks to his passion for discussing the problems of cultural interpretation and of editing indigenous oral history (we had daily sessions for almost a year when I was writing Cipriano’s oral history). I thank Adriana Incháustegui for her editorial assistance and useful comments on matters of style. And to my mother, María de los Ángeles Dounce Villanueva, who helped transcribe the taped interviews with Cipriano Buitimea. To my sister, María Luisa Dounce, for her expert editorial suggestions and corrections of style which I applied to the structure of this book. I thank the anonymous reviewers, whose suggestions improved the text. To Martha González and Ada Ligia Torres for editing and production. I also thank the readers of *Sierra de Nadie* who have gladly given their opinions; I hope that reading *Like a Painted Footprint* is for them an equally pleasant experience.

*Tepepan, Mexico City, January 2004*

## THE DIFFUSE LINE: ETHNOGRAPHY AND LITERATURE IN MEXICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

ANDRÉS MEDINA HERNÁNDEZ

In these days of steamrolling globalization, the transition into the third millennium has been marked by the florescence of cultural diversity, a vital response to the powerful and homogenizing inertia coming from the great centers of transnational financial capital. Alongside this transition, and with all of the intensity and subtlety of new communications technology, comes a discourse saturated with the strident colors of Western postmodernity.

Mexico is diverse in its origins, in its history and contemporary cultural composition, and in its geographic contrasts and biological richness. Its history is a rich interweaving of ethnic and racial components. Nonetheless, moving against the grain of these underlying historical processes, the Mexican state that emerged from the colonial period has worked to superimpose an impossible cultural, racial, and linguistic homogeneity, as well as a political centralization that is more archaic than democratic, and that has demonstrated, in the face of such obvious cultural diversity, a kind of balkanization "syndrome"; that is, an unfounded fear of territorial and political fragmentation. It has responded with an institutional rigidity that takes it from political regression to suicide.

Our diversity is therefore not simply of the present; it is an inherent part of our national history and culture. We live it every day, we breathe it, but we are only just beginning to study and come to terms with it as an alternative to the constant beatings we take at the hands of globalization, both virtual and real. In fact, reflecting on our diversity -- in terms of its significance for defining a national identity -- has been a constant part of our literary and cultural traditions. Such has been the case from the earliest attempts to break free on the part of New Spain's *criollos*, trapped between the discrimination of the *peninsulares* and their own disgust for Indians, whom they rejected as compatriots. It runs through the populism of the Mexican Revolution, when we began to ponder the idea of a "Mexican psyche," its "*mestizo*" character, and the need for "integrating" the most important source of our diversity, the Indian population.

In the framework of the new revolutionary nationalism, anthropology appeared, from the hands of Manuel Gamio, as a scientific instrument

to understand racial and cultural diversity, and to transform it within the homogenizing model represented in the figure of the “mestizo.” The professional anthropologist also emerged as a specialist with academic and technical training that would equip him for carrying out the tasks required to confront a cultural diversity portrayed as one of the greatest obstacles to Mexico’s modernization.

But the work of the anthropologist is not at all easy, for to go deep into the interethnic regions with indigenous populations, more than a contrasting otherness, one is faced with conditions of poverty, exploitation, injustice, and institutional violence against which it is impossible to remain insensitive. At the same time, one has to remain faithful to the task of investigating that reality and to share the knowledge that will allow both for the possibility of creating policy solutions and for contributing to a larger conversation about theory and politics.

Surviving these professional and ethical exigencies is an adventure that each one of us resolves in our own way, as it implies a fortuitous combination of personal capacity and favorable institutional resources. Yet we know little of this, as it is not something that is openly discussed, despite its implications for defining an adequate methodology and professional profile. Nevertheless, we are beginning to see signs of a response to Estéban Krotz’s assertion that in matters of methodology, Mexican anthropologists are “at ground zero.”

Knowledge of social and cultural conditions in Indian populations, of their history, now forms a rich store from which Mexican ethnography may draw, though overall the balance is somewhere between successes and gaps. The central importance of Mesoamerican cultural traditions for the configuration of regional cultures has concentrated ethnographic investigation in those places that bear ancient projects of civilization. In studying them, anthropologists have constructed national, scientific traditions. These have been largely expressed in the complexity, amplitude, and profundity of Maya ethnographies, such as those based on Chiapas, and on the Nahuatl populations in various regions across the country, and in particular communities of the Sierras of Puebla and the Huasteca.

The north, paradoxically, continues to be a vast blank space of deserts and mountains where ethnography has studied but a few isolated points. We still have much to learn, not only in terms of Indian populations, but also in terms of the cultures created by prospectors, ranchers, and immigrants from all parts. One anthropologist and writer, Fernando Jordán, faced with the complex specifics of northern cultures and limited by the need for brief characterization, wrote in his book, *Crónica de Un*

*País Bárbaro* (1956), that the north is a place of pure “force and will.” It is also, of course, a scenic space of historic and cultural extremes that condition diversity, mixing with it its turbulences and great silences.

In this social and cultural universe marked by national diversity, the Mexican anthropologist has emerged as an original creative force, articulating scientific studies with government-directed social programs. Mexican anthropologists have also expressed their criticisms, their sense of utopia, and their reactions in texts that frequently have transcended the limits of the technical report, the monograph, or the ethnographic essay. In a variety of ways, this allows them to touch on that other universe that is constituted by literature. It is not easy to establish with clarity the border between ethnography and literature. As I sketch out below in this short essay, it is a fuzzy line.

### *Ethnography and Literature*

The roots of ethnography can be traced to perceptions of different ethnic groups, the recording of their existence, and in reflections provoked by their condition of alterity. Added to this is the colonial experience, when systems of exploitation and dominance were established that were based on a racist ideology that inserts itself in the cultures of the colonized as a sense of inferiority. This is the space in which racism is forged.

We see the scientific and cultural expression that accompanies the process of colonial expansion as a precursor to the anthropology that is formalized in the mid nineteenth century. It emerges within an evolutionist framework, and is tied to forms of colonization spurred by the industrial revolution.

Critical reactions to the ambitious evolutionist theory—which proposes a series of fundamental laws that guide the history of human development—led to a series of research techniques that make up fieldwork. That is, to the direct collection of data and their representation by the researcher. As such, the founding fathers of modern scientific anthropology are scientists that, like Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowski, conducted meticulous field studies at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their theories form the basis of future ethnography. To be more precise, ethnography takes on its full scientific form with the adoption of methods and techniques for observing, registering, and organizing information that is represented in the form of descriptions and interpretive essays.

The primary source of ethnographic observation is fieldwork that—in the tradition of Malinowski, working in the South Pacific—becomes “participant observation.” Notes are taken in a field diary, and to this are added other techniques, such as questionnaires, genealogies, index cards, photographs, maps, and voice recordings, among others. But all of this implies a rigorous theoretical approach that allows for control over the gathering and testing of data, and exchange with other researchers.

Nevertheless, the creative process is situated in the lapse wherein the mass of data and the accumulation of experiences are transformed into a text. As some postmodern anthropologists, such as James Clifford, have suggested, the creation of a text implies the unfolding of a literary strategy and, with it, the placing of bridges and ductworks that connect to literature. As many of us have experienced in our own professional training, some of these basic texts have an attractiveness that goes beyond the scientific community, like Malinowski’s celebrated *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1975).

The forerunner of the ethnographic monograph—and in some ways, its twin brother—is the travel diary, a source from which many anthropological evolutionists drew, and from the comfort of their library. Nonetheless, the fundamental difference between the two is the rigor of observation in the former and, above all, the implicit reference to diverse theoretical conceptions. The travel diary has had a special place in literary traditions, whether for its style of writing or for its reference to unknown people and cultures. And it has created a space for written work in anthropology that in much the same way has become widely known in literary circles. Such is the case, for example, with Jacques Soustelle and his book, *México: Tierra India* (1975), originally published in 1936, in French.

In some instances, the specialized texts of anthropologists get an unusual amount of literary and intellectual attention, as was the case with Oscar Lewis’s *The Children of Sánchez* (1964), which also became the subject of a spectacular political discussion in Mexico City, and which prompted, among other things, a shift in its editorial classification, moving from the section on anthropological works to literature. In France, it won a prize for best foreign literary work, and in the United States *The Children of Sánchez* was made into a movie.

Another variation of the articulation between literature and ethnography, coming from anthropology, is seen in works that, although with an apparently technical form, carry a literary structure and discourse. Such is the case with Carlos Castaneda’s *The Teachings of Don Juan*



(1974). Works like Castaneda's, presented as ethnographic texts, are posing as science but their ethnographic descriptions have turned out to be fictitious, far from the other studies made in the region that the book purportedly draws from. Nonetheless, they have been widely read for their rich esoteric allusions, as they come at a time when people are looking for new forms of spirituality, feeling disenchanted with so-called Western religion. Such a movement would leave its mark on the decade of the 1990s.

A few anthropologists have sought with complete intentionality to step into the literary camp in order to transmit their knowledge and experience. This is the case with José María Arguedas, who occupies an exalted place in Latin American letters for his novels and stories about Peruvian Indians. But his ethnographic work has been obscured. Arguedas has moved in the direction of fiction, he says, because of the greater potential to more broadly share the virtues of Quechua culture in a racist and generally illiterate society.

In a similar vein comes the work of Fernando Jordán, who, with his anthropological training, decides to move into the field of journalism, producing excellent-quality reporting that comes close to ethnography in its rigor and in terms of the density of analysis and broad sweep. This is seen in his two more well known works, *El Otro México* (1951) and *Crónica de un País Bárbaro* (1975), which influenced the literature and journalism of Mexico's northern region.

Moving in the opposite direction are works from writers and journalists that are presented as ethnography. This is the case with Spanish writer Gloria Méndez, who concocts the biography and scientific work of a Polish researcher who conducts ethnographies on villages in Asia (*El Informe de Kristeva*, 1997). There is also the well-known work of journalist Fernando Benítez, the series, *Los Indios de México* (1968-1981). Here, ethnography provides a cover for an ideological discourse infused with racism, romanticism, and exoticism, and that plagiarizes ethnographic texts. It also sensationalizes and manipulates specific aspects of Indian cultures. Yet, the work is widely distributed and celebrated in the national media, which has much to do with its inclusion within historical discourses of *criollo* patriotism and the more recent Mexican revolutionary nationalism.

On the other hand, there are anthropological works that are popular and widely read, as much for their literary qualities as for their situation within emergent, innovative, and triumphant political movements. An example of this can be found in the works of Fernando Ortiz focusing on the Afro-Cuban tradition, which is exalted and propped up by the



cultural policies of the Cuban Revolution. The same description applies to a work by Miguel Barnet, *Biografía de un Cimarrón* (1968), whose main protagonist, an aged slave, narrates the vicissitudes of his life through some of the most important chapters of Cuba's history. The work was originally the result of an ethnographic investigation that employs the narrative technique of life history. But its story of the vindication of the African tradition in Cuban national culture gives it a privileged place as part of the discourse of the Cuban Revolution and this, in turn, has made it widely popular.

Life history is possibly the technique that draws more than anything else from literary resources and, as a consequence, transcends with certain ease the field of literature, as it transmits the voice and cultural experience of those whom we know little about, or whom we misunderstand. But in contrast to fiction, its testimonial character lends it a particular eloquence and, frequently, a dramatic tone. And as we discuss in the examples from the following section, we see some similarities here with anthropological investigations from other countries.

Recently we have seen a special interest in making public anthropologists' field diaries, a desire fueled by a postmodern focus on written texts, and in particular since the publication of Bronislaw Malinowski's notes in *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1967). This work clearly suggested the natural connections between the totality of his ethnographic investigations, which have made the author famous and granted him an exalted place in the field of anthropology. James Clifford is someone who has offered a suggestive idea with respect to this and other work in his essay "Sobre la Invención Etnográfica del Sujeto: Conrad y Malinowski," published in the book *Dilemas de la Cultura* (1995). In it, he draws a comparison with the writing process of Joseph Conrad in his novel *Heart of Darkness* (1902), which focuses on an existential search to construct a subject. In Malinowski's case, this is precisely the new profile of the professional anthropologist as a field researcher.

So far in Mexico some field diaries have been published, those of Alfonso Villa Rojas, Calixta Guiteras, and Marcelo Díaz de Salas, but without any kind of discussion on methodology or any reflection or commentary oriented towards demystifying the field experience, such as that of Nigel Barley. Barley's book, *El Antropólogo Inocente* (1989), relates with a tone of irony and humor the things he experiences from the beginning of his research in the university through his installation in the field in Africa.

It seems to me that the contrast between the experience of anthropology

in Britain and that in Mexico has a lot to do with their different institutional configurations, and with their different academic contexts. While British anthropology expresses a classic and fundamental relationship between ethnography and colonial policy, the situation in Mexico is one of anthropology in a colonized country.

Modern Mexican anthropology has its foundational moment under the regime of revolutionary nationalism and in particular in the government of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), when anthropology's institutional complex was created and the contemporary profile of a professional anthropologist was defined. Its most important antecedents are to be found in the development of the Museo Nacional, founded more or less during the first years of Mexican independence. The central figure in the constitution of Mexican anthropology is Manuel Gamio, who in 1917 set down the guidelines of ethnographic research in Mexico. The specific profile of the Mexican anthropologist is the result of the efforts of various researchers with an ample view of the nation's social problems. Among others, this includes the already noted Manuel Gamio, Miguel Othón de Mendizábal, Andrés Molina Enríquez, Julio de la Fuente, Alfonso Villa Rojas, and Ricardo Pozas.

That is to say, anthropology in Mexico has been oriented in two directions: One is the study of the ancient history and contemporary culture of Indian populations. The other direction is toward the design of social action programs, centered on "indigenist" policies. A characteristic expression of the Mexican anthropologist has been that of social responsibility in the face of national-level social and cultural problems. This concern was crystallized with the creation of the Department of Anthropology in the School of Biological Sciences of the National Polytechnic Institute, in 1937. Thus was defined, in an explicit way, the profile of the professional anthropologist as a field researcher who would constitute a link between Indian populations and the state.

The profile of the anthropologist and the orientation of research have changed with time, both because of progress made in the theory of anthropology and because of broader changes in Mexican society and the role of anthropological activity within that. We can see more or less three critical moments in the development of ethnographic theory in Mexico. The first corresponds to the dominance of evolutionary theory, wherein the culture of Indian populations is classified as representative of a previous phase of civilization, stuck in a backward state. This period ends at the close of the 1940s.

The second moment is distinguished by the influence of relativism,

from American culturalism to British functionalism. This period runs from the 1940s to the mid 1970s. This is a time of rigorous theoretical and methodological formation in ethnography, during which fieldwork is granted a fundamental importance, along with the use of new techniques for managing and analyzing data. It is also a time of coexistence of the *indigenista* and the scientific researcher. An important expression of this epoch can be seen in the theory and information built into the design of the exhibits for the new National Museum of Anthropology, inaugurated in 1964.

The third moment runs from the second half of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s, and develops along two general lines: one responds to the influence of French Marxism, and the other is articulated with the continent-wide Indian movement, and it generates a discourse that is sensitive to the social and political perspectives of Native Americans. The discussion about the relationship between ethnicity and social class dominates much of the ethnographic research of the period.

Finally, in the 1990s we see the beginning of another moment, influenced by the process of globalization, which in Mexico has two important expressions: On one hand, we have the public emergence of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), in 1994, and with it a widely held discussion about the multicultural composition of Mexican society and the need to reconfigure the idea of nation and the course of national politics.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, we see the intense influence of postmodern anthropological currents coming from the great centers of theoretical production (and of hegemonic processes): the United States, France, and England.

Mexican anthropology nonetheless maintains its eccentricity and its place on the periphery, as well as its deep sense of social responsibility. There is also another characteristic that I feel is important in terms of its epistemological implications: the experience of Mexican anthropologists shaped in the multicultural context that they share with the Indian communities they study, and this in turn conditions their sense of alterity. The ethnographic gaze, then, is charged with a particular cultural identity and sympathy as well as a sense of social responsibility—which nonetheless do not eliminate a profound racial discrimination—that is quite different from that of the colonizer and of the researcher who is secure in his position in “Western civilization.”

This preliminary periodization is necessary because in each of the moments singled out the relationship between ethnography and literature is different. In the first moment there is a heightened sense of scientism

that privileges objectivity and distance, and creates a stark separation from artistic activities. The second moment is characterized by intensive and rigorous research techniques, in particular life histories, testimonials, field diaries, ethnographic photography, and tape recordings that provide access to the verbal expression of the populations under study.

The third moment is characterized by an explicit intertwining (on the part of some authors) of ethnographic research and literary works. This is deeply influenced by the political and cultural movement of Indian populations and the emergence of an anthropological discourse that feeds from it, taking on the movement's points of view and supporting its political and cultural assertions.

It is impossible to cover the entire field of literature that anthropologists have been involved in and its diverse expressions, so here I refer to the well-known cases in terms of novels, biography, stories, poetry, couplets, the ballad, and the essay. I will leave it to other scholars to reflect on the place of these works, written by anthropologists, in Mexican literature. There exist important works on novels and the stories of indigenistas. Nonetheless, they leave out the perspective that I am putting forth here; that is, the deep connections with ethnography.

### *From the Ethnographic Text to Literature*

The field experience is one of the richest sources of information for ethnography, both in terms of the recording of observations and first-hand reflections, and for generating different kinds of situations, many of which become the anecdotes of oral tradition within the anthropological community. The primary instrument for recording is the field diary, and the first order of business is to translate observations into text. Still, the practice of keeping a field diary seems less common with Mexican anthropologists, who are more inclined toward simple note taking, writing reports, and preparing specialized texts for publication. At the same time, however, these forms of data recording nevertheless lend themselves to the production of diverse texts that reflect the technical and methodological requirements of ethnographic research.

The full intensity of the human experience of fieldwork is not always completely channeled by the technical instruments of inquiry. This has pushed many researchers to explore literary paths and oftentimes abandon all scientific pretense in order to let the imagination run free and allow for a sense of aesthetics. The stark separation between science and art is underlined by the idea that true science demands a rejection of all forms

of subjectivity even though we know all too well that this is an impossible rupture, as there has always existed a line of confluence between the two.

The anthropology that from the beginning comes out of the nationalism of the Mexican Revolution makes forays into literature. Few scholars have researched this phenomenon, not considering it to be part of the history of anthropology. Likewise, historians of literature have also not paid attention to anthropologists' incursions into the spaces of art. Indeed, there are literary works written by anthropologists that form part of the national artistic panorama, but whose expressions are severed from the body of scientific works, as in the case of Ricardo Pozas, Francisco Rojas González, and Carlo Antonio Castro, among others.

The father of contemporary Mexican anthropology, Manuel Gamio, is the author of a novel and a collection of stories, *Estéril* (1923) and *De Vidas Dolientes* (1937). A close collaborator and disciple of Gamio, Alfonso Fábila Montes de Oca, who was initiated into the field ethnographic investigation when the two of them worked together in the Valle del Mezquital, in the state of Hidalgo, was an active scholar with wide professional experience and prolific anthropologic production. Unfortunately, most of this work is still unpublished. Over the course of his life, Montes de Oca retained close ties with indigenista programs, and traveled throughout the country's interethnic regions, preparing numerous reports and monographs, and likewise compiling a rich photographic archive. Not only does his work cover a wide geographic range, but overall it possesses a high degree of artistic quality that awaits rediscovery and recognition.

The field of photography experiences something similar to what happened with literature whereby the ethnographic basis of the artistic expression is lost. We see this with the work of Alfonso Fábila and with Julio de la Fuente, two well-known anthropologists with ample field experience and a clear presence in ethnography. Both produced as part of their work high-quality photographic material and with a defined personal style that is known only in terms of the images that accompany their ethnographic texts. Alfonso Fábila is the author of seven novels, the first of which, *El en Sí*, was published in 1922 and the last, *Entre la Tormenta*, in 1946 in a volume put out by the Fondo de la Cultura Económica. We still do not have any studies of his body of literary work, much less knowledge of the connections between his ethnographic research and work as an indigenista. One of his more well known books is *Las Tribus Yaquis de Sonora*, published by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) in 1940 on the occasion of Mexico's First Interamerican

Indigenist Conference. In the book he explains that his research was carried out in collaboration with Yaqui authorities who ultimately approved the content and, faced with publication difficulties, even offered a modest economic stipend to make it possible. Ultimately, the text was recovered by the organizers of the congress—in particular by Luis Chávez Orozco—and made known to the participants. It is a text that reveals the mark of Manuel Gamio and his ideas about social obligation.

Francisco Rojas González, an author from this pack of anthropologists trained in the 1920s and 1930s, is the most well known for his literary output. Rojas González began as a student of ethnology in 1925, in the National Museum of Anthropology, associating closely with Andrés Molina Enríquez and with Miguel Othón de Mendizábal, his collaborator. He also participated in research directed by Moisés Sáenz in Carapan, in the state of Michoacán, and in the diverse activities developed in the Valle del Mezquital. This is where Mendizábal carried out one of his most important projects, in a time of effervescent revolutionary nationalism, with the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas.

Francisco Rojas González early on becomes part of the Institute of Social Research at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). There, he is integrated into a research group and collaborates with Mendizábal as well as Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, a specialist in national agrarian problems. Mendieta y Núñez was a disciple of Gamio on the Teotihuacán project, and in 1939 founded the *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*. Gamio designs a grand research program, *Etnografía de México* (UNAM, 1957), which is carried out by Mendieta y Núñez. Rojas González authors 12 monographs for the project and edits the *Obras Completas de Miguel Othón de Mendizábal*, published in 1947 by Talleres Gráficos de la Nación.

The literary work of Francisco Rojas González runs in parallel with his activities as a field researcher. In 1928 he won the prize for short novels organized by *Revista de Revistas*, and this begins a period of prolific short-story production. He publishes a scattering of stories in literary magazines and Mexico City newspapers, as well as books that bring together diverse stories, some previously published, others new. The most well known of these, *El Diozero*, was published posthumously by the Fondo de Cultura Económica in 1951, the same year that Rojas González died. It was re-published in 1961 in a new series, the Colección Popular, by the same publishing house, together with similar literary works, such as *Juan Pérez Jolote*, by Ricardo Pozas, also an anthropologist, and *El Llano en Llamas*, by Juan Rulfo. The series is widely read and

comes at an important moment in Mexican literature. The three texts allude to the cultural diversity of the Mexican countryside, transcending the picturesque and focusing on the human condition, on hunger, discrimination, and violence at the hands of government officials.

In 1944, Rojas González receives the National Prize for Literature for his novel *La Negra Angustias*, and in 1947 publishes another novel, *Lola Casanova*, whose story is set among the Seri Indians of Sonora and touches on indigenista policies. Both novels are made into movies, employing Rojas González as a scriptwriter (see the preliminary study by Luis Mario Schneider in *Obra Literaria Completa*, published in 1999).

The movie that has the biggest impact for its documentation of Indian life, however, is *Raíces*, based on the stories of *El Diosero*. It is directed by Benito Alazraki with cinematography by Walter Reuter. The film fuses indigenous bilingual teachers and officials employed by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista alongside professional actors. And it was filmed in diverse interethnic regions of the country, which lends it veracity that impacts viewers.

From the first generation of students at the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH), during the 1940s, comes a diverse array of ethnographic studies that in one way or another border on the space of literature. Perhaps the most widely recognized of these are works by Ricardo Pozas Arciniega, and in particular his *Juan Pérez Jolote: Biografía de un Tzotzil*. Published initially in a student-run journal, the series *Acta Antropológica*, in 1948, its primary objective is to present the results of a particular ethnographic technique: life history. The text is accompanied by a series of engravings by the artist Alberto Beltrán, a member of the Taller Gráfica Popular. Beltrán accompanied Pozas on one of his follow-up trips to Chamula to collect missing data.

The Taller Gráfica Popular is a grouping of artists led by maestro Leopoldo Méndez, and it forms part of a radical current of Mexican revolutionary nationalism. One of the group's antecedents, from the 1920s, is the Bloque de Obreros Intelectuales, which both Miguel Othón de Mendizábal and Francisco Rojas González had participated in. This was followed in the 1930s by the Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios, which Julio de la Fuente had been a part of.

Ricardo Pozas comes from the powerful teachers movement and more broadly from the camps of leftist activism that were flourishing at the end of the 1930s, the time of Cardenista nationalism. In other words, it has a critical orientation. Upon matriculation in the Department of Anthropology, Pozas participates in the dynamism of that first generation, which was critical



to his professional formation. This included participation in a 1944 project in Chiapas directed by Sol Tax, a collaboration between the University of Chicago, the state of Chiapas, and ENAH. We are now in the second moment of Mexican ethnography, which brings together the empiricism of multiculturalism and theoretical conceptions of British functionalism.

Sol Tax is at the time a young and brilliant anthropologist steeped in the theoretical and methodological rigors of functionalism, training he received from one of the founding fathers of that tradition, Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown. Brown had completed a three-year residency at the University of Chicago and directed the doctoral dissertations of Sol Tax and Fred Eggan, among others. Later, Tax joins the team of Robert Redfield working on a research project to study the Mayan cultures of Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Chiapas, and Guatemala, a project that involves Alfonso Villa Rojas, a Yucatecan anthropologist and close collaborator of Redfield.

Ricardo Pozas studies the economy of San Juan Chamula, the largest and most well known town of Los Altos de Chiapas—for Chiapan *ladinos*, all Indians are considered Chamulans. From his time in Chamula, Pozas produces an enormous and substantive typewritten field diary. In the course of his fieldwork, he comes to know Juan Pérez Jolote and creates a friendship that will lead to his writing a biography of Pérez Jolote. The work is structured as a testimonial, in first person and in the voice of a Chamula Indian, and it is clearly intended as an exposé of the difficult life of Chiapas's Indians.

The biography is published sometime later, in 1951, by the Fondo de Cultura Económica in its series Letras de México, but repackaged as an "indigenista novel," and without citing its first iteration in ENAH. Ten years later, it is widely distributed in the Colección Popular. Nevertheless, from its first appearance as a novel, it gains popularity for its dramatic content and the sobriety of its narrative. Because of this, it is quickly translated into other languages and with this, its author gains international prestige.

This ethnographic document, transformed into a novel by dint of publicity, is a text that is profoundly intertwined with scientific research, expressed in all of its rigor and formality in the book *Chamula, un Pueblo Indio de Los Altos de Chiapas* (1959), a now classic monograph of Mexican anthropology. The two texts differ in important ways, and they have their connections. This is not specific to the fuzzy line between literature and ethnography alluded to here, as it is evident that at the scientific base of the monograph there are no individuals, specific people with



names or faces, but only their initials. There is an effort at distancing, a reflection of the demands of objectivity—a basic requirement of any scientific document. Yet, the text does contain a critical and indignant tone, though it is tightly bound up with the actions under study. The drama and empathy of the work are retained in the engravings by Alberto Beltrán, as well as in the photographs taken by Luis Beltrán and by Ricardo Pozas himself.

By contrast, people do appear in the biography, and in particular in the person of the protagonist. The conditions of poverty and exploitation, likewise, are given free expression, as is the racism that dominates interethnic relations in Chiapas, as it does in other parts of Mexico. That is to say, literature makes room for everything that the dominant concept of science does not. Nonetheless, the lines of connection between the two texts have only been partially explored, and in an effort to understand the role of the testimonial in strictly literary texts. In the work of anthropologists, however, the situation is more complicated and rich in its epistemological implications.

The institutional space that allows for the articulation of the theory and practice of Ricardo Pozas as well as other anthropologists and artists is that created by the Mexican government's indigenista policies. This began in 1948 with the creation of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI), and in 1951 with the construction of its first Centro Coordinador Indigenista in the Tzeltal-Tzotzil region of Los Altos de Chiapas. The mysticism of indigenista thought, the possibility of helping transform difficult conditions attracts progressive artists and professionals who venture forth to offer their experience to the different programs that begin to be developed in one of the most socially and culturally marginalized regions of the nation.

Without a doubt, one of the most important architects of contemporary Mexican indigenismo is Ricardo Pozas. He is an active participant in the design and in the work of the first Centro Coordinador, where his professional experience as a researcher of the Chiapan reality plays a fundamental role. His long-established relationships with Indian communities and authorities also play a crucial role.

The Centro Coordinador's first director is Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, the most important theorist of integrationist policy, and someone who goes on to define the regional character of indigenist programs in the countryside. After getting the first center up and going, and directing it for a year, Aguirre is replaced by Ricardo Pozas. This is when artists began to arrive, like Marco Antonio Montero, Rosario Castellanos, and Carlos

Jurado, young anthropologists with a literary sensibility like Carlos Antonio Castro; enthusiastic professionals such as the doctor Roberto Robles Garnica; and a grouping of Zapotec Indian teachers led by Fidencio Montes, the founder of a dynasty of educators working in the indigenista tradition. This scene, charged as it was with utopian ideals and enthusiasm, and with its sense of solidarity born of lived experience, its frustrations with bureaucracy and politics, lent itself to what the scholar Joseph Sommers would call the “Chiapas Cycle” of Mexican literature, a phase with specific characteristics. Many of those who formed part of the cycle had participated in the indigenista programs, and who, in one way or another, influence other young Chiapan writers and poets who in turn contributed to the cycle, such as the group called “*La Espiga Amotinada*” (which included Óscar Oliva, Juan Bañuelos, and Eraclio Zepeda, from Chiapas, and Jaime Labastida and Jaime Augusto Shelley). The name of the group was also the title of a book that they published together.

A notable figure in this conjuncture of anthropology and literature through indigenista programs is Carlos Antonio Castro, a linguist who had studied at ENAH and who had a rich ethnographic experience that he got alongside one of the greats of Mexican anthropology, Roberto J. Weitlaner. His time at the Centro Coordinador between 1955 and 1957 is one of intense activities that move beyond the boundaries between linguistics and ethnography. Castro’s contributions to these fields are important, such as the devising of a method for teaching the Tzeltal language (tailored to professionals who worked in the Centro who had no familiarity with the indigenous dialects of the region), as well as creating a bilingual Tzeltal-Spanish newspaper (*Sk’oplal te Mejicolum*), targeted to those working in the area of Tzeltal cultural production. Of equal importance, however, are his works that either border on or become literature, which constitute substantive contributions that are not all recognized for their richness and originality.

In the development of applied linguistics in Chiapas Carlos Antonio was helped along by Mauricio Swadesh, one of the founders of the contemporary Mexican school of linguistics. One of the works that generates interesting results is the collection and translation into Spanish of Mayan stories written by students at the indigenous boarding school in San Cristóbal de las Casas, where many cultural workers and bilingual teachers had trained. They would go on to work in regional indigenista programs. Later, in 1965, Carlos Antonio publishes *Narraciones Tzeltales de Chiapas*, a book that offers rich material for ethnography and linguistics, but that overall is an eloquent illustration of the vitality of Indian oral tradition.

Once openly working in the field of literature, Carlos Antonio releases his novel, *Los Hombres Verdaderos* (1959), whose main characters are members of the Tzeltal community of Oxchuc. Here, one can appreciate the particular ways expressions are adopted into Spanish, and are permeated with grammatical and phonetic categories of Indian dialects. It is also a valuable contribution to ethnography in that its descriptions are the product of a long experience in the region and a deep understanding of Tzeltal culture and language.

From this environment of enthusiasm in the Centro Coordinador Indigenista Tzeltal-Tzotzil—which includes confronting the problems of a hostile environment of los “*auténticos coletos*”<sup>11</sup> as well as of a few colleagues—Carlos Antonio has left us two brief and beautiful descriptions, one from his personal diary that he kept while in Chiapas, and another that narrates the arrival of Rosario Castellanos at La Cabaña (the other name for the Centro Coordinador). Both texts were published in the magazine of the Universidad Veracruzana, *La Palabra y el Hombre* (nos. 92 and 15, respectively).

Another interesting result of the use of “life history” is the lovely narration “Lupe, la de Altotonga,” originally also published in the same magazine of the Universidad Veracruzana, in 1962. In a subsequent publication of the text (1998), Carlos Antonio Castro offers a set of methodological reflections over the use of this technique, which clearly reveals its ethnographic intentionality. It seems to me that its literary quality has clouded its rich cultural content, based in the rural Nahua Indian communities of central Veracruz. His book of poetry, *Íntima Fauna* (1962), is testimony to the intensity of the professional experience that deeply shaped his interests and orientations; it is clearly nourished by his exposure to the interethnic, indigenista environment of Los Altos de Chiapas.

This is an opportune moment to bring up the work of Rosario Castellanos. Though not an anthropologist, she is one of the most important Mexican writers of the twentieth century. Her work was shaped by her participation in the activities of the Centro Coordinador, which she draws from to re-create the lives of her characters in the novel *Oficio de Tinieblas* (1964) and in her book *Ciudad Real* (1960). The same is true for her first novel, *Bahún Canán* (1957), which poetically relays the profound formation she receives as an infant growing up in a context, markedly colonial, in which Tzeltales and ladinos commingle. This material brings up a question that has received little attention in the ethnographic literature, despite a preponderance of hints and suggestions, and that is also present in a subtle way in literature: that is, the imprint

that members of the international community, and in particular anthropologists, receive when they share a deep experience with the populations they study.

Those who have remarked on this have been artists, part of a burst of creative energy provoked by the nationalism of the Mexican Revolution and the idea that cultural diversity was an important characteristic of nationhood. By contrast, despite the privilege and access provided by their research and position as members of the faculty, anthropologists have generally not explored perceptions and relations of alterity in their own work—in terms of how such relations have influenced either them or their research.

Nevertheless, this phenomenon is fundamental for understanding many of the particularities of Mexican anthropology, and perhaps also for comprehending its theoretical nucleus. That is to say, the experience of professional development in a multicultural and racist environment conditions perceptions of that same diversity. Just like every anthropologist or sensitive tourist from the United States or from other countries, Mexican anthropologists are not separate from this environment. A consequence of the colonial framework in which this diversity is expressed is the taking on of a sense of obligation to change the prevailing conditions of injustice and social inequity of the nation.

The underlying question, it seems to me, is clearly epistemological and in many ways gives Mexican anthropology its specificity. Of course, we share this with other nations of our continent that are constituted, in the words of the Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, as “*pueblos testimonio*”—that is, nations developed out of a civilizing and violent process of colonial domination, and thus generating markedly divided societies. The anthropology generated by the colonized out of necessity must be distinct from that of the colonizers, lest it maintains the anachronistic ideal of science as somehow removed from the historical conditions of its reproduction.

To close this discussion of anthropologists who have moved into the area of literature in a time when there still exists a formal separation between science and artistic expression, I want to talk briefly about the work of Carlos Navarrete, an archaeologist trained at ENAH during the 1950s. Navarrete has made significant contributions for our discussion here. I must also point out that his is an exceptional case, as archaeologists have a strong inclination towards technical formality in their writing.

Carlos Navarrete has contributed to different literary genres, from the field diary, which he published in 1978 (*Un Reconocimiento de la*

*Sierra Madre de Chiapas: Apuntes de un Diario de Campo*), and with interesting ethnographic and historical data, to a novel (*Los Arrieros del Agua*, 1984), and poetry (*Ejercicios para Definir Espantos*, 1979). Nevertheless, the field that he articulates so creatively with literature, ethnography, and history is the study of popular narratives and religion. Here we find works of transcription and compilation, such as *Cuentos del Soconusco, Chiapas* (1966), or complex works that bring together prayer, historical research, and life histories, as is the case with *Oraciones a la Cruz y al Diablo (Oraciones Populares de la Depresión Central de Chiapas)*, a book published in 1968. There are also formal studies of a particular genre, like the *corrido* (ballad), or worship of a particular saint, such as that of San Pascual Bailón. This is seen in the works *El Romance Tradicional y el Corrido de Guatemala* (1987) and *San Pascualito Rey y el Culto a la Muerte en Chiapas* (1982). It is important to note that these works do not exhaust Navarrete's literary production. His oeuvre is large, and to understand the magnitude of his contributions would require a careful study. A particularly interesting question is the way in which this literary and ethnographic production articulates with the work of an archaeologist, a field in which he has won recognition for his scientific contributions. Hints of this show up in his literary works.

Finally, I will pause for a moment to consider an author who comes from a new moment in the relationship between ethnography and literature, a new conjunction that has generated novel and suggestive results. I am referring here to Jesús Morales Bermúdez, a young anthropologist and also writer and poet from Chiapas. His early training was in the seminary, which leads him to work with the Bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Samuel Ruíz. There, he participated in the organization of the First Indigenous Conference of Chiapas, in 1974, a significant event marking the formation and emergence of the indigenous movement in Mexico. The movement now has a national presence, won by blood and fire.

One of the first results of the Indigenous Conference is the organization of a political group made up of representatives of different indigenous populations. Jesús Morales helps organize and direct it, but the conditions of political backwardness in Chiapas force the group into secrecy and ultimately dissolution. But this does not impede Morales from working with various Indian communities, sharing in different tasks. He spent four years traveling to different Chol communities of the Chiapas's Sierra Norte, and another two years in the Tzeltal communities of the mountains and in the lowlands. He is thus able to have long conversations with men of deep indigenous knowledge, as well as with Chol and Tzeltal

farmers, catechists, and other people he comes across. Here he has the opportunity to reflect on and reconsider his own life's path, and he soon decides to enroll in the ENAH, and begins his professional training as an anthropologist, generating work that creatively weaves together ethnography and literature.

His first book, *On o t'ian = Antigua Palabra: Narrativa Indígena Chol* (1984), is a compilation of myths and other texts brought together as a result of his travels. They are not written in a formal or technical way, but rather they retain the quality of Chol dialogue and are respectful of their local variation of Spanish. With this book, he opens the door to a Chol ethnography, for at this point there were but a few, brief articles on the Indian cultures in the Sierra Norte of Chiapas. Even today there are very few ethnographic works on the Choles, though there are some excellent works in terms of theory and methods, like the research of José Alejos.

In his *Memorial del Tiempo o Vía de las Conversaciones* (1987), Jesús Morales further advances a literary construction of his ethnographic materials. Now, we have a single narrator who lays out myths, stories, and histories that draw from the cultural world of the Choles in a perspective nourished by the spoken word. In 1986 [sic], the work wins the Prize in Fine Arts for Literature, in the category of "testimonial."

In 1989, Morales Bermúdez returns to the lush lowlands to talk with some old friends who have migrated from the mountains Los Altos, but this time with the intention of conducting and recording formal interviews. He also designs a guide, a prioritized list of themes for future field investigation. Based on an ancient dialogue maintained by one of his closest Tzeltal friends (who has a detailed memory and a keen sense of his cultural identity), he decides to recover the biblical sense of the Tzeltal exodus down to the lowlands. It is an experience that members of all other Indian populations of the lowlands share, despite the diversity of their linguistic affinities. His primary purpose is to draw from ethnographic methodology in its widest expression—that is, utilizing diverse techniques for recording and managing data, as well as giving his material a literary form.

The result is a splendid novel, *Ceremonial* (1992), an eloquent historical and cultural testimony of the indigenous populations of the Lacandón rain forest. It is also an opportune source of information, when, reporting on the Zapatista (EZLN) uprising of 1994, the media propagates a version of the story that has the rebels forming part of a cocktail of Central American guerrillas and disguised Indians, as a movement fueled by narco traffickers. In reality, what emerges is a movement that is new in its configuration, its goals, and its strategies,

and that challenges a national cultural imagination clinging to old and racist stereotypes of the Indian.

Jesús Morales's clarity of thought at the junction of ethnography and literature is clearly expressed in an essay that situates his work within a combination of recent texts of oral history from Chiapan Indian communities. It also narrates the process by which he writes his books in terms of ethnographic techniques and literary motivations. It is in the essay *Ablan k'inál: Recuento de una Escritura* (1993), where he lays out the history of his texts and the process of their construction through anthropology, philosophy, and poetry.

Finally, I want to refer to two texts by this same author that are situated in thematic poles wherein he sets up the larger connections of his original insights. On one hand, we have the best documentation of the Indigenous Conference of 1974, which provides ample information and description (*El Congreso Indígena de Chiapas: Un Testimonio*, 1992), and in which we can recognize the activist integrated into the nascent Indian movement. On the other hand, we see a faith in the erudite knowledge that Morales Bermúdez has of Chiapan literature, and about which he has written numerous essays. This is crystallized in one of his more recent books, *Aproximaciones a la Poesía y la Narrativa de Chiapas* (1997).

If we return our gaze to the totality of the works singled out here—those that express an articulated transformation in processes of theory and methodology in Mexican ethnography—we see a succession that begins with the intentional separation between ethnographic and literary works on the part of the authors, of anthropologists in action. Later appear those who are eager to create a technical document but with an approach that takes them into different literary camps. And finally we arrive at a place where authors are creating works that intentionally bring together both camps, without confusing their thematic origins, and producing original and attractive results.

This succession is, however, not a process of evolution, as it seems to me that each of these various historical camps continues to have expressions in the present. What interests me is to point out that the thread that runs through all of the texts referred to here is that of a national problem of racial discrimination, exploitation, and injustice. There is a spirit of protest and condemnation here, of course always with a complex array of expressions. There is also the awe of those who visit Indian regions and speak with people there, taking in all of the desperation but also seeing the dignity of people defending their way of life and their most basic rights.

*Teresa and the Guarijíos*

Bursting into the long genealogy of males who together make up the peculiar space of the “fuzzy line” is the voice of a young female anthropologist, Teresa Valdivia. In effect, *Sierra de Nadie* is an essay situated clearly and comfortably on the line where ethnography and literature come together. It is an original text in terms of its approach and form, one that expresses a long tradition located at the heart of Mexican anthropology, as it responds directly to the insistence on social obligation and on the utility of anthropology for solving the great national problems. This is an urgency that starts with the foundational ideals of Manuel Gamio, running through the constructive actions of Miguel Othón de Mendizábal, Julio de la Fuente, and Ricardo Pozas. From the point of view of ethnography, it is a novel text because it explicitly engages with the idea of a researcher in all of its prejudices and subjectivities. Drawing from this, Teresa issues a series of basic reflections for Mexican anthropology, and offers a rigorous and honest critique of indigenista policies.

At this point it is necessary to note that this is not a monograph on the Guarijíos, but rather on the role of the anthropologist as researcher and indigenista official working in an interethnic region that brings together Guarijíos and “Yoris” (whites, or Spanish), farmers, merchants, and ranchers, part of the dominant national culture. Teresa nonetheless also directs attention to the Guarijíos, the main axis of her professional activity and her reflections, and in particular to their social and economic conditions and, to a lesser degree, their culture, of which we know very little, almost nothing. She also alludes to historical and cultural relations between the Guarijíos and the other nearby indigenous groups, the Tarahumaras, the Mayos, and the Yaquis, as well as the importance of agricultural rituals—principally, the ceremony called the tuburada, which relates to rain and fertility. But the primary emphasis is on the struggle for land and the difficulties of dealing with functionaries and the federal government’s indigenista policies. She also examines the conflicts of Guarijíos in their work as day laborers who are implacably exploited in a variety of ways: at the hands of farmers and ranchers who clearly identify with a regional culture that exalts violence, racism, and machismo.

Here, then, we see ethnographic insights in the description and analysis of the Yoris, their social conditions, the upheaval in their lives that imposes on many a sense of isolation, the tough conditions of the Sierra, domestic violence (which comes out in the story of the crazy Matilde), and, also, the frequent practice of bestiality.



In other words, it is not a description that reproduces the typical binary oppositions between Indian and ladino, seen so often in ethnographies from southeastern Mexico. In Teresa's narration is a range of personalities that works against a schematic view, pointing out a complexity that is articulated with regional and national society and politics. Alongside honest officials are racist and indifferent ones. And among farmers and ranchers it is the same thing: corrupt *caciques* (local political bosses), as well as landowners and merchants who are sensitive to the Guarijíos' plight.

There is also a deep questioning of the professional development of Mexican anthropologists, faced with the particular work conditions of the field but also working within the framework of indigenist programs. We are not talking here just about the gaps in the regional ethnographic record—rich in data for other regions, but in the north it has for some time shown its limitations. Rather, this is also about the techniques and methods needed to work in interethnic regions, in communities of diverse Amerindian languages, and not as a sympathetic observer, but as a representative of diverse government institutions marred by corruption and deception, as is often the case with those charged with carrying out agrarian reform policies. This is an attempt to open a dialogue, and in her text Teresa Valdivia makes abundantly clear her point of reference is that of a critical ethnography.

The central question here is how to create feedback among the experiences of anthropologists who work in diverse government institutions with the spheres of teaching and research, and in ways that move us towards a refocusing of programs of professional development such that they provide adequate training. Here, of course, are questions of an academic as well as scholarly, ethical, and political nature. Nevertheless, it is clear that the majority of anthropologists employed in government programs and focused on social action do not offer up their experiences, much less define a critical position from which to open a dialogue on theory and methodology. Such a dialogue would allow us to constructively rethink our anthropology. This situation underlines the importance of the present essay, a pioneering force in that direction.

Still, we also recognize in this work by Teresa Valdivia a continuity with one of the traditions that characterizes contemporary Mexican anthropology—the taking on of a social obligation that addresses the conditions of exploitation and poverty that characterize large parts of the nation. This implies both rigorous scientific investigation as well as condemning dominant injustices in a way that leads to their disappearance.

But while revealing and criticizing the hard conditions in Indian populations have been a constant in the work of most Mexican anthropologists—demonstrated irrefutably in the classic works mentioned above—it has not been the same in the area of indigenist policies, which were lauded in the context of revolutionary nationalism. However, the popular student movement of 1968, critical of the Mexican state, also turned its sights on indigenism, at first with a sarcastic or superficial tone, seen in the book *De Eso Que Lllaman Antropología Mexicana* (1970). Later, the criticism came from two flanks. One flank was the Declaration of Barados, in 1971, denouncing the ethnicide of Indian populations at the hands of nation-states, religions, and anthropologists. The other, Marxist in orientation, assumed the point of view of the proletarian class but was also disdainful of ethnic and cultural aspects.

One of the most important Marxist critiques of indigenista policies came from Ricardo Pozas in a sweeping document, *La Antropología y la Burocracia Indigenista* (1976), aimed at both the theory and approach of government-led indigenismo, as well as at its practical functioning at the level of the Centros Coordinadores Indigenistas. Pozas denounces the ferocious *caudillismo* of Alfonso Caso and the pragmatism of a diverse array of anthropologists who hew to the exigencies of the bureaucracy. Similarly, it exposes an anthropology used to prop up and justify bureaucracy rather than as an instrument of knowledge and transformation.

In this same vein, Teresa Valdivia critiques indigenist action from direct experience working in a Centro Coordinador that was in the process of being organized, and that had the immediate problem of justifying its existence in the region, as well as making contact with the supposed beneficiaries of its programs, the Guarijíos. Aggravating it all are the monumental errors of one of its functionaries and the indolence on the part of most of the center's personnel. Even if Teresa's actions do not end in substantive changes in the center's direction and approach, her direct involvement and timely counsel given to the Guarijíos in their struggle for land are a significant demonstration of how to transcend bureaucratic obstacles.

As a central problem of the research that Valdivia has developed in the region, the Guarijíos' struggle for land is the central theme of this book. When Teresa arrives in the region, the Guarijíos are hardly surviving, laboring on the Yoris' lands and leaving the region now and then to look for work in other places in the state of Sonora. They had no hope of securing land, although they never stopped fighting in that bureaucratic inferno that is agrarian reform. Nonetheless, Teresa Valdivia

gradually comes to recognize, based on an intensive search in the agrarian archives, in libraries, and consulting with diverse national and international specialists, the precarious condition of property holding in the region (which occurs in almost all of the Indian regions of the country, and has a proximate example in terms of the situation, the struggle for land among the Tarahumaras, Mayos, and Yaquis). Continuous occupation was the primary argument used by the Yoris to defend their possession, along with appeals to a corrupt agrarian bureaucracy and the use of illegal means to subordinate repressive government forces.

Faced with this grievous situation for the Guarijíos, Teresa Valdivia turns to historical documentation to establish the rights of native populations to a territory that they had occupied for centuries. Taking into consideration the Yoris' lack of historical documentation, she begins a delicate negotiation to acquire, through sale and purchase, sufficient land for the Guarijíos' subsistence and for establishing an infrastructure sufficient for constructing basic public services, such as a school, a health clinic, and administrative offices. The difficult part of the struggle lay on the backs of the Guarijío leaders, who with Teresa's help and counsel initiate an enormous effort, a constant, stubborn, and patient push into the labyrinth of bureaucratic processes, seasoned with threats, backstabbing, and innumerable deceptions.

The complex path of the process, nevertheless, is not intelligible if we cling only to the anthropological part of the story contained in the pages of *Sierra de Nadie*, despite its suggestive and intense description. In this story there are other voices, those of the Guarijíos, and in particular that of one of its most lucid leaders, Cipriano Buitimea. Years after the struggle and having achieved their primary objectives, Buitimea asks Teresa Valdivia to help him write a book that brings together memory of that effort with the historical and cultural foundation of the Guarijío community. The experience is far more complicated and laborious than Teresa expects. But the result is a magnificent and original text rendered in the voice of Cipriano Buitimea, recorded and edited in a way that respects the particularities of a Spanish permeated with the world and language of the Guarijíos, and that retains the circularity of the original narrative.

The effort is of such a magnitude and is so suggestive of Teresa Valdivia's professional and literary creativity that it forces us into an intensive methodological reflection, as evidenced in a variety of papers that have been presented at conferences ("De Aquello que el Antropólogo de Campo Debería Recordar," published in 1992, and "Voz de Los sin Voz: Notas sobre el Papel de los Testimonios Indígenas en la Historia Oral y

la Perturbante Tarea de Editarlos—Una Perspectiva Antropológica,” in 1994).<sup>12</sup> Here, one must appreciate one of the most valuable contributions to ethnography, the production of a shared text, a collaboration between the speaker and the anthropologist, a work for which both share the credit.

The situation is novel because current practice in autobiography and life history situates the researcher as author but not as voice, which is frequently reduced to the status of “informant,” discussed above in terms of the literary and ethnographic activity of anthropologists. It is worth noting, moreover, that Teresa’s book *Como una Huella Pintada* (*Like a Painted Footprint*) (1994) won first prize at the Los Indios Frente al Derecho national book contest in 1991 [sic], and through which funds were made available to create and record an oral version in Guarijío. Copies were distributed among Guarijío families. The Guarijíos’ reactions to it, and the repercussions for them, are seen in the text “Voz de Los sin Voz,” in which Teresa talks about striking a careful balance between the need to edit and the effort to maintain the voice of Cipriano Buitimea. The value in this effort is to offer us a vision for the future: the recovery of the respective stories of indigenous populations in their own words, and without the mediation of professional historians who might strip away their critical tone and re-create them as “indigenous memory.”

In my opinion, the diversity and contribution of Teresa’s ethnographic research are best appreciated when we see them in terms of their dense connections with the works referred to above, but without denying the originality and the substantive data of each one of them. But the fluidity of the narration, the personal tone, and the literary turns of *Sierra de Nadie* do not allow us to see the complicated framework that sustains them. The narration of Cipriano Buitimea as well as the particularities and rhythms bring us directly into Guarijío culture, its historical memory, and we can hardly appreciate the effort it took to achieve such narrative smoothness. The tightness of the plot does not permit it. Nonetheless, Teresa’s explicitly methodological essays do situate us directly in the theoretical and literary scaffolding of her work, and they help us appreciate the originality of the effort.

If in these works one discovers the methodological difficulties and literary strategies used to resolve them—and this is what gives them an exalted place among ethnographic works—in the other two texts we see the literary vein. In one, we see the peculiar accent of Guarijío discourse. In the other is the narration of both the soft and intense vicissitudes of a young woman, a naïve, romantic, and tenacious anthropologist in training to be an indigenista functionary, still absorbed in the world of scholarly texts and the counsel of her teachers.

In the agility of her words are nevertheless articulated theoretical and methodological reflections, and solid and well-founded critiques of the indigenista bureaucracy. Likewise, her reflections are defined by the basic characteristics of Mexican anthropology, its sense of social obligation with the exploited and a critical consciousness towards institutions and authorities that sustain an anachronistic political structure with colonial roots, where racism continues to germinate, as do corruption and impunity. To say so openly and with literary style and grace, and to tie it to a rich Mexican scientific tradition, that of ethnography, constitute valuable achievements that set forth constructive tasks for the millennium that is upon us.

*Ciudad Universitaria, D.F., November 2003*

## SIERRA DE NADIE

MARÍA TERESA VALDIVIA DOUNCE

### *San Bernardo and Its Neighbors*

The scene is a mountain range in the Mexican northwest, but the reader must not think in terms of a rugged range of verdant peaks, but rather of an arid region of cowboys in Texas-style hats and pointy-toed, high-heel boots, of scattered settlements where hundreds of cows, bulls, and goats roam without a care in the world. When I first saw it I had the impression that I was in a typical Western film. As the train from Mexico City progressed toward the state of Sonora, the landscape slowly changed from brilliant green to coffee-brown, with various shades of gray. For a time we were immersed in a great sand dune. Then, once again, the sad barren ridges returned, now in the midst of the northwest's great coastal plains. These, too, were areas of semi-desert. It was June of 1978, and although in Sonora the campesinos were waiting for the 24th and the feast day of Saint John the Baptist to bring on the summer rainy season, that year San Juan was just another name in a crowded calendar of saints. In those early moments I had no idea how important precipitation could be for me. But when I got back to Mexico City one

of the strongest impacts I felt was the return to rain. I then realized I had spent two years without enjoying the marvelous and enigmatic sensation of a downpour, those truly heavy rains that in my hometown are viewed simply as a nuisance to motorists.

A journey by train of more the 1,500 kilometers can be quite pleasant, but it is also frustrating to find that, upon arrival, the final leg is to be on an uncomfortable bus, followed by a transfer onto an even less comfortable bus. We were twenty people in total on that *camión*, resigned to our common fate, and, quickly, in the span of about 15 minutes, our number grew to thirty, then forty. Soon we were snuggled in shoulder to shoulder. There were enough of us to keep tightly together. The dirt road leading to the towns closest to the Guarijío region covered us in a fine dust that changed the color of our skin. After a time, we had all turned white. Almost to the town of Los Tanques, the bus slowed, barely waking us from the sleepy rhythm of the heat, the vibration of the motor, and the last 30 miles of sandy washboard roads.

Suddenly a voice boomed, announcing: "I'm looking for the *tropóloga* from the INI who comes from Mexico City.<sup>13</sup> Is there a *tropóloga* here?" the bus driver asked. And as absurd as this may sound, I had no idea that he was alluding to me; the word "*tropóloga*" meant nothing to me. I didn't know what he was referring to. More importantly, I didn't want to know. I was too busy trying to get a little sleep after 34 hours on the road, resting my head on my knees. But if the word "*tropóloga*" meant nothing to me it meant even less to the rest of the other passengers. The driver asked the question again, this time more loudly, and finally I began to come to my senses and realize that he might be referring to me. Still, I didn't want to be hasty or to seem naïve, so I waited for a third call to confirm my presence. Finally, the driver hit the brakes, turned off the motor, got up from his seat, and yelled the question again, toward the back of the bus, this time looking me straight in the eyes: "Who else could be the *tropóloga*?"

A tall, dark-skinned man with a solid build got on the bus to help me with my luggage. He greeted me with a big smile. I suppose he made me feel important (although he also made me change my plans because I'd hoped to walk the rest of the way into the town of San Bernardo). He was Sergio Ozúa, the official driver for the Centro Coordinador Indigenista (CCI). I would later call him "Supersergio" because this man was an especially good driver. We traveled all over the rocky Sierra Guarijía together on roads so rough that Sergio sometimes had to clear brush with his machete to open a path for our truck. At that time his

greatest source of pride was having worked for the Coca-Cola Company driving a truck that could take up to 1,000 cases of soda pop and go places “only Coca-Cola could go.”

Once past the introductions and small talk of “How was your trip?,” “Are you too hot?,” and “Where are you from?” I was able to ask Sergio how long it would be before we got to San Bernardo. I looked at my watch, totaled up the hours of travel since Mexico City, and patted myself on the back for being off by just an hour in my initial calculations. Then I gave myself another pat on the back for having deciphered the map and figured out the route with no university training at all in cartography. My enthusiasm did not last long, however, because the extreme heat made retaining a thought for any amount of time quite difficult. Indeed, it was brutalizing.

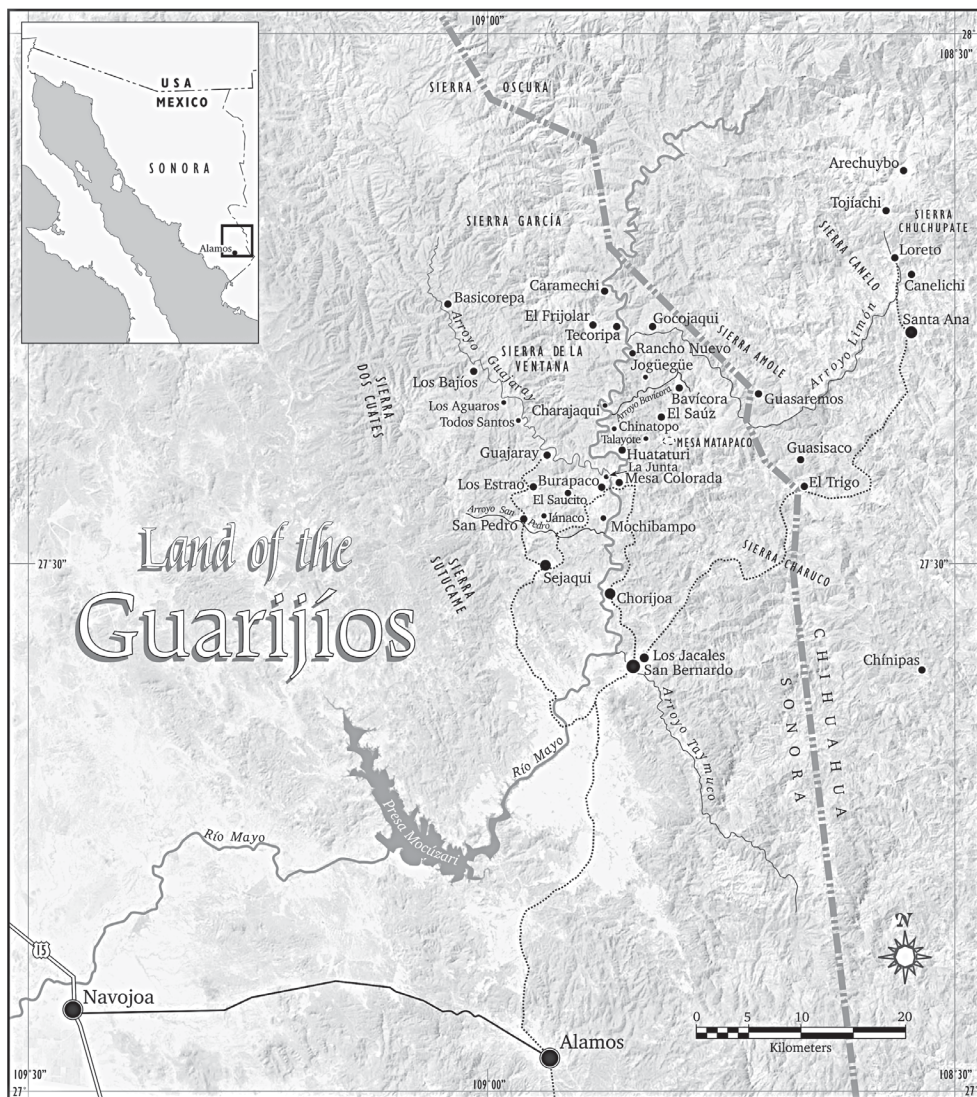
The beginning of a project can be very difficult if one has not dealt with some basic issues, and in my case, I don’t believe I had. I arrived in Sonora with all of the maturity and professionalism that a recent anthropology graduate and *roquera* and hippie of 1960s Mexico could have, someone from the generation of young people who had lived through the student movement and authoritarian violence of 1968. Part contagion and part conviction, I had been influenced by the guerrilla movements and national liberation struggles of the time. Part of me was *defeña*, from the capital, and the other part provincial.

I had to begin a new project, but not just any project, and not in just any place. Here there were few creature comforts like those one gets in the big city. There were no attractions, no amusements. No cultural events, book fairs, discos, bars. Television and radio reception were poor. The closest bookstore was in Navojoa: an enormous warehouse of the type that, at least in Mexico City, we call a “newsstand.” So, months later I found myself enjoying the thick weekly novelas in circulation around the town, and in my worst moments I even shared a sense of rejection in those love stories—the novel *Raratonga* captivated me for two months.

San Bernardo had only one small, rarely visited plaza, and one cantina, which in my case for the first time had to accept a female patron. The main attraction was a series of large dances that began in September and did not stop until the hottest time of the year, in June, and for which you had to debut a new dress every eight or so days. In the opinion of San Bernardans, a dance was “good” if it ended in gunfire!

A workplace like this one can quickly modify the views of an inexperienced anthropologist from Mexico City. I had to begin a new life, as “the process of adaptation”—according to anthropological theory an intentional part of fieldwork—is simply what happens when one experiences





*Map Of Guarijio Region.* (Cartography by Paul Mirocha)

big changes in everyday life. The difference, however, is that fieldwork involves the anthropologist's voluntary decision to subject him- or herself to such change for "scientific" ends. By contrast, when this kind of change happens to others, it can come from some sort of misfortune from which only the most "capable" survive. I think, though, that in both cases the strategies for adaptation can be the same. Indeed, what we call "social science" is often



little more than a combination of common sense and coherently organized imagination. Such organization, in turn, has a logical substrate shaped by current trends in thought. I'm sure that this idea will prompt more than one reader to jump up from the chair in indignation, but I am not seeking to produce epistemic discomfort. Rather, I simply want to be open about certain ideas that I think I probably share with many readers, and in particular those who dislike self-censored half-truths.

In this process of adaptation, sometimes one fails to realize how and at what moment she has taken on elements of cultural difference, of otherness. In my case, I probably interiorized first the strongest characteristics of regional mestizo culture: the manners of speech, the sense of humor, ways of greeting, conversation, and forms of entertainment. Then there were other things that were harder to integrate, like dancing (especially since I like it so much), types of food, the joy and love of the region's aridity, as well as staying on a horse for more than four hours at a time.

The process is thus also one of learning. Indeed, I do not believe it is possible for us to adapt to new situations in any other way. For example, if you are used to a verdant countryside, it is almost impossible to distinguish between a *huizache* and a *guamuíchil* tree, or between a *nopal* and a *pitahaya* cactus. It is not simply accidental that Eskimos recognize more than a dozen types or states of snow and ice, which they distinguish by different names. With a good "teacher" one can learn to identify a large variety of plant and animal resources contained within this semi-desert Sierra. The anthropologist Howard Scott Gentry understood the marvel of this place starting in 1939, when he made his first research forays into the region.<sup>14</sup> In a study titled "The Warihio Indians of Sonora-Chihuahua: An Ethnographic Survey" (1963), he noted as many as 140 species of plants that the Guarijíos utilized for different ends.

When I conducted my research on the origins of the main area of Guarijío settlement, I came across the work of Gentry. Reading it I became enthusiastic: here was a large body of work, descriptive and well organized. So I decided to visit him, if he was still alive. I confess that what I really hoped for was to find some sort of complete research volume, some kind of "treatise" on the Guarijíos of Sonora. I arrived in Tucson and in the University of Arizona Library could not find a single text by Gentry on the Guarijíos. I inquired further and found that Gentry was indeed still alive, but living in Phoenix. I made a trip to see him, and I must say that while Gentry was so gracious in receiving me, he was also a little puzzled by my visit. After explaining to him in my broken English the reason for my visit, he smiled and said to me in very good Spanish:

I'm sorry I don't know more about the Guarijíos. Look, in 1939 I was a young and inexperienced anthropologist. The research that I did in the Guarijío region allowed me to become a faculty member of the University of Arizona. But once I was in the system, I was obligated to publish new material year after year, and it was hard to get away from the university. So in order to publish a new article each time, I had to get into the process of specialization. So from the time of that monograph on southern Sonora, where I talk about Guarijíos and mestizos, and about species of plants and animals, climate and geology, I decided to become an expert on arid lands. With time, I had to become even more focused in my area. So I decided to look at plant species in arid zones. Later, of those arid zone plant species, I focused on cactaceas. From there, I went on to study prickly pear cactus so that now I can only tell you about fruiting prickly pears.<sup>15</sup>

I returned to Sonora with a couple of new and important experiences. The first was to visit Phoenix, and it seems that there is where I learned to love the desert and to understand what the Catholics refer to as the "fear of God": 120-degree heat! The second important experience was my interview with Gentry, which I would characterize as "exemplary" in the sense that I felt tempted to confirm that we Mexican anthropologists are by training "*todólogos*," and very few of us achieve Gentry's level of specialization.<sup>16</sup> There are several arguments on which to base this hypothesis. For example, in Mexico there are more jobs for a professional anthropologist in public administration than in academia. Different from other countries, Mexican academia is highly dependent on the state economically, politically, and ideologically. There are also very few possibilities for applying specialized research because of Mexico's low level of social and economic development.

But Gentry, the specialist, in his study missed the importance of human adaptation to aridity, something that I experienced on a deeply personal level: the first month or so of my work at the Centro Coordinador I spent in an intense process of adaptation. And what determined that process was the extreme Sonoran heat. Of course, working conditions also contributed, and these together meant but one of two options: adapt as quickly as possible or go back home to Mexico City. Working conditions were miserable enough to grant government indigenista officials the moniker "Missionaries for Indians." During that time we worked seemingly 24 hours a day, at minimum wage, far away from our homes,

with no basic services, without adequate housing or food, and most of the time camped out in or near indigenous communities.

As the excessive heat had me more or less “paralyzed” for a month while I acclimatized, I took the opportunity to get to know the town of San Bernardo. It was not a place set up for transplants. It was a small town with scarcely 1,500 inhabitants, few services or means of communication with the outside world. It had both an elementary and technical middle school, which was a source of local pride. Although San Bernardo is an ejido and thus has elected ejidal authorities, back then these authorities exercised little influence over local government.<sup>17</sup> San Bernardo was basically run by a local schoolmaster, Francisco Franco, who by taking control of collection for potable water and electricity, as well as the civil registry and the elementary school, had been able to assume political control of the town. In light of the schoolmaster’s important role in San Bernardo society, and driven by my dogmatic Marxist vision, I quickly came to the conclusion that what I saw there was a local strongman (“*cacique*”) in the fascist vein. And, of course, I said to myself, half joking, “Doesn’t his name say it all?”

The duties of *profesor* Franco went far beyond those of a simple central administrator. People came to him from all over town with whatever business that had to do with San Bernardo, from marital conflicts to common criminal offenses. Franco believed he could resolve whatever difficult case came his way, and maybe he was right. I remember one case especially well. Walking by the elementary school one day I came across a couple of children of about six years old, crying. I walked over to ask them why they were so upset, and they told me that maestro Franco had given them a good thrashing. I did not want to hear another word. I felt such indignation that I went straight to see the maestro and chew him out. In his characteristic tone of authority he asked me if I knew why he had reprimanded the children. “No,” I answered, “but what harm can a couple of small children do to merit such punishment?” Franco replied, calmly, “Their teacher caught them in the middle of a sexual act.” The maestro’s response was so effective and authoritative that I immediately turned on my heels and left his house, completely disconcerted. I wanted a coherent, “scientific” or moral explanation—who knows, anything that would return me to a secure sense of what and who I “should be” in this place. I still lack this certainty, but I appreciated not having to be in Franco’s shoes.

Details, details, in the end Franco certainly performed his functions well. He conducted campaigns to get people registered in the census

and civil registry, he always paid the town's water and electricity bills on time, and he was available for anyone who needed help of any kind. In his free time, he collected archaeological pieces as well as objects still in use by the Guarijíos. The first time I visited him in his home I had the impression that I was walking into the Alamos History Museum.

When I returned to visit San Bernardo in May of 1990, the town was mourning the death of Francisco Franco. People were debating over the question of "who next" to take over for the maestro, as they felt the pain of loss. Taking advantage of the situation, the municipal president of Alamos already had his eyes on Franco's "museum."<sup>18</sup> And this became a principal point of conflict between the municipal president, the Guarijíos, and a group of San Bernardo defenders.

The then director of the CCI sought a solution to the problem. "Tere," he asked, "what would you do?" We had a long talk about the issue, as it was so complicated. To make the right decision, we had to consider several different axes of analysis: Mexico's laws on archaeological objects and cultural patrimony, as well as indigenous rights to their own patrimony; the problem of political centralization in Mexico, which impedes local decision making; the legitimate social and cultural identity of a given group to defend its symbols. . . . In the end, I don't think I helped much, and all I could propose was a meeting of the defenders of the "museum" so that together they could come up with their own strategy. And this was not even an original idea on my part: the CCI's director, Leobardo Quiroz, had already planned for such a meeting.

Another point of conflict around the death of maestro Franco—and the Guarijíos had no interest in this detail—were the books of the civil registry. The municipal president of Alamos did not trust anyone from San Bernardo to maintain the records. But if these books were to be sent to Alamos, the civil registry would surely no longer be maintained for the Sierra. San Bernardo had the blessing and the curse of being run for more than thirty years by this one man, maestro Franco. He was the only man with qualities that perfectly matched the needs of the town at that time. There was no other, nor would there be another.

But about San Bernardo there is so much more to say. Both San Bernardo and Los Tanques (another small ranching-farming town located about midway between Alamos and San Bernardo) are towns at the gateway between the Sonoran and Chihuahuan parts of the Sierra Madre. Merchandise and people—the riches of the two parts of the Sierra—constantly pass through these crossroads. Trucks loaded with lumber, fruit, and cattle from Chihuahua move through here every day, and are

met by rigs from Sonora loaded down with different types of minerals, cattle, and merchandise. The towns of the Chihuahuan Sierra, on the border with Sonora, form a distinctive economic and cultural region. Many of the ranchers on the Sonora side also have operations in Chihuahua. On the other hand, a good number of Chihuahuan ranchers had settled in San Bernardo, putting their children in school there. Because of this, San Bernardo is constantly experiencing legal problems related to migration, for over time people from outside begin to acquire private property and ejido land rights.

The majority of the original population works in cattle ranching; in this part of Sonora the land is 100 percent pasture. One head of cattle requires about 20 hectares of land to survive here. Other ejidatarios also have some small-scale plots for commercial production. But, overall, San Bernardo's economy is measured in head of cattle. Not long ago a mining operation was exploiting graphite and other minerals, but it shut down after just four years. With its departure San Bernardans saw their hopes of future economic growth fade. They nonetheless inherited the mine installations that later on would be converted into a boarding school.

The town's food provision was (and remains) very limited. Although there was a pair of sizable stores located on the deserted central plaza, neither of them carried the necessary elements for a balanced diet. Over time they acquired a supply of fruits and vegetables, as well as eggs and meats. During harvest time in Chihuahua apples and peaches were abundant. Meats and vegetables, by contrast, were always in short supply. We did have meat when Don Lolo Flores announced that he was going to slaughter one of his cows, but if he could not find enough buyers he would not do it. We might have vegetables when a vegetable truck driver got lost and, by mistake, came to San Bernardo.

This became most clear to me when my family came to visit and I saw the scarcity of food affect them psychologically, just as it had me in the beginning. One day sitting with my family in my house we heard a man in the street calling out, "Potatoes! Potatoes!" My brother-in-law sprang suddenly from his chair, grabbed a bucket, and ran out of the house so fast we scarcely had time to get what he was doing. I suddenly understood that my own process of adaptation was moving along just fine: at least *I* was not the one running for the potato truck!

Still, it was not easy to get to that point. It was hard to get used to the routine of coffee, beer, and soup. I shed as many as 12 kilos in two months. It was also difficult to work in the same place I lived, and turn my desk into bed at night. Harder still was getting used to living with

an all-male crew in these cramped conditions. In my first months of work at the Centro Coordinador our team was composed of five people: the director, secretary, driver, agronomist, and me. Except for the secretary, who was from Milpillas, Chihuahua, we all suffered the same daily discomforts of our work conditions.

There were two main reasons for our living this way: conditions in the town itself and the low priority INI gave to its personnel. With regard to the second reason, I am not talking just about the lack of infrastructure and equipment. The institute offered little in the way of basic provisions and supplies, and also paid very low salaries. To give a clearer idea of this, my federal life insurance policy payout in 1978 was the ridiculously low equivalent of five two-week pay periods, or two and a half months of salary. Of course, this also had a positive side: death was just not economical!

Another more immediate reason for our poor conditions was that the Centro Coordinador had only received its funding a short six months before our team arrived, and its inauguration was not accompanied by the completion of INI office buildings. In practice, when the institute opens a new CCI, it sends its personnel to the field first, then it orders construction of offices. But the construction of a Centro Coordinador Indigenista can take up to one or two years, depending on the availability of financial resources and the political expediency of having such a center in a given location. And of course, such judgments do not take into consideration the opinions of Centro Coordinador staff, but rather those of the state governor and other officials who “have some say” in the matter. This was the decision-making process of Ignacio Ovalle, then general director of the INI. Previously, an anthropological assessment and justification was required for the establishment of a CCI. Such a study did not nullify the decisions of political functionaries, but they were at least required to consider the anthropologists’ recommendations.

In San Bernardo the CCI was established in the old, modest offices of the DIF, which had been abandoned for lack of funds and programs.<sup>19</sup> The DIF offices were built in 1971 and had been in operation for just two years, when they were suddenly taken over and converted into a base by the Mexican army, which until 1976 was engaged in combat with a group of armed guerrillas who were operating in and around the Guarijío zone.

When I learned of the military’s occupation of this building it just added to my general level of discomfort, for I was constantly aware of the fact that the place I was living in had been the “headquarters for assassins.” Nights became increasingly glum. My companions’ snoring kept me awake. The sleeping bag that at one time seemed like a king-

sized mattress now looked small. And the mosquitos that buzzed around us turned into buzzards on the hunt.

Then the temperature got even hotter. Soon, it was impossible to sleep inside the office. We grabbed cots made of wood and woven agave fiber, and found a quiet space wherever we could on the basketball court, convinced that this would become the permanent INI dormitory. During the hottest days of summer, San Bernardans generally sleep outside. But they have walls and fences to protect them. We, on the other hand, had to get used to the burros and dogs constantly passing through. I had to be particularly vigilant, as on more than one occasion my workmates tried to take over my cot, sometimes, curiously, while I was sleeping in it!

My co-workers saw me as a professional “in transition,” someone who was playing anthropologist, but really just looking to get married. They saw me as a woman, but within the same understanding that almost all men have. Now that feminism has become popular, I have the benefit of saving time and words because I no longer have to describe the concept of machismo to my *compañeros*. When I defended my cot and my person for the first time against the advances of a co-worker, he became embarrassed and quickly asked for my forgiveness. He decided he would offer me the “peace pipe” by confessing his discomfort with the misogyny of another of our teammates who, when learning that a female anthropologist was on her way to the CCI, had reportedly said, “That one is mine!” “Wow!” I said to myself, “now that is some kind of subliminal machismo that doesn’t even need empirical familiarity with its ‘object’ to feel moved.”

During my time in San Bernardo I came up against various expressions of machismo. The first time, as I said, was in my cot. Shortly after that it took place in a car (women apparently do not know how to drive, according to our director). Then it was over a beer (women get drunk too easily). Next, a game of cards (women cannot play cards). Another time it was at a formal meeting (women do not think!). It even continued years later with another INI co-worker who refused to work with me on the delimitation of a sample population for a project because, apparently, “women do not know how to calculate percentages.” Of course, on that occasion I said to my director, “You either put me on another team or I quit.” In the interest of fairness, especially to those who are uncomfortable with feminist discourse, I do have to confess that some women indeed do not know how to calculate percentages. The woman who replaced me suffered from that defect. Nonetheless, this single case was by no means statistically valid proof of the inability of the “weaker

sex.” The panorama is apparently even more disheartening, however, as perhaps as much as 90 percent of anthropologists enter the field not simply in the “spirit of science” but because it is a profession that does not require math. This datum is the result of a survey I conducted with my students at the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia between 1981 and 1982.

In light of the fact that I would have to continue for some time with a team of *machistas*, I started to look for the advantages that this might bring. That is, I tried to be more like one of the guys, and the more I did this, the more they treated me like one. And what did I have to complain about? I mean, wasn’t this treatment what I had longed for all along? I do not know if it was for psychological, sociological, or environmental reasons, but my personality began to take on masculine traits. On one occasion we walked into a cantina in the town of Quiriego, hungry, thirsty, and after 20 days in the field without a shower. My compañeros asked the bartender if I could come in with them. After making various suggestions for my protection, he said that the woman could come in. Then he began to look around the bar, searching. “Where’s the woman you’ve brought with you?” Without a doubt I had been transformed. I had cut my hair very short, I was wearing boots and a cowboy hat, and by this point I rarely took off my jeans, not even to sleep.

We spent many nights in San Bernardo before finally making the decision to head to the Sierra and meet the Guairjíos. The director was worried because he had been at the job for two or three months, and he had not been able to get the institute out into the Guairjío zone. He was convinced that what was needed was a program to win over the Guairjíos, and that this was the work of an anthropologist. Indeed, it was the reason for his applying for the post at the CCI. It was my reason for being in San Bernardo, too.

It was not as if the Guairjíos had taken up arms against the government, or were linked with some kind of political movement, or fearful of strangers. It was simply that they did not want anything to do with the CCI because it had been in operation already for six months and had done nothing good for them under the previous director. José, as most people called him, had been named CCI director by the institute, but the designation of bilingual teacher José Corona was a political error that came with extremely high costs. Apart from his lack of training, experience, and capacity, he was seen as an alcoholic and a racist. But how could someone who had himself suffered discrimination be a racist? Well, it happens.

In the first assembly I had with the Guairjíos all of these accusations



against José Corona came to the fore. Many of the accusations were quite specific: that he treated them like children; that he yelled at them; that they had to stop being Indians (in the sense of being *tontos*, or stupid); that he made them come all the way down from the Sierra to meet with him, at his desk in San Bernardo; that he was constantly inebriated and hung out in the bar with the Yoris (mestizos). Back in San Bernardo, some of the mestizos I spoke with about maestro José confirmed this.

When the staff of indigenistas working at the CCI office in Etchojoa found out about all of this, they sent a letter to INI's director. The Guarijíos, meanwhile, simply decided to no longer go down to the offices of "*La INI*." INI's director ultimately decided to relieve José of his duties as CCI director. At the time I thought to myself, If I write about this experience someday, should I use people's real names? I wasn't worried so much about ethical codes of social anthropology that called for the anonymity of informants or of others who form part of the research team. Instead I was thinking about my credibility faced with a reader who, perhaps like me, could easily make the association between names and characteristics. Such a reader could think that I had simply invented the names of Francisco Franco, town cacique, or José Corona, alcoholic, or the story about a director of the INI with the capacity to personally decide these kinds of matters. I realized that such associations would be inevitable, but that just about anyone could corroborate them.

Whatever the circumstances, we, the new team of indigenistas, were about to make our debut in the Guarijío zone with the "stigma of José Corona." That was the nightmare that kept awake the new CCI director for the Guarijíos. Many nights the director suffered from asthma attacks, and we would all go running to render aid in whatever form we could. With one of us telling him a story, however silly, slowly he would calm down.

Sergio Ozúa once told us the story of how he had been traveling alone late one night and suddenly felt the hair on his arms stand on end. He was going past a low hill called La Puerta, on the road between Alamos and San Bernardo, and said he was sure that spirits were following him. The reason he felt this was because sometime before he had been staying in a house on the nearby ranch of Mexiquillo when the corrugated tin roof inexplicably flew off and landed on the patio. Sergio's stories got us all talking about our own experiences with the "world beyond," and we would not get any sleep that night.

Each night, if Sergio didn't start it someone else would begin talking about Mexico's diverse climates. From there, we would recount stories



*One of the earliest formal assemblies to take place between INI personnel and Guarijíos, Burapaco schoolhouse, 1978. Most of the Guarijíos present had walked for many hours. When they arrived, to freshen up from their long journey they took a quick dip in the waters of the arroyo Guajaray.*

of the different places we had lived, or we would talk about food and our favorite dishes, drinks, or movies. Once our imaginations waned we might start talking about the topic we usually avoided: family. None of us liked to talk about family, I think, because they were so far away from us there in San Bernardo. When the solitude really attacked us, we would react impulsively, and the director would invent some sort of official commission in Alamos; Sergio would invite himself to people's houses for a good carne asada; the agronomist would spend three days straight in the bar Marcolfo; and I would seek refuge, like an orphan, in the home of our secretary, Rosario. (Years later, I became Rosario's *comadre* when I baptized her first daughter, Libia Margot.)

One fine day, our director said that we *had* to make an appearance among the Guarijíos in the Sierra. "The first thing we have to do," he

said, “is convince the Guarijíos to accept the INI. Teresa will be in charge of that.” That day, coincidentally, a bundle of camping equipment had arrived, sent from the INI offices in Mexico City: two 10x10-meter tents and six sleeping bags. We ended up not using the tents; they were so big and heavy that you could only transport them by truck, and at that time automobiles still could not make it into the Sierra Guarijía. The sleeping bags, by contrast, would be useful for our psychological and emotional security since with them we didn’t have to worry about finding cots in the unknown Sierra. Nonetheless, we hardly used them since they were designed for snowy mountains rather than the hot, dry conditions of the Guarijío region.

As I prepared for my first visit to the Sierra, I had about a dozen concerns and questions about what we really hoped to do out there and how. Were we to go as a team, or was I to travel alone? Where, exactly, was the Sierra? How long would it take to reach the closest Guarijío settlement? How long would I stay there? What should I take with me? And how was I supposed to get the Guarijíos to let the INI back into their communities? I realized that I was trapped. And the answers weren’t to be found in a social anthropology text, either. It wasn’t a matter of finding a theoretical framework, a methodology, or a technical instrument in order to gain an emotional or rational purchase on the problem. If only there were a manual, I thought: “How to Convince the Guarijíos to Accept the Help of Instituto Nacional Indigenista.”

Then again, “convince the Guarijíos”? Did I really want to do that? Convince them that the INI was what or whom, exactly? What if the Guarijíos didn’t see institutional support as important (or maybe they did)? The problem was me. I realized that I had idealized many of the things that I had studied in Universidad Veracruzana (where applied anthropology is highly regarded and particularly government-supported indigenismo), while at the same time taking some things too lightly in order to get to San Bernardo. My situation was like that of a newlywed—they say that one must not overthink marriage; you just have to do it. It wasn’t enough to invoke the wisdom about fieldwork from the old anthropologists whose works I’d read. Most of them had hidden their true motives and personal struggles as they wrote up the results of their work. Maybe they considered that to be “intimate information,” or “subjective data,” or strictly personal matters. Maybe the task was to go back and read the basic “treatises”: the one on professional ethics, where they talk about whether or not to do applied anthropology, or the one on morals, ideology, and an individual’s political positionality, wherein you determine your views based on whichever social class you supposedly belong to. With respect to

the second treatise, I wondered, from which of the two Marxist class positions should I make the decision: class in itself, or class for itself? And if it were the latter, it would have to be from a proletarian standpoint, so what was I doing working for INI in the first place?

I began to recall, step by step, my original motives for joining the institute, and finally arrived at my reasons for studying anthropology (versus law or medicine, or going to secretary school, things that would have been acceptable to my family). I had managed to hold out against family pressure in order to study anthropology: “a woman’s place is in the home,” and “you can’t make a living on anthropology.” But being there, staring at my luggage, faced with a theoretical, political, and ethical dilemma, I had to admit to myself that I was little more than a green anthropologist, inexperienced, naïve, and perhaps just an adventurer. I held off the trip for a few days while I tried to determine what, exactly, my role and work should be. I looked through some of the books I had brought with me, and decided to re-read the one by Georges Devereux (*De la Ansiedad al Método en las Ciencias del Comportamiento*, published by Siglo XXI). We had used the book in one of our courses taught by professor René Cabrera. The book focused on the experiences of researchers who work with people, their mishaps when confronted with cultural difference, and the falsity of so-called scientific objectivity. Researchers come imbued with their own complexes and theoretical prejudices that they are unconsciously reluctant to abandon, and because of all of this they make the “pieces” fit together perfectly to fit their hypothesis.

It is an engaging text, with its more than 400 cases of “conflicted researchers,” and it helped me make my decision because it was not burdened by accusatory matters of theory and practice, or the ethics of “applied” versus “theoretical” anthropology. Devereux was even less concerned about the implications of being from one social class versus another. It was then that I finally decided to go to the Sierra, bringing with me a proposal for the Guarijíos without further delay, and with an open mind about my role and what might happen.

I brought with me two changes of clothing, ten tins of sardines, a jar of instant coffee, a set of camping utensils and plates, a grill, a large knife, a canteen, sleeping bag, a notebook, pencil, camera, and the book by David Werner, *Donde No Hay Doctor* (*Where There Is No Doctor*). (Never again would I pack a bag with these same things for a trip to the campo, much less in Sonora.) Sergio showed me the route that I was to take to get to Mochibampo, the closest Guarijío settlement. He was also nice enough to get me a horse for the trip.

I left at six in the morning, an hour after life begins in San Bernardo. The sun came up hot enough to melt anything in its path. Housewives rushed their kids and husbands out the door, ready for their daily routine. The chickens, meanwhile, wandered the streets looking for edible scraps, while dogs stood watch on their masters' patios. I'd only been on the road for a half hour when already I felt nostalgia for San Bernardo. Standing atop a low rise, I looked back at the town. There stood the majestic Pílares, three red-rock spires that stand 15 or 20 meters high, and that, along with its people, form the very identity of San Bernardo.

*Three Stories about Yoris, Strangers, and Foreigners*

I've said that in this region it does not rain, or at least it rains very little; this is one of the nation's many arid zones. But I don't mean to suggest that the rivers never flow. During the rainy season, runoff from the upper reaches of the Sierra Madre Occidental forms large rivers that ultimately reach the sea. You learn about this in elementary school geography classes, from the book by Jorge A. Vivó. But you soon forget it, and when you live in an arid zone it is even harder to remember. Nonetheless, nature has a way of refreshing the memory, which is exactly what happened to me as I arrived at a crossing point on the Río Mayo.

Tired of being on that horse, carrying my heavy bag, and drinking hot water from my canteen, I realized that I'd arrived at a crossing on the Mayo River, and that nobody had prepared me for what came next. I'm not sure how long I stood there, mouth wide open. My mind was racing, thinking many thoughts at once: I fantasized that Mochibampo was actually on my side of the river and thus there was no need to cross. I imagined that a boat had suddenly appeared and its pilot gently transported me to the other side. Earlier, it had also occurred to me that since nobody had mentioned anything about the river it was because crossing it wasn't necessary. I imagined myself comfortably reclined on my desk-cot, certain that all of this was but another one of our director's nightmares, not my own. I also began to dream up plots of detective novels so intricate that I would never find a trustworthy clue. I thought about all of this until my tailbone brought me quickly back to reality and forced me to dismount and verify that I was indeed looking at an uncrossable river.

I tied the horse to a tree the species of which God only knows, and I sat down to wait. This river was a powerful old man. The volume and energy with which he could move just about anything in his path were

enough to impress anyone. But he wasn't satisfied with this. He also had to strike fear into the hearts of earthly beings by roaring as he passed. And he achieved his objective: I was truly frightened. And yet, perhaps the river had hypnotized me, because despite the fury I still had the desire to swim, wash my clothes, and cross to the other side. But this would have to wait, perhaps till November or December. I resigned myself to my fate and prepared a cup of coffee. It seemed absurd that so much water simply passed and passed, making its way to the sea, while people throughout the region suffered from a lack of potable water. The INI would have to resolve this with a program to install a potable water system, I thought.

I was deep in bureaucratic digressions when, from behind, I heard someone say, "Good morning." It was a very dark-skinned man, and judging by his physical characteristics I suspected that he was a Guarijío. "Where are you headed?" he asked. I recounted for him the entire story, leaving out no details. I told him about the institution I worked for, the purpose of my visit to Mochibampo, of how imperative it was that I cross that river, and also of my lack of experience with such adventures. "Ey," he replied at the end of each of my statements.<sup>20</sup> He then assured me that locals didn't cross the river as much during the rainy season either. "Where are you from?" I asked. "From Mochibampo," he replied. Logically, then, my next question was meant to discern whether I would have to cross the Mayo to get to Mochibampo, and if it was necessary, how had he done it. "Well, it's just that I crossed it three days ago." According to him, there was no problem if one had a horse or mule, and since I was traveling on horseback we could get across.

He told me to take off my boots and to rearrange my backpack so that everything fit in snugly. Then, he said that I should tightly grab hold of the horse's tail and that whatever happened to not let go, because "the horse knows how to swim in a river, but we don't" (I later learned that most Guarijíos know how to swim in the river). For his part, he carried my boots and my backpack on his right shoulder and grabbed on to the horse's mane with his left hand. We then entered the stream. At first we were stepping on the rocky bottom of the Mayo, but we hadn't taken four steps before the bottom fell away and we were floating. It seemed as if the river were offended by our impertinence because it threw broken branches of acacia at us, along with sticks, leaves, and even dead animals. The horse kicked and paddled desperately, trying to flee that inferno, but each time it looked like he was pulling out, the water would consume him once again. An intelligent beast, the horse worked



to keep his muzzle above the waterline. He kicked and lashed about with such intensity that my knees were bruised. The man spoke to the horse in Guarijío, at times shouting, treating him harshly as if to bring out all of the horse's fire in a matter of three seconds. The tail slipped through my fingers, but I knew that I'd held on with everything I had because after it was over I found strands of hair in my hands. I had grown dizzy, and I felt as if time had stopped. I thought we'd never make it out of there. Things were moving up and down, everywhere. Terrified and nearly in tears, I shouted to my guide that I couldn't make it any farther. "Don't look at the water," he shouted back. "Look at that acacia tree in front of us." And he was right: fixing my gaze on something stationary, the world seemed to recoup its fundamental physical properties and the river seemed out of context. Yet looking at the riverbank, I also realized that we weren't moving across, but rather downstream, with the current. At that point I just gave in to circumstances, suspecting that if we survived this ordeal, we'd probably get to see the entire course of the Río Mayo, all the way to the sea. I don't know how he managed it, but the horse was the first one to get a foothold on firm ground, then the Guarijío. I just held on until I had all fours on the shore. I didn't kiss the ground a la Christopher Columbus, but I did thank God for the second time, certain that if my work were to bring me more experiences like this one, my atheism would be in danger of extinction.

Since we were both headed to Mochibampo, we continued on our journey together. We spoke very little along the way. He wasn't disposed to conversation with me perhaps because I hadn't earned his trust. But then I wondered why he had even helped me at all, knowing about my mission. Now, years later, I've come up with two answers to this question. The first is that perhaps he wanted to see how INI's proposals would go over with the Guarijíos. The second is that it is simply the custom, among people of the Sierra—Guarijío or Yori—to help people in need, even your worst enemies. My reasoning here is that conditions in the Sierra are so tough that anyone at any time might be in life-or-death circumstances and in need of help. And just imagine what it would be like to be coldly abandoned while in such dire straits. For instance, of the many times I was in Burapaco, Don Daniel Enríquez always provided me with water, food, a cot, and a horse, with everything, and he knew that our work in the region could leave him landless. We were, in a way, enemies, but he never left us without provisions. More still, Don Daniel donated the land for the construction of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista in San Bernardo.

We arrived at a ranch owned by Yoris that is located along the road

to Mochibampo. The Guarijío said that we would rest there for a little while. The *rancheros* received us courteously, situating a pair of chairs under the shade of the *portal*, and serving us coffee. In the hot season, coffee is really the only thing that seems to quench one's thirst in the Sierra. They make it strong and serve it boiling hot. They use coffee as a remedy for dehydration, mixing in lime and sugar.

We were talking about the weather when I walked an older woman. She was crying and she said to me: "Please, doctor, have a look at my little girl. She's dying." Apologizing, I informed her of my real profession . . . well, at least to the degree possible—it's often a struggle to explain to people what it is that anthropologists do, especially since anthropologists themselves often don't have a clear idea of what the objective is. I told her that I was not a medical doctor, but she didn't believe me. In her way of seeing things, a stranger in these parts had to be a physician, lawyer, or teacher, and in any case if someone from the outside had come to the Sierra they had to have knowledge about many things because they were from the city. She took me by the hand and led me to her daughter. Lying on a cot in a corner of a room that doubled as a storage area for the Yori landowner's corn and bean supplies, and sandwiched between bags of grain, tools, and other things, the poor girl was suffering from a fever so high that she had become delirious. Moving in for a closer look, I was taken completely by surprise that despite being dressed as a ten-year-old girl, I saw that she was clearly older than forty! Her face showed evidence of dementia, and, flashing me a crooked smile, I could see clearly the few teeth that she had remaining. Examining her more closely, and asking her mother a few questions, I concluded that she was suffering from a case of severe dehydration. So, "doctor" Teresa recommended a few homemade remedies. On a second trip along the same route, the mother ran up to me on the road to thank me for my help. Her daughter had recovered. I also was thankful for having looked through my book, *Donde No Hay Doctor*, just before leaving San Bernardo. After this improvisation, the Guarijío and I continued on our way.

We arrived in Mochibampo at that hour of the day when it's difficult to tell whether it's afternoon or evening. The Guarijío was informing the other Guarijíos about me, then returned to ask for my forgiveness: they had no food to offer me but they could loan me a woven palm mat to sleep on. They set up my "bedroom" outside of one of their homes. Before falling asleep, I asked the Guarijío who had accompanied me if he knew José Zazueta, who, according to people in San Bernardo, was the Gurajíos' leader. "Yes," he said. "We'll go see him tomorrow."





*José Zazueta by the Mayo River.* (Phtographer unidentified)

The next day I had breakfast with the family that had given me nocturnal asylum, sharing the rations I had brought with me. It was the house of Pablo Cautivo. Pablo is now one of the tribe's *gobernadores*,

and I would say that his dream had become a reality after ten long years. Pablo had wanted to be the Guarijíos' leader, and because José Zazueta was known to be a difficult person, Pablo didn't have to work too terribly hard to find the right argument against him.

José Zazueta was one of those people who is always certain that things should be done exactly as he thinks they should be. This kind of self-assuredness sometimes comes across as foolish, and, well, that more or less describes José. Pablo told me that José Zazueta would waste no time in seeking me out to see whether I had something to offer. But I still did not understand the dimension of things, for Pablo was talking about the man who had helped me across the river, while I thought I was talking about someone else, the Guarijíos' leader. Well, as it turns out, they were one and the same, and Zazueta could now be certain of the truth of my presence in the Guarijío zone.

José Zazueta did in fact arrive, but it was not to see what I had to offer. He wanted to talk about the proposal I'd brought on behalf of the Instituto. We talked for the entire day, and it wasn't that we had some long list of points to address, but rather that each of us was trying hard to convince the other of our position on things. José tried to push me away from Mochibampo with all of the linguistic and social forms a respectable Guarijío had at his disposal. I defended my points with whatever cultural resources I had at my disposal. Zazueta made many good points, too, criticizing the demagoguery and bureaucratic nature of federal and state-level programs. But I was convinced that the honesty and interest I had for the work would help ensure that the services the Guarijíos required would be delivered effectively and on time. But, I must admit that I could not convince Zazueta of this, nor could he get me to give up my objective. Nonetheless—and probably because we were just tired of debating—I ultimately acceded to his proposal: the Guarijíos would accept the INI if the responsibility for its programs fell on me, which meant I would be in charge of the practicalities of implementation. In turn, the Guarijíos would agree to continue on with their promise of not drinking alcohol until they had finally won federal recognition for their lands. I had to give my word as a pledge to honor our bilateral agreement.

Zazueta was able to arrange a general assembly. Guarijíos came from Mochibampo and Bavícora, but word hadn't reached people in Los Conejos, so they didn't attend. At first, I believed that this kind of uneven turnout for meetings was a matter of geographic distance. With time,

however, I realized that there was more to it than a physical barrier. Guarijíos from Bavícora and Mochibampo had stronger ties, a bond that was established not only among the communities' leadership, but also out of the need to unite forces and defend themselves in past conflicts.

If I had spent a good amount of time trying to grapple with Mexico's great national problems—the demagoguery of a state that made so much of the drive to “redistribute wealth,” the betrayal of Mexico's 1910 revolutionary movement, the superficial ideology with which we as citizens view our world, calling the misery of the countryside the product of idleness or sloth—if there was one thing that pushed me to look deeply into my soul, it was this general assembly with the Guarijíos. The night before, several men had left to make their rounds, walking village by village, house to house, going to the farthest away corners of the region to spread the word about the meeting. They returned in the morning, now accompanied by those they had called to assemble, people who had walked all night to make good time. They soon took their places on the ground, situating themselves in a disciplined manner underneath the shade of a ramada. There they waited in silence for what we had come to say. It was an incredible sight to behold, all of those contorted faces, those bodies with skeletal outlines, and, even more, to discover—smelling their breath—the absence of food in their stomachs for perhaps as many as two to four days. I thought, Where is the justice here? Am I looking at a portrait of the nineteenth century? How is it that we are so different despite the fact that we are all equally human? How do we draw the line between anthropologist and object of analysis? There were the Guarijíos, more than forty heads of household, with their huaraches protecting the calloused soles of their feet. Even though they were an image of hunger, I could still see some of the things peculiar to their culture: a number of them wore their hair long in the back, in a pony tail, which contrasted with its shortness everywhere else. Their hats, sandals, and shoulder bags were homemade. Few spoke or understood Spanish, and the patience with which they handled matters seemed deeply cultural. The assembly moved along in an ambience of hope. It lasted more than eight hours, and most of what was said I don't recall. I do remember, however, the great responsibility that I had just taken on as a person.

From the ideas that were flowing around in the assembly, I concluded that the Guarijíos centered their objections concerning the Instituto Nacional Indigenista around the errors of José Corona, and from him had derived their general idea of the institution. Moreover, there was

little clarity about the functions of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (SRA), the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources (SARH), and the Ministry of Public Education (SEP), and I felt obligated to explain, in general terms, the role of each of these. They didn't realize, for example, that Sonora wasn't the only state, that the country is very large and is governed by the Constitution of 1917, which has a very specific law of agrarian reform spelling out its applicability to cases like theirs. (It is "curious" that when I proposed to the director of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista that we give out books on the Law of Agrarian Reform so that the local schoolteachers could explain the laws to everyone, not only did he deny authorization of the purchase, he also told me not to get involved in "politics.") In a word, they were just as marginalized from the events of national life. Little by little we were coming to understand each other better, and, by late afternoon, the discussion began concerning the problems that they wanted to see resolved, and they were tacitly accepting the work of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

The conclusions we reached that day were quite encouraging: as was their custom, in the assembly and by unanimous vote, they accepted the presence of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista in the region and set forth their urgent needs, such as planting permits [from the SARH], a doctor, and a bilingual to initiate the process of Castilianization, along with the task of moving forward with a general census of the region's inhabitants and their specific economic and educational situation.<sup>21</sup> (Some time later, I wondered why they had requested Castilianization. Wouldn't bilingual education have been preferable, or better still, that they would learn to read and write in their own language? And why did they want to have their needs attended to by an allopathic doctor, instead of their own *curanderos*?<sup>22</sup> They made such decisions based on their own parameters of what they considered best, and in conjunction with what I could offer at that moment, though it is also likely that these decisions had come from their own cultural sense of inadequacy.)

That night, feeling satisfied with the day's work but also still smelling the fetid odor of hunger, facing one of the many spectacularly beautiful scenes of the Sierra, the night stars, I asked José if he knew the woman we found lying ill at the ranch of the Yoris, the one who, at least I thought, was suffering from severe dehydration. He told me he did. Then I asked him if she, Matilde, was sick in the head, crazy, or something similar. His only response: "It's a Yori thing." When I returned to San Bernardo,

the first thing I did was to try and find out more about this woman, and I stumbled upon a story of passion and love in which the physical conditions of the Sierra sent two people to their destruction.

Matilde was born and had lived all of her life in the ranch where her father had worked as a cowhand. It was a typical Sierra cattle ranch that required thousands of hectares to sustain a regular-sized herd. Because of that, the distance between one ranch and the next was at least six hard hours on horseback. The Sierra had been colonized starting in the eighteenth century by one Bartolomé Salido y Exodar, followed at the end of the last century [19th] by the Enríquezes, a Yori family. Their children and grandchildren had inherited the ranch at the middle of this century [20th], when the story of Matilde and José took place. The possession of thousands of Sierran hectares in the hands of fourteen entwined nuclear families made for a very particular social life. Ranch work demanded the Yoris' presence 24 hours a day every day of the year. There was very little time for recreation or entertainment, and when they did have some free time the Yoris spent it together, with the extended family. As such, the need to form a family was hampered by the structure of Serrano life, work, and the dispersed settlement pattern of the ranches. Therefore, when a person wanted to marry he would have to develop a special strategy to achieve his goal, organizing his ranch tasks in order to have three or four days free to attend the dances, or use a trip to San Bernardo for supplies as a ruse, all with the idea of looking for a future mate.

Neither Matilde nor José had enough time to map out a strategy to find their life partner. They had the fortune and misfortune of falling in love as adolescents when they attended family gatherings or on visits. Matilde would go down to the river to wait for José, who could make his way on horseback across the ranch country in less than six hours. They say that José was the best horseman the Sierra ever produced, so I suppose he could save a lot of time on his journeys. Of course, these were clandestine encounters, at least until someone finally caught them and told both sets of parents about it. Their parents scolded them and prevented them from seeing each other, with the blunt argument that cousins can't marry.

But José and Matilde continued on with their furtive encounters for a long time, albeit more cautiously. They were still adolescents, or maybe they had just become adults, when they decided to flee. Someone found out and the lovers were stopped on the road. This time, the punishment was far harsher. They locked up Matilde in a storeroom used for old

equipment and corn so that she could not return to see José. They threatened to keep her locked up until she forgot about her cousin. They sent José to live with some relatives in Alamos, with the hope that he would discover other women and forget about Matilde.

They say that Matilde went on screaming and shouting for many days, kicking the door and crying in desperation. Nobody came to let her out. When it finally seemed that Matilde had calmed down, her mother took her food and water, but upon entering the storeroom, she saw that her daughter was dizzy, near death. José, who was becoming an alcoholic, escaped from his relatives' house when he learned that Matilde had been locked up. When he got to the ranch, he found that both sets of parents had decided to simply let the couple live together, after Matilde had nearly torn down the storeroom door with her fingernails and had tried to commit suicide. Then, their parents put them together once again, but in a very strange way: locking them both up in the storeroom. Matilde and José began to fight. They said horrible things to one another, hit each other, and yelled and screamed. It seems that Matilde went crazy. José knocked down the storeroom door and fled from the ranch at full gallop. From that moment onward, Matilde's mother never let her daughter out of her sight until she had recovered. But Matilde never recovered. She was crazy and her mother would remain living with her in the storeroom. José's fate wasn't any better. As he fled from the ranch, directionless, he got lost in the Sierra. A week later, someone found him on the road, unconscious and beaten. When José recovered, he too had gone crazy, and his legs had turned into two flaccid extremities that he dragged around the streets of San Bernardo.

For this love story I supposed that the obligatory anthropological comment should be the following: in the "laboratory" of Claude Lévi-Strauss they discovered the importance of the prohibition against incest between first cousins, a prohibition that goes back to mythic origins in almost all contemporary societies, but that is no longer understood but for those who have dared to violate the fundamental rules of human reproduction that form a constitutive part of basic social relations. But my need for an "anthropological" judgment was not sufficient. The story of Matilde and José actually reminded me that among the mestizo families of Porfirian [late nineteenth century] Mexico, marriage between first cousins was not sanctioned so drastically by society. So I thought about the relationships between couples that I know, and came up with three cases of marriages between first cousins, and two cases of "inconclusive"

infatuation. I thought that even if relationships between first cousins had as a consequence the procreation of individuals with physical and mental problems, this was not reason enough for the disappearance of the practice. Sexual attraction between men and women has always run in the face of social taboos. I think that in general we humans are attracted to the idea of penetrating prohibited spaces, and perhaps the seduction is inevitable. In the end, the story seemed so sad to me that I cried.

But revisiting the phrase that José Zazueta had used, that the story of Matilde “is a Yori thing,” once I knew the facts I wondered why he had discarded the possibility that this could have happened to a Guarijío. There wasn’t an opportunity to discuss it with José, because just like this inquiry there were many other questions that remained unaddressed; we had other priorities having to do with strategies for securing land. Then, when I returned to the region in September and October of 1990, I found that the Guarijíos do not “respect” the prohibition against incest between first cousins, or between uncles and aunts, and nieces and nephews. Not even between siblings or between parents and children. The list of marriages that they put together for the new civil registry, along with various interviews, confirmed this. (Pablo Cautivo asserted: “I have told them that they need to thin out the bloodlines because that is why their children are born with illnesses.”) Though the indices aren’t high, such cases are taking on greater relevance because the Guarijíos are a small group (at that time, the census that I took came up with a total of 610 inhabitants [from the Sierra Guarijía]). So why is it a Yori and not a Guarijío “thing”? Is the difference really that the permissiveness of these types of relationships impedes things from becoming bigger problems like those of Matilde and José?

I went through my entire food supply in less than five days in Mochibampo; the river was still impassable and the horse that I had rented in San Bernardo was no longer satisfied with a diet of local grasses and spiny bushes. Although Pablo ran a small store out of his home, he only had cigarettes, matches, candles, and an occasional bar of soap for sale. I had to get out of there as soon as possible. José Zazueta suggested that I could get to San Bernardo without crossing the upper part of the river, making a large detour along the San Juan route. On the sixth day José accompanied me to San Juan. We passed through Burapaco, Sartenejal, and other ranches. We made a stop for a few hours in Burapaco, where José got Don Daniel Enríquez to serve the horse and me a succulent lunch that consisted of a kilo of corn for the equine and eggs



scrambled with whatever he had available, “Maseca” tortillas, and two cups of coffee for me. Once I had devoured that deliciousness (and I had gone a little wild in doing so), I realized that I had already eaten more than the basic diet of the Guarijíos in Mochabampo, which consisted of one dish: water boiled with salt and pieces of floating tortilla.

Burapaco had more of a town aspect than any other ranch in the Sierra or Guarijío community. At the very least it had five Yori homes and a few houses for ranchhands. From the looks of it, the Enríquez family would have the place turned into a large town like San Bernardo. The homes were built with some degree of town planning, leaving in the center a space for a future plaza. It had a large esplanade that was fitted with a landing strip for a small, six- or eight-passenger aircraft, and a small medical clinic built by the government’s ISSS program.<sup>23</sup> They had also installed a storage tank and pump to extract water from the arroyo Guajaray, though the project was unfinished. Don Daniel provided all manner of services for travelers in transit, from the rental of horses to loaning cots to spend the night on his porch. It’s perhaps too much to say that Don Daniel was less amazed than stupefied by my presence in Burapaco. But Don Daniel was typically cautious with his questions and comments, and in his way of treating strangers, so he limited himself to trivial questions about the weather. I suspected that he had in reserve a long list of questions to figure out later on, when he was with his trusted “contacts.” We abandoned Burapaco with little more than a thank you to Don Daniel for his hospitality, as although he did charge for his services, he was under no obligation to offer up his home.

As I crossed the imaginary plaza, I saw that facing and situated strategically next to it was a large, Yori-style house, but in ruins. I wanted to know more about it and Don Daniel, but decided to leave this and another couple of questions for José for a better time. We walked and walked and walked, for many hours. At times, I would get off the horse to take a break from the saddle and then I’d get back on to rest my feet. Some moments I felt bad and stupid for having to depend on a horse for transport, while José walked the road as if we were having a day in the countryside. But my shame went away when I realized that if the short route took me almost eight hours of travel, the long route could be double that. José seemed like a professional at obstacle courses; he walked fast and said little. His attitude was not exactly a great motivation to keep up my tireless efforts. The moment had arrived to find out why José had treated Don Daniel with such respect, why he had not accepted

the lunch that he had offered him, and why that house on the plaza was in ruins. With respect to the first two questions, he told me that Don Daniel was his compadre because Daniel had baptized one of his children and that, moreover, Daniel was married to one of José's half-sisters. José owed him respect, as did Daniel to him. He hadn't accepted the lunch because he didn't want to "owe" any favors to any Yori (Don Daniel), as long as the land conflict hadn't been resolved. I felt a great respect and admiration for José, as it isn't easy to turn down a plate of food when hunger is more than tangible. About the third question, José had to explain to me many things because the first answer he gave me was too vague. In the end, his explanation turned into a history, a very important history that explained much about the situation that the Yoris and Guarijíos were living in the Sierra. It was so important this account that I had to reconstruct it using the different versions that mestizos and Guarijíos had given me, people from different ranchos in the region who were involved or had been observers.

It was 1973, the peak of the guerrilla movement called the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, when the Guarijíos received for the first time an important visit, one that altered their conditions almost immediately. The guerrillas were fleeing a military siege by the army in the state of Chihuahua. The guerrillas came on foot through the Chihuahuan Sierra, around the Tarahumara region, and made their way into Sonora, finally arriving in Guarijío territory near Bavícora. The Guarijíos put up the Liga members in their homes, sharing what little they had with them. As the days went by, and as they lived together, they developed a good relationship, with the guerrillas giving them lectures aimed at "raising consciousness." While the guerrillas were in the region they worked each day with the Guarijíos, teaching them to read, imparting basic hygiene, and giving them insights on the Mexican political system.

After a couple of weeks, the guerrillas decided to act, "bringing justice" to the Guarijíos and trying to obtain, at the same time, a "base" in Sonora from which to launch their struggle. And they arrived in San Bernardo to kidnap Don Hermengildo Sáenz, the wealthiest man in town, owner of one of the largest general goods stores, businessman of the Chihuahuan and Sonoran Sierras, and owner of various ranches and an unspecified number of cattle. (With this description it might seem that the narrator had taken sides. Indeed, I think I did, at least in the very beginning. But later, I had to accept that, despite everything, his wealth was earned legitimately, and he was loved and well respected by the people of San

Bernardo.) The guerrillas received a million pesos for freeing Don Gildo. They deposited Señor Sáenz somewhere in Chihuahua, leaving him with money for his return by train to a central point from where he could later be picked up.

Now solidly in their refuge and with no thought of defeat, the members of the Liga organized a second kidnapping that they carried out days later. It consisted in the capture of Don Agapito Enríquez. They went down to Burapaco to kidnap who was then the richest man in the Guarijío region. Once they'd accomplished their task, the kidnappers took the road leading to Guajaray and sought out their hiding place. Upon getting the news of his father's capture, Agapito's son (of the same name) left in the early morning hours with armed ranchhands, in search of his father. María, the elder Agapito's wife, recalled that the evening before an owl had perched on top of the wall next to their home and sat there hooting all night long, announcing an inevitable death in the family. María went back inside and began to pray, perhaps not so much to stop the catastrophe declared by the bird's bad omen, but to gain spiritual acceptance of that destiny which she would soon have to live. The encounter happened on an old Camino Real [colonial-period royal road], and it resulted in the death of Don Agapito, the father; his son; and a guerrilla.

Having dominated the situation, the members of the Liga immediately returned to Burapaco with the idea of corralling the townsfolk inside Don Agapito's home. Once everyone was together in the pseudo-assembly, the guerrillas spoke of the objectives of their struggle and what they had hoped to achieve with the kidnapping of Don Agapito. "We kidnapped him because he had enriched himself by exploiting the Guarijíos and because he treated them poorly. We did not want to kill him; the Yoris made us do it." They then threatened to kill any mestizo who interfered with the actions of the Liga in the region. Finally, they brought everyone back out of the house, poured gasoline in the rooms and throughout the store, took some supplies for themselves, and set fire to the "big house." It was destroyed, completely in ruins. Nothing from the store was salvaged, not even the money Don Agapito had stored in a chest. The entire action lasted less than an hour, after which the guerrillas took to the road and headed back to their refuge, toward the Sierra, leaving behind their dead companion on that royal road to Guajaray, buried under a sad cross of sticks.

Upon receiving word of the guerrilla's presence in the region, the army cast out a wide dragnet in the Sierras of Sonora and Chihuahua.

They stationed an infantry regiment at a fixed position in San Bernardo—to be more precise it was set up at a DIF building, since there were no adequate places elsewhere for it.

The army was able to trace the direction of the guerrillas. They then located some of their family members and asked them to come to the Sierra and try to convince their relatives to turn themselves in. When they arrived in Burapaco the army went in through Guajaray and set up a kind of fence to trap the guerrillas. From there, the army began to ask for their surrender. If the guerrillas failed to do so, the army would find and kill them. Among the family members was a father of one of the guerrillas, who shouted out to his son to give himself up. The guerrillas accepted and, as they emerged, the soldiers went against their word and massacred the remainder of the group (most accounts put the number at three members of the Liga Comunista).

Violence and fear took turns between Yoris and Guarijíos. Andrés, Don Agapito's eldest son, accused the Guarijíos of complicity, and they were jailed, beaten, and tortured into revealing everything they knew about the Liga Comunista. They told all that they knew but also managed to protest: "Why do you beat us if you are also campesinos, also Indians? Even though you are Mayos, you are just like us, exploited the same!" They lived in an environment of tension, of mutual fear. And from that moment, the mestizos never stopped cleaning and oiling their guns. The Guarijíos grew desperate as many were fired by their bosses and were forced to migrate to the Yaqui and Mayo Valleys in search of work in the agricultural fields there. Those who remained suffered defeat and its implications with their own flesh.

The Liga's time in the region was very short. I don't have precise dates and even if I had them it would matter little; memory of events was still alive even five years later, when I had the opportunity to find out what had happened. People still trembled when they talked about it as if it were going on that very moment. When the Liga abandoned Sonora it left things between Guarijíos and Yoris stirred up by making that warning in Burapaco about respecting the work of the Indians and the impoverished Yoris, and by condemning the mestizos' exploitation of their *peones*; it was a warning that penetrated deeper than a simple reminder that one would carry easily in the pocket, or a minor setback after which you would simply cinch up the saddle strap and hit the road once again. All of it had settled in deeply and full of potential, like a dormant maize seed waiting year after year, child after child, for the rains to come and relieve the dryness.

Perhaps the appropriate way to put it would be that the Guarijío population “became conscious” [of their circumstances] or, if you prefer, they were “stirred up.” Call it what you will, but from that experience forward the Guarijíos organized and began to make collective, forceful decisions. As it was for the Guarijíos, sometimes it becomes possible to see life in a different way by virtue of a singular act that exposes or shifts one’s worldview. They had lived believing that their role in this world was restricted to their condition as tenant farmers. For the guerrillas, by contrast, what was truly clear was that Don Agapito had accumulated more than he had “earned” at the detriment of the indígenas, more than was “just,” and more than he needed for himself, his needs. The people knew it. They said that Don Agapito was a very “special” millionaire: in his house he kept a chest full of money because he didn’t trust the banks.

But from this nightmare that they had lived through they did manage to get something useful. Some began to realize that the boss was not simply a good man who did them the favor of giving them work, but rather he was exploiting them; that the lands that the Yoris inhabited and the region from which they made their living were not necessarily the exclusive property of the Yoris; and finally, they recognized the state of things was not permanent, that they themselves could change the situation of exploitation and poverty that they were subject to.

I came to better understand Jose’s attitude toward the Yoris, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, and toward his compañeros. Arriving in San Juan, José and I rested at the home of Señora María, a woman who I will always remember for her selfless acts of kindness. Each time I was in her home, she would give me a gift of a thick vine of *guamúchil* fruits and, when I didn’t stop in to see her for a while, and if someone was headed to San Bernardo, she would send me a “regalito,” a little present. Guamúchil was the fruit that we ate most frequently in the region, and I assure you that it is delicious if toasted over a *comal* with the entire vine left attached. José and I ate, rested for a while, and as nighttime arrived he decided that at that moment he would return to Mochibampo. And as I said, when José decided on something. . . . So we agreed that the next indigenista visit to the the Guarijío zone would happen no later than twenty days from that moment, so that we could carry out the socioeconomic census of the population.

Very early in the morning I said goodbye to Señora María and I left for San Bernardo, walking, because the rises and hills at San Juan give way to roads that are paved with smooth stone—it was also because my tailbone had gone on strike, not allowing me to get back on that horse.

The Río Mayo is very wide at that spot, perhaps double its width compared to where it passes by Mochibampo, and this makes it less deep and more docile. So I went down to give myself a good bath. To bathe here on the Río Mayo people have defined areas of the river just for women and exclusive areas just for men. A unisex bath isn't frowned upon, but you don't do it in the nude. Such areas have to have sufficient depth so that the bath doesn't turn into a big pool of mud. During the hot season, people of the Sierra bathe as frequently as twice a day, which helps avoid the chafing and chapping of the skin that can become quite severe because of sweat coming into contact with clothing or the saddle.

In a few hours I was arriving in San Bernardo at a different point than the one I had passed through when I left. It was the entrance into town where there was a small basket or pulley bridge. The Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources (SARH) had installed it there so that people could cross over the Río Mayo; it hangs from a long steel cable. I informed the director about the different agreements that had been made in the assembly, including the details of the discussion, and after listening to my report he asked me to type it up and create the survey that we wanted to conduct in the Sierra. Meanwhile, he would look for assistance to bring in a group of bilingual schoolteachers to help me with the study. But it was fifteen days before the teachers arrived, which for the personnel of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista of San Bernardo meant fifteen more days of inactivity. While I finished writing my report, my companions derived their happiness from hours spent at the cantina Marcolfo. Faced with this situation, and because I don't like to play the victim, envy made me work faster, fast enough to finish all of my field notecards and have time to join them after.

Whenever the agronomist drank his case of beer, it made him want to sing to live music. Fortunately for all of us, he discovered in town a trio of musicians that played *norteño* songs. It became a real party after that. The musicians would set up with a cooler of beer in the cantina, or in front of our office, or in Doña Tayde's house (a fun, hardworking, friendly woman who had taken on the job of feeding us; we all became close friends). People started stopping by and at times we had enough to hold an impromptu dance. This isn't surprising; it's a matter of custom in San Bernardo. At weddings, everyone brings a case of beer to add to whatever the host provides, and the dance goes on all night with the "live music" trio. Part of this "custom" is that things always go till everyone is fallen-down drunk, or until there is a fight or when bullets

fly. The next day, and with the excuse of curing the hangover, the fiesta goes on. And if it was a “good scene,” the party might last a few days more.

Some of the wives get mad at their husbands; others drink as much as their husbands so that there is nothing to get upset about. But I did not see one woman fallen-down drunk like the majority of the men. When the party finally ended there was always somebody who suffered greatly from the excess of alcohol and had to go to the health clinic for hydration. Maybe that’s why whenever someone wakes up with a hangover, the people of San Bernardo always say, “He’s sick,” or he “woke up in bad shape.”

It was in one of those fiestas that somebody from the town made the comment that, just the day before, a man named Edmundo had come into the Sierra. That “somebody”—who it was I don’t recall—thought that Edmundo was working with us. But we had no idea who this Edmundo was, which was unpardonable because, as it turned out, we indigenistas would not have been there at all if not for him. We asked the person to tell us who Edmundo was, and what he did. The version of the story we got was quite biased, in part because the person didn’t know Edmundo well, and also because they didn’t sympathize with the idea that Edmundo helped the “indios” (for the same reason, I believe that we didn’t sympathize, either). But in any case, the story intrigued us, and soon we had a chance to find out a little more about this person, getting different versions from the Guarijíos, others in San Bernardo who did in fact know him, and from the archives of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista.

One of the results of our investigation was to learn that the INI did not begin operations in the region as a result of the violence that its inhabitants had suffered during the time of the guerrilla operations, but rather as a result of a series of written denunciations about the Guarijíos’ situation filed by Edmundo Faubert with a variety of state and federal agencies. If Edmundo had not had the courage to hand in those documents, it’s possible that nobody would even know of the Guarijíos’ existence and, what is even more grave, they might even continue being exploited peasants. Clearly, the presence of the guerrillas helped to awaken consciousness and fear in the interior of the zone, but this never reached the point of creating a viable strategy for solving the conflict, given the peculiar form of struggle.

Edmundo Faubert, of Canadian origin, appeared in the region in 1975. Recently arrived from his birth country, his objective was to invest in some kind of business in Mexico. He had some money that he would



receive from his father on the condition that he started some kind of enterprise in Mexico. He arrived in Hermosillo with the clearly expressed intention of “colonizing lands to work as an hacendado.”<sup>24</sup> So he sought an audience with the state governor to ask about the legal process for acquiring a Mexican hacienda.

The situation became somewhat comical as, paradoxically, Governor Biebrich tried to make Edmundo understand that in Mexico there were no longer any haciendas, much less haciendas under foreign control. The colonial period was long gone, and there were no longer slaves. Thanks to the Mexican Revolution and the agrarian reform, the land was now in the hands of campesinos (he forgot to mention that Sonora’s beaches weren’t in gringo hands, either). To convince him, he had to finally tell Edmundo that he should travel to Yucatán to see if he could find something there that interested him. Still somewhat motivated, Edmundo looked at the map of Mexico to find exactly where the governor was talking about, and upon seeing the distance he decided to request whatever form of provisional employment the governor would offer him. Governor Biebrich offered him the job of reviving the traditional handicrafts of Sonora’s indigenous groups, a program that was under the direction of the governor’s wife. Charged with this task, Edmundo traveled the state of Sonora top to bottom, purchasing handicrafts that he encountered along the way so that he could begin putting together a museum of objects. Later, his work consisted in creating production incentives for crafts that could be sold in the United States. And this is how he arrived in the Guarijío zone.

Edmundo was closest to the Guarijíos of Bavícora and San Bernardo (the Guarijío musicians who lived there); they were the most important people in the region for his work. He bought woven blankets from Señora Guadalupe, from Bavícora (one of which is exhibited in the Tucson Museum of Anthropology<sup>25</sup>), which were sold in the United States. He bought wool for making blankets and would give them to weavers, as at that time no Guarijíos had sheep. At times he also bought *angarías* (baskets woven of agave fiber used as burro packs), *guaris* (little boxes made of woven palm, better known in the region as “*petaquitas*”), and hats and mats of woven palm. His work with the musicians consisted in organizing annual concerts in Tucson and in other nearby cities, lasting 20 or 30 days. He paid the musicians for each concert, as well as their round-trip travel expenses, lodging, and food. At the end of each visit, he would make arrangements for the next tip, and would travel to San Bernardo himself to pick up the Guarijíos.

Little by little the work relations that Edmundo had with the Guarijíos transformed into friendships and a deep understanding of their way of life, which later turned into a profound concern for the problems of exploitation and oppression. Edmundo attempted to help the Guarijíos, offering suggestions like forming a political organization that could legitimately represent their interests to governmental authorities. So they named two representatives, one from Bavícora and the other from Mochibampo. I believe that it was at that moment that the Guarijíos developed a name for the post, at Edmundo's suggestion: chief of the Guarijío tribe. The Guarijíos accepted the title, just as they would years later when they adopted the post of "governor." At the behest of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, the title was suggested to them by an anthropologist who replaced me, arguing that, "all indigenous groups have a governor, just like those in the South of the country" (yes, obviously!). It always intrigued me that the Guarijíos accepted the titles suggested to them. The only explanation that I've had for this is that they believed that the titles helped them gain access to government services or as a way to gain access to national society—indeed, as a way to "negotiate" their survival.

After naming the chiefs of the tribe, Edmundo left with them for Mexico City with the steadfast purpose of speaking with President Luis Echeverría Álvarez. After they were denied an audience, they decided to station themselves at the doorway to the presidential residence, Los Pinos, until Echeverría would see them. Their actions got the attention of the national press, and on July 27, 1976, the newspaper *Excelsior* published a brief note about them. Edmundo spoke to the press and, because he was familiar with most of the Guarijío region, said that the Guarijíos received 10 pesos for a 12-hour workday, that the Yoris had appropriated 50,000 hectares, prohibited the Guarijíos from eating meat, beans, and fish from the river, that they possessed no land, not enough to harvest even a little bit of corn for subsistence. Although the interview was published in one of the country's more important newspapers, the Guarijíos still did not achieve their objective. The doors to the presidential residence remained closed to them. So they all returned to Sonora.

In desperation, Edmundo sought out another alternative and went to see then governor of Sonora Carrillo Marc with a document containing information on the region's history, economy, and, above all, an explanation of the Guarijíos' land tenure. At the end of the document appear a few recommendations, such as revising and reorganizing

land possession in order to achieve a well-deserved restoration of land rights to the indígenas; open a Centro Coordinador Indigenista to see to bilingual education, with boarding schools and Guarijío teachers; the installation of CONASUPO stores in the zone<sup>26</sup>; conduct a technical evaluation to improve land use; conduct a vaccination campaign against preventable disease; organize a program for creating fruit orchards to fight against chronic malnutrition; encourage handcraft production to generate family income and conserve the cultural values of the ethnic group, considering these an irreplaceable feature of national culture.

Later, he distributed a copy of the document to the president of the republic; the president-elect; the state governor; the general secretary of the Sonoran government; the minister of Agrarian Reform; the chief of Rural Affairs for Sonora; the minister of Public Education; the director and deputy director of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista; the director of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista Mayo of Etchojoa; the director of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH); the director of INAH's regional headquarters in Hermosillo; the president of the Sonoran Agrarian Commission and its state delegate; the chief of Sonora's Secretary of Health; the head of the Sonoran Institute for Child Protection; and the representative of the Mayo tribe of the National Council of Indigenous Peoples.

There is no doubting that Faubert's report had some kind of impact at the level of federal and state bureaucracy. Nonetheless, in practice there was no discernible change or immediate support. It seems that in terms of national politics, the moment wasn't right to attend to such a difficult case like this. I say that it wasn't a favorable political moment because the nation was about to receive a new president in a few months, which implied the restructuring of powerful posts at the cabinet level, and a new composition of forces for the next six years. This takes time, according to my empirical observations, at least a year.

Meanwhile, and in light of the fact that there are always one-of-a-kind people in the political life of the government apparatus, a new political actor erupted onto the scene in this story: engineer Villavicencio, chief of Rainfed Agricultural District Number 1, under the control of SARH-Sonora. Thanks to Edmundo's reports, the engineer became aware of the Guarijío case, and quickly gathered together his Scout knapsack, canned food, camera equipment, and he set out with a group of assistants toward the location of Bavícora. Along the way he came across a group of Guarijíos who offered their services as guides (for the going day rate

for work). They rented animals for the trip and arrived in town as representatives of the Ministry. The engineer promised to help them with whatever they needed, asked them to put on one of their traditional fiestas so that he could film it, and paid them in cash and with tubing for the construction of a potable water network (they didn't even have a well at the time, nor had they thought about constructing one!). He then returned to his home, very contented, satisfied that he had delivered on his promise of helping the Guarijíos.

A few days later, a local newspaper published a brief note that read: "Engineer Villavicencio, discoverer of a heretofore unknown tribe in the state of Sonora, almost extinct, living in the past." When I interviewed the engineer among other things he told me that "the Guarijíos of Bavicora do not have problems with land tenure because the landowners who they work for as peons are good people" (sic!), and that in any case what they really needed was help in the areas of education and health, as none "of those *indios* know how to read or write, and they suffer from many diseases" (again, sic).

Would Edmundo have known of this engineer, discoverer of the lost Indians? I couldn't find out because nobody knew what had happened to the Canadian Edmundo Faubert in 1977. Some say that he returned to his country after his wife had suddenly left him. This might have weighed heavily on him, along with his ongoing frustration with trying to help out the Guarijíos. Maybe these two factors together discouraged him in his work with handcrafts and his stay in Sonora. What is clear is that year after year the musicians continued to wait for him to come back so that he could take them to the United States to give their concerts. Interestingly, although Edmundo had not said goodbye, neither did he promise to take them to the U.S., as he had in the past.

With Faubert's intervention, the Guarijíos had begun to organize to fight for their lands. With him, they had got to know the various government offices that they could appeal to for help with the granting of land. At the same time, three artisans and two musicians had the opportunity to improve their lives and those of their families. For the Guarijíos, it was like the beginning of some hope.

Today, Edmundo Faubert is almost like a part of Guarijío life. But to be part of the Guarijío social environment does not imply a privileged status, or to be someone of respect, or to be loved by the people; it's not going to get you the "keys to the city." Edmundo did not disappear from the Guarijíos' lives in 1976, the same year that he formally

denounced the miserable conditions they were living in. I feel that it is important to emphasize his trajectory in the region because he is a person who has been in constant interaction with it: here is someone with a changeable character, in search of “something,” and each time he decides to go looking for it he inevitably returns to the Guarijío region, certain that he will find it there. It’s been two years since I first heard of Edmundo Faubert, and my life places me in contact with his writings—almost all of them denouncing some problem the Guarijíos were having—but I do not know him personally.

The last news I received about Edmundo was through a strange document that he had written: a list of Guarijíos who were supposedly involved in drug trafficking. The document had landed in my hands quite naturally, for at the time I was working in the Directorate of Justice in the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. The information shocked me deeply, and I couldn’t believe that Edmundo would have even suggested it. I had to travel to the Guarijío region to investigate the matter, and what I found was a case of revenge: the Guarijíos of Mesa Colorada had run him out because he was insisting that they try consuming peyote during the prayer ceremonies for the Holy Cross. By that time, Faubert had adopted a religious faith that used peyote in its ceremonies, and he had decided to proselytize its use to the Guarijíos. After I learned all of this, it seemed irrelevant to initiate legal proceedings for an accusation based on revenge, and even more because I knew that the Guarijíos would have been harvesting drugs but were not drug traffickers themselves.

Edmundo’s history in the zone was the bridge that was missing in order to better understand the process that the Guarijíos had gone through. It also helped me in rounding out some ideas about how people lived in the Sierra and in San Bernardo during that time. By tying together the three stories of Yoris, Guarijíos, strangers, and foreigners in the Sierra, I could begin to extract a few hypotheses. Among these, one was fundamental: that if we weren’t careful, the Yoris could possibly respond to the actions of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista by “adorning” our faces with a bullet.

Given all that I had seen and heard since my arrival, I prepared for a second journey into the Sierra to administer the census, together with the bilingual schoolteachers. It seemed easy enough, but we had to arrange for three horses, food for thirteen people, everything multiplied by thirteen. Before leaving we received the lovely news that the river level had gone down. We thus covered the entire zone in four days. The

effort served to demonstrate to the Guarijíos our interest in the work, while, as a source of information, the data allowed us to prove how widespread the poverty was in the region: in nearly every category of our survey meant to assess levels of material possessions, most people marked “none.”

### *Indigenistas in Action?*

“Look, that is a hard place for you to go into. Those indígenas almost live in a desert. There’s a little house here, then you have to walk two or three hours to find another house there. There’s nothing to eat, no place to sleep, people are armed. No, no, why would you go there? It’s better to choose another zone. It’s not a safe place for a woman. Why don’t you go to Oaxaca or to Chiapas? Think about it.” This is what the adjunct director said to me before he signed my contract when I first came to work for the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. His words were prophetic, as even the Mayo bilingual teachers helping me with the census did little more than complain about the work. They said, “Why do we need to carry out a survey if we already know that the Guarijíos are dying of hunger,” and, moreover, “We’re not going to be able to cover the entire zone because they are scattered and we have to walk a lot,” and “The river won’t let us through,” and “It would be better to survey a sample of five families and analyze the results.”

So there we went, with all of the arguments and complaints, and, just like José Zazueta, I had arguments of my own. Arriving at Mochibampo, I divided the region up, assigning a team of four people to each area. The first zone was Mochibampo, which included Burapaco and the neighboring ranches. Bavícora was the second, and Los Conejos the third. Our teammates who went to Bavícora and Los Conejos went swearing and cursing the whole way. Then, I found out that three of them had returned to Burapaco with the clear intention of waiting to rejoin the rest of the team when they passed by on their return, so that I wouldn’t discover their resistance. So I had to go to Burapaco and have a talk with them. But such was their apathy that I just didn’t want to try and convince them for fear of catching their despondency. Of course, my initial reaction was to peg them as lazy, as bureaucrats, as lacking professional ethics, and as corrupt (the government was paying the teachers on the side, apart from their regular salaries, and it looked like corruption), and for having little concern or showing little solidarity with the Guarijíos.

I couldn't see things differently until with time I felt the weight of life in the Sierra. How could they not complain, I said to myself, if they had lived in conditions of deprivation similar to those of the Guarijíos? The last thing they wanted was to return to those conditions, while for me the Sierra was charming for its unknown elements, and in the knowledge that my stay would end when I decided it would end. This last condition is very important. I think that even when an anthropologist lives for twenty years in the same place, he always knows that he is not from there, and this knowledge makes him view things differently, regardless of how well he has adapted to the place and the people. I also think that if this same anthropologist were not conducting a research investigation, and even though he had lived for one or twenty years in that place, he could become "just another" of the local inhabitants, and if all goes well, he would only be distinguished as "that guy with strange habits" or "that guy from somewhere else."

Not knowing what to do, I asked the team of renegade teachers, "Who wants to go with me to Bavicora and Los Conejos to carry out the survey?" Only one of them rose, after seeing the rest of his companions refuse, and seeing that I was almost ready to go alone. We finally surveyed 100 percent of the Guarijío population, a total of 610 inhabitants. The results of the survey were: "One hundred percent of the Guarijío population has no land; one hundred percent work as sharecropping peons; one hundred percent probably suffer from second- or third-degree anemia; ninety-five percent are monolingual; and in general, conditions are unhealthy and marginal, as they lack all services." One of the bilingual teachers then said, "Didn't I tell you?" Well, I thought, we have to look for some practical, "optimistic" use for the data, as they were a "measurement of hunger." Why not hope that some day, as we worked with the agrarian reform process, we would run into a positivist-minded functionary whom we could dazzle with our numbers and percentages?

Once we were finished encoding the surveys the teachers returned to the Centro Coordinador Indigenista Mayo of Etchojoa. But just as they left, the rest of our teammates of the Centro in San Bernardo began to arrive. The first to get there was the young doctor, recently married and possessing a fresh new degree. He was quite clear in his objective: to rise through the ranks of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. In just a few weeks, and with much enthusiasm, he had combed the entire Guarijío zone, collecting basic data on nutrition. He measured and weighed each and every one of the Guarijíos, and his results were: "Ninety-five percent



of the population suffered second- or third-degree anemia.” I just couldn’t bring myself to say to him, “I told you so.”

Then there arrived the economist, a young man who never looked people in the eye, and whose attitude reminded me of the “coletos” [self-described blue nobility] of San Cristóbal de las Casas, in Chiapas. He had graduated from the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara, and he assured me that he had read the entire work of Karl Marx, and that Marx had never written anything about the things I’d mentioned to him (precapitalist economic forms). We were equally thrown off, because my comment came after I had been in the Sierra for a while, and conditions there made me think about precapitalist village social formations. We were all very good to the economist, as he learned to drive the Centro Coordinador’s trucks, with us inside. Three years later, on one of my visits, I went back to San Bernardo, and he took me into the Sierra. He was driving like some rich kid with his left arm resting on the window, and his right hand hanging from the lower half of the steering wheel. The truck hit one miserable rock, causing us to veer from our path. It happened so quickly that he couldn’t control it. Fortunately, we finally stopped, with a front and a rear tire in the air, one-half of the chassis off the edge of the road. The car rocked from side to side. When we finally got out of the mess, thanks to Supersergio, who had been driving ahead of us, I had no doubt about what I needed to do; I would ride in Supersergio’s car. On that occasion, Cipriano Buitimea (head of the Los Conejos tribe) was with us. Days later, when we came across each other in the rancho arroyo Guajaray, he asked me if I had healed. “From what,” I asked. And he reminded me of the terrible fright that had come over us with the truck on the verge of rolling into the canyon, and that he had been on a diet of tea since that day, to cure himself. Then I told him about my stomach pain and headaches.

The economist had “big ideas.” He proposed creating a brickyard in the Sierra, with no thought about the lack of power or of roads for transporting the product. Later, he had another “brilliant idea”: he found out that the most famous brands of tequila could not keep up with demand, and that the Guarijíos could harvest agaves in great quantities. I don’t fault him for his ideas, as the director also had a few of his own, like raising goats. And of course this idea fared poorly. After purchasing and transporting them into the Sierra, the Guarijíos said in their assembly: “We don’t want goats.” This, as well as other proposals for the Guarijíos’ “advancement,” was rejected for the simple reason that there were no

Guarijío lands. Thus, no program for productive activity could survive, and much less if it had no plan for the marketing phase.

Then the veterinary doctor arrived, a pleasant and helpful teammate with revolutionary roots (he was the grandson of Manuel González, who many say was Pancho Villa's "right-hand man"). He was singled out by someone from San Bernardo as "the one who was born in Chihuahua but who came from nowhere." This was probably because of his height of a meter and a half. His antipode, our administrator, who was 1.9 meters tall, was the next to arrive and, except for his size, there was nothing else that distinguished him. He was a faithful reproduction of the typical administrator: he would wrangle over three cents, he saw himself as the proprietor of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista, he always took the newest vehicles to drive from the office to his home (which was in the same small town), he tortured us with requests for financial reporting on our programs until it was "exact," he never bothered to go out to the communities we worked in no matter how often we asked, and he blackmailed the female sector (a total of three women) of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista, lording the power of "his" money over them. But the most absurd of all was that he would call us out for arriving even ten minutes late to work!

The last one to arrive was the bilingual schoolteacher, who quickly earned the ironic nickname "Campamocha Muchas Cuentas."<sup>27</sup> This was for his "verbal dexterity"; his skinny body, which resembled a praying mantis; his "ability" to handle complicated mathematics; and his "common sense." His nickname came about so naturally that I couldn't say who exactly came up with it, but I'm convinced that he didn't have to do much to earn it. On one occasion all of us from the technical team went to Los Conejos to carry out some tasks in our area of specialization. One of these was to conduct a visual survey of some plots of land that could be handed over to the Guarijíos with some negotiation. All of us technicians traveled in Los Conejos on horseback, while the director of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista, an observer from the state-level Coordinador office, and the "owner" of the ranch under negotiation all went by plane.

By the end of the trip, the director invited us to return with him in the plane. We didn't think twice about it. The landing strip and Los Conejos sat atop a series of small mesas, so we had to descend a very steep hill, cross the Guajaray arroyo, and then climb back up another steep incline. In this last climb, the agronomist had lost his horse. We heard the slip then saw a cloud of dust (for that brief moment we all

held our breath), and soon the agronomist reappeared with a big smile, saying, "Whoa, that sucker went down!" He had managed to jump clear from the animal! And so we knew that we had amongst us a true survivor. The doctor and I both got off our horses to walk the rest of the way. As the saying goes, "When you see your neighbor in a close shave, get ready for one of your own!"

When we got to the airstrip we were all feeling good, cracking jokes, and happy that the arduous journey was behind us. What we didn't see just yet were two determining conditions that would quickly change our mood. First, the plane had room for only four people, and there were seven of us. Second, the Sonoran pilots, who had been trained in the United States, would not risk their lives or those of their passengers by carrying too much weight. The expressions on our faces changed as the pilots spoke. Nevertheless, they did promise to return for us by eight in the morning the following day.

And so we spent 24 hours on that mesa. We hadn't thought of bringing water or food, confident that we were going to just get right on that plane. And even then, not one of us had even thought about this problem until our stomachs began to protest. The truth of the matter is that our behavior would have made quite happy any researcher working on the unconscious mind (either individual or collective).

In the first hours of our stay that day, we talked constantly and mechanically about the same things: our opinion on planes and about the pilots, how poorly we were carrying out the tasks in our area of work, and the small dumb mistakes we'd made. It seemed like nothing at all was happening! We finally began to take full account of our situation with the first growling of our stomachs. Then we went through a second phase in our behavior, characterized by "a second period of denial." Someone had brought along a deck of cards, and with them we put together a grand "casino" featuring poker. It quickly degenerated into a boring story of Toby barring Little Lulu from the club. The players even bet their shirts, and discussed, fought, and accused each other of cheating. Somebody would suddenly snatch up the pebbles they were using to place bets, then they would continue on. I took it upon myself to get in their way, giving my opinions and making it impossible to play.

Night began to fall. Then came the fear of spending the night there, and we were brought once more back to reality. Nobody commented on it, but the Guarijíos had told all of us that a jaguar had been in the area killing cattle. So now we were going through a third phase in our behavior:

reality. The doctor took on the role of leader, and he told each of us what we had to do. The agronomist would find enough wood to get a fire going to last the night. The teacher would find drinking water. And since we had nothing to eat, he gave me a job “appropriate” for my sex (clearing a site where we would sleep, and making a border of rocks around to protect us from animals). He also took my camp knife to use if the jaguar came by. He was “very busy” with the organization of work and supervision. The agronomist kept bringing more and more wood, piling up enough to last the entire week, and he would have kept going if the doctor hadn’t finally stopped him. The teacher, by contrast, did not make life complicated for himself: within an hour he had found a source of water and filled a large canteen. With nightfall came a fourth phase, that of “Robinson Crusoe.” Now lying on the “clean and protected” ground, sheltered by the rock barrier, our stomachs filled with water, and the fire burning, the doctor assured us that the knife and the campfire would protect us from a ferocious attack. He had also organized teams to stand guard every two hours.

—“It smells like skunk,” I said to the doctor. “I suffer from a refined olfactory.”

—“I don’t smell anything.”

My teammates answered:

—“Me neither.”

—“Me neither!”

Then, a few minutes later, we saw a face just above the line of the fire, illuminated by the light of the coals. “Ay!” we all yelled together, the doctor failing to even pull out the knife. It was Juan, one of the Guarijíos from Los Conejos. He came with his dog, which smelled like a skunk because, as they were walking, they had come across one in the road. Skunks are a dangerous plague. Their bite can transmit rabies to humans, and that’s why nobody took to the road at night without a dog (except for José Zazueta and us—José because he was brave, and us because we didn’t have one). Cipriano had sent Juan out with a few tortillas and a good piece of meat for us; he had learned that we were staying the night on the airstrip. I don’t know how he knew. Maybe because of the campfire, or maybe it was logical that we wouldn’t all fit in the airplane. Juan also told us that the agronomist’s horse was dead, and after giving us our food he went back to the ranch. We were alone once again.

The threat of the jaguar persisted, but then came the fifth phase of our behavior: dreams, a product of having experienced the intense rush of adrenaline for such a long time. The sun woke us up at five in the

morning and, with the plane due to arrive in three hours, we stayed in our sleeping bags for another hour, enduring the sweat that covered our entire bodies, a product of the heat from the elements. After a while we rose, gathered our things, and even had enough of the teacher's water left over to brush our teeth. "Where exactly did you find water, maestro?" we asked. To burn a little time before the plane arrived, the maestro took us to the site where he'd extracted the water. It was a small puddle full of mud, and with a cloud of mosquitos hovering over it. Yes, it was close to our camp. We went to look more closely at the water in the canteen, and it was in essence an aquatic zoo. I think each of us began to experience stomach pain even before we had real symptoms. The maestro's nickname was thus confirmed that day.

Before we left my *compañeros* grabbed the pebbles that they'd used in their poker game, which they had promised to convert to real money once we were back in San Bernardo. That was the sixth and last phase of our behavior that might be of interest to a researcher of the unconscious mind, for as the airplane flew across the Sierra, closing in on San Bernardo, we began to once again assume elements of "normal" conduct. When we stepped out of the plane, they threw out the pebbles that they had been carrying, and I forgot that I was supposed to be treated like a housewife.

"Curiously," I failed to write up this experience in my field notecards, and so all of this part and more comes from memory and from what I learned on that trip: the thing about the skunks, about the nutrition of Guarijíos in Los Conejos, about the existence of jaguars in that area, the cattle-raising arrangements the Yoris had made with the Guarijíos, about how the Guarijíos have knowledge about what happens around their settlements, the custom of taking along a dog when traveling, and what the Guarijíos do with dead horses. And things that I now knew about my *compañeros* and about myself that I didn't know before.

With such a large team of *indigenistas* as we were then, the problem of housing quickly exploded. Sergio was the first to find a room with a cot in San Bernardo, and he shared it with the agronomist, the teacher, the doctor, and the economist. The director, on top of being asthmatic, was very cheap, and thus preferred living in the office. I secured a very small house with four rooms, a cement floor, a roof, and adobe walls. I had a bathroom and shower installed. In the past, San Bernardo's houses did not have latrines. Just as in the Sierra, defecating in the open air was normal. But in town, houses were very close together, while in the Sierra they were not. In San Bernardo, people would grow leafy trees in their

patio areas, and these would serve to shield them from view when they were conducting their business. The bathroom consisted of a framework of four walls, made either of cloth or sticks, and installed somewhere in the patio. This is where one could bathe, using the “gourd-bowl” method.<sup>28</sup> The bathroom was quite uncomfortable, and its improvised character suggested that bathing in the river was more typical. San Bernardans did improve these conditions over time, and today they have latrines and showers inside their homes.

Before securing that small adobe home, I had lived in a house loaned to me by a family from Chihuahua. All of them had gone to pick fruit up in the Sierra, and in exchange for letting me live there rent free they asked me to take care of the place. The house was a “round room” form, 5 x 5 meters, and situated in the middle of a large plot of land that was maybe 300 square meters. The parents lived in that house with their three children. There they slept, ate, bathed, and took care of their necessities. “Look,” the mother said to me, “during the day when you need to use the bathroom, use the bucket here. You can throw it out over there and the pigs will eat it.” There were no trees in the yard, which suggested that this was a dirty and lazy family, at least according to the way San Bernardans saw things. I could never use the bucket nor could I relieve myself by night outside in the yard. I always went to Señora Tayde’s house or to the office; I just wasn’t capable of feeding those pigs that way.

That might be why one morning I was awakened by the growling of the animals outside. I went outside to see what was going on and startled a sow that had recently given birth and was eating one of her eight piglets. I cursed at the sow, calling her every name in the book, and one by one took away her piglets. Despite my efforts to care for the newborns, none survived. My attempts to get them food did little to help them, as the rainy season made it difficult to get food even for humans, and no other sow would suckle them. When the family returned, the mother accused me of being irresponsible, but I didn’t give it a second thought because that was the least of my troubles after having gone through so much with her animals. The little adobe house that I secured afterward was for me, then, a real luxury residence.

I shared that house for a season with our administrator and his wife. They were recently married. They were also young, immature, inexperienced, and disoriented in Sonora, like me. Added to these conditions, which brought us many difficulties, were others such as the

tension between their conventional marriage and legitimate need for solitude. Quickly I began to feel like an outsider interfering in the business of my own household. The tension finally burst from the weakest side, turning into a melodramatic scene of reverse machismo. I opted for the easiest route, trying to be in my house as little as possible, sometimes sleeping elsewhere. A few weeks later, the couple was able to secure another house in San Bernardo and went to live there. My only consolation was that Sergio did not come away from it any better. The situation also showed me that living together was not easy for the indigenistas. Sergio's room was where all the poker games were played, enlivened by cases of beer, and lasting into the morning hours. Our *compañeros* began to arrive at the office later and later, in a bad mood, and with alcohol-tinged eyes. Apparently, the only lucid one was the director, and that was saying a lot. But if there was one thing we all needed for our work with the Guarijíos, it was lucidity.

What were we to do, faced with the hunger, unemployment, and the Guarijíos' absolute lack of farmable land? In a meeting of the technical team we discussed this matter. The director suggested that we seek to negotiate with the Yoris permission for the Guarijíos to plant their crops on a small plot of land. Such an approach, he added, had produced good results the year before, according to information provided by the director of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista of Etchojoa to the state coordinator. I argued that we were out of time, as the planting season was now months in the past. It was a heated discussion, a dialogue of the deaf between the director and me. Two proposals remained on the table: negotiate permission to plant with the Yoris, and couple this with credit so that the Guarijíos could plant corn, or request emergency food rations (the latter idea, certainly the most simpleminded, was mine). The remaining members of the technical team chose to stay out of the debate, and thus the weight of the decision rested on the shoulders of the one occupying the highest post in the hierarchy of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista. The director commissioned me to visit the Yoris who lived in the Sierra, house by house, and try to persuade them to give permission to plant.

But before leaving, I thought it was necessary to look over the Center's archives, at the reports on work conducted previously by indigenistas from Etchojoa. I was certain that this would give me an idea of the type of people I was about to visit; that is, it would offer me an image of these Yoris through the lens of the indigenistas, as the histories of guerrilla activity, the disappearance of the Canadian, of José Corona, and what



little I already knew about the Sierra were insufficient for designing a persuasive strategy.

The archives contained much information. The Centro Coordinador Indigenista of Navojoa had taken a general census of the Guarijío population in September 1976. In February 1977 they had created a massive civil registry of marriages, births, and deaths, and in May that same year they returned to conduct another general census that included data on occupation, income, literacy, and the number of monolingual Guarijíos in the region. This information had but one major deficiency: none of the registries contained information on the Guarijío population in the community of Los Conejos. It was evident that the actions of the indigenistas had been focused on the Mochibampo zone. I suppose there were reasons for that. For example, Mochibampo is the first, closest point of contact with the Guarijíos from San Bernardo, and the leader from that area was more tenacious than the one from Los Conejos. Perhaps this was in part because of his personality, but also because of the experience with guerrillas, torture, death, hunger, and unemployment that he had endured.

Among those documents were also reports written by the director of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista from Navojoa and by the agronomist who was in charge of the area, both of whom were tasked with attending to the Guarijíos' needs. This set of papers spoke of the origin of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista of San Bernardo, of its earliest actions, and of the indigenistas' penetration into the region.

The director of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista Mayo of Etchojoa, Sixto Jiménez, had taken up the case personally. The first thing he did was to try to coordinate the different federal offices through the representative of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (SRA) in Huatabampo; the chief of Rainfed Agricultural District Number 1, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources (SARH); the municipal president of Alamos; and the area representative of the Rural Credit Bank (Banrural) who was in charge of programs for the Integration of Indigenous Communities. The objective of this coordinating effort was to bring together and get a sustained commitment from the representatives of various federal offices whose services were needed in the Guarijío zone. Following this, they had organized an official visit to the area at the end of 1976. Engineer Héctor Jiménez, who was in charge of agronomy for the Centro Coordinador Indigenista of Etchojoa, in an interview described to me that official visit:

That day the municipal president [of Alamos] gave us a letter of introduction for the authorities of San Bernardo and Burapaco so that we could arrive in the region without trouble. In San Bernardo they sent us to speak with a one Andrés Enríquez (the son of Don Agapito), who was in charge of policing the area. He told us that if we wanted to travel by car we should take the route that went through Mexiquillo, San Juan, and other *ranchería* pueblos until we got to Burapaco. In San Juan a Guarijío, José Ruelas (the prayer leader of the group), joined us and led us to La Junta, a place that lies three kilometers to the north of Burapaco. There, we held a meeting with the Guarijíos, using the locals as emissaries. The next day Guarijíos from all of the ranchos began to arrive, coming in from Atonico and Huataturi and as far away as Bavícora. The only ones who couldn't make it were those from Los Conejos, because they were too far away, more than a day's walk from where we were. We came with the intention of forming the Agrarian Committee to take the first steps towards legalizing the land, which we formally presented to the Guarijíos and explained to them what was necessary for them to secure their land. In our discourse we also said to the Guarijíos that it wasn't necessary to be sharecropping with the Yoris, since historically all of the land belonged to them as did the harvest. They didn't have to hand it over to the patrón. Soon, mestizo cowboys who worked for the Yoris began to show up, requesting that they be included in the Agrarian Committee, and we denied them entrance because they were not indigenous. I later realized that we had made a mistake with them because we were so taken by our work and because we were indigenistas with little experience with these kinds of problems. We were, it is true, so moved by the Guarijíos' misery that nothing could keep us from moving forward, not even when a Yori threatened that if we did not leave the region he would cut off our testicles and hang us right there. Aside from all of this, we still were able to initiate the petition for agrarian reform, including in it around 300 Guarijíos. We thought that males sixteen years or older were capable of farming an area that at that time we calculated should be 130 hectares. We sent a copy to Mexico, both to the SRA and to the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. I personally handed in a copy to the state delegation of the SRA in Sonora. There, they told us that the document could not proceed because the individuals who petitioned for

land were not properly registered as Mexican citizens (and none of them could be because they did not have birth certificates). This stalled the process even more because we would have to create a registry of births and deaths for the group.

According to the analysis of Sixto and Héctor Jiménez, the land legalization could happen quickly, because they saw that at least in part the Yoris, although appearing to be always ready to fight, did not have the kind of official support that would provide them with a position of strength. Moreover, some of them were afraid of losing everything they had. It was the best time to begin negotiation. It was the best time, they thought, to begin negotiation because the administration of president Luis Echeverría had given signals that it would bring justice for campesinos throughout Mexico, and in particular to those of Sonora, where there had been several historically important agrarian struggles: giving land back to the Yaquis; the restitution of Tiburón Island to the Seris; recognizing the land rights of the campesinos of “Cuadrilátero 417”—who were forced to kidnap an agrarian reform representative in order to have their case heard, an action that, along with other factors, forced the resignation of the head of the Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios y Colonización, Félix Barra García; the resolution of the conflict in San Ignacio Río Muerto, in 1975 (a group of campesinos who had held back army troops sent in by Governor Biebrich to control them—this and other problems cost the governor his office); and the presidential resolution for the ejido Guajaray, which took less than five years in total. These kinds of actions reassured Sixto and Héctor that a similar situation was possible in the Guarijío case. Once President Echeverría was informed of their deprivation, they believed, he would intervene in the most effective way to create a rapid, favorable, and lasting solution.

The environment had grown quite tense during the 1976 season, when the Guarijíos decided not to deliver their “half” of the corn harvest to their patronos, as was customary. A few Yoris, like Dolores Samaniego, traveled down to Alamos to file charges against their workers for not turning in their share of the harvested corn. Then municipal president Jesús Gil, who had been informed beforehand and who was sympathetic to the Guarijío cause, replied that he thought it would be a good idea for the Yoris to file charges since, as far as he was concerned, the sharecropping arrangement they had with their workers was illegal, and the charges could land the Yoris in jail rather than the Guarijíos. There

were no charges filed against the Guarijíos, only poor treatment and dismissals. Some of those fired decided to travel down to the Yaqui and Mayo Valleys for work in the fields, though not with the intention of abandoning altogether their territory.

Just before the 1977 harvest the director general and subdirector of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, the director of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista Mayo of Etchojoa, and a delegate from the SRA traveled to Burapaco to enter the Guarijíos into the new civil registry. As a “gift” to the Guarijíos, the director general gave the group 25,000 pesos, suggesting that they use the money to buy corn and beans, since the season of hunger would come soon—and problems between the Yoris and Guarijíos would only grow worse because of the presence of the different federal authorities now operating in the region, and in particular the Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

They still had no land for this planting cycle, since there had been no legal resolution to the agrarian problem, nor had there been an agreement between the Yoris and Guarijíos to temporarily use the land. That year turned out to be one of the most terrible for the Guarijíos. Héctor Jiménez followed the advice given to him by the adjunct director of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista that he should ease the tensions by getting the Yoris to agree to letting the Guarijíos plant while they sought a legal resolution. But the mestizos had created an environment of distrust and fear around the possibility for negotiation, which pushed them to plant crops on the *magüeches* that the Guarijíos had previously worked, with or without permission.<sup>29</sup> In the beginning a few mestizos had granted permission to plant. The Instituto, as a result, had secured sufficient planting credit through Banrural to benefit all Guarijío families. But this infuriated other Yoris, who did not agree with the planting permission. They then began to threaten Instituto workers at gunpoint, and they provoked the Guarijíos by letting cattle loose onto their *magüeches*, all with the support of the state judicial police.

At the end of the planting cycle, the indígenas could not recuperate any of their harvest. A few Yoris had indeed been able to file charges against them for illegal land occupation, and for property invasion and damages (they were able to do this with the aid of the Alamos Association of Small Propertyholders). Secondly, the cattle that the Yoris had let onto Guarijío *magüeches* had thoroughly destroyed their fields, eating even the remaining corn stubble. Finally, added to the conflict were two unforeseen elements outside of anyone’s power to control: a drought

that year had devastated the state of Sonora and a measles epidemic hit the Guarijío zone, causing the death of two indigenous people.

Sixto and Héctor Jiménez were able to keep the Guarijíos out of jail through a series of legal negotiations. They were also able to secure an agreement, supported by the governor, in which the Yoris promised to loan 160 hectares for planting, while the Guarijíos agreed to plant strictly within the established boundaries. For his part, Governor Samuel Ocaña promised to quickly commission a topographic survey so that the legal process would be well on its way before the next planting cycle. Héctor Jiménez proposed that the agreement include a concession for the Guarijíos to plant in the Mayo River floodplain—where high soil humidity made the land the best place to plant. Those lands legally fall under the control of the nation. But the proposal was immediately suspended because shortly thereafter the Instituto opened an office in San Bernardo—under the official classification of “residence”—to directly assist the Guarijíos; the teacher, José Corona, was designated office director. What followed is the story of José Corona that I describe above, a story that ends with his dismissal for irresponsible behavior, and with the creation of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista in April 1978, with a new director.

In the interim, the path that had been cleared with so much hard labor took many steps backward. The hunger returned, and the planting cycle was near. Many Guarijíos returned to the agricultural valleys to work; others, against their will, went back to work for their patrones, weak and defeated. The Guarijío leaders were persecuted and threatened by the Yoris. The former lost confidence in the Instituto to such a degree that they stopped coming by the San Bernardo office altogether. They also forbade visits into their communities by Instituto officials.

It seemed as if the director knew only half the story of what had happened before, or certainly the half of the story that suited his purposes. Or, perhaps he was aware of everything that had gone on before but didn't want to prejudice my view. Whatever the case, I did know that if indeed there had been permission to plant, it wasn't accepted by all of the Yoris; that the surface area conceded was ridiculously small (160 hectares for thirty or forty families); that the Association of Small Propertyholders had been involved in the case, along with endless numbers of state and federal functionaries, and even the state judicial police; and that, along with all of this, the Guarijíos had incurred debt for the credit granted to them by Banrural to plant corn. This was a “tough bone to pick.” I came out of the Sierra complaining just as bitterly

as the bilingual teachers, and with new “labels” for the director (“arrogant” was one label that won out).

I went to Mochibampo to look for José Zazueta and ask if he would accompany me into the Sierra to talk to the Yoris. The house-by-house visit was meant to get to know the Yoris, to introduce myself, to get a sense of the terrain that I would have to walk through, get information about the land conflict, and a sense of the balance of forces. I defined the objective of this first visit without consulting anyone else, since it was my hide that was on the line. Obviously, they did not receive me with open arms, but they also weren’t aggressive with me, just apprehensive. It seemed to me that the mestizos were very distrustful of any stranger and even more so with employees of the federal government (that is, those of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista). But they, just like the Guarijíos, were partially marginalized; they suffered from the problems associated with a difficult environment just the same and at times they too could not escape the dangers of this region. I knew a Yori youth who later died in Burapaco because of indigestion. It was harvest time and he ate all the watermelons that his stomach could hold. He couldn’t get medical attention because the Mayo River was running high, the dirt airplane runway was out of service, and, as a consequence, when the doctor arrived about 24 hours later the patient had died.

José and I began the walk to Setajaqui because he suggested to me that if we could convince Doña Dolores Samaniego—known throughout the region as Lolona—to loan the Guarijíos some of her land, it would mean automatically getting something like 50 percent of the Yoris on our side. The road to Setajaqui was in very bad shape. It had probably been two or three years since shrubs and weeds had been cut back. In some places, José had to clear the path with his machete, and the mosquitos and horseflies were like a plague. José recommended that I smoke my Delicado cigarettes to fumigate them out. I went through two packs, and they never stung me or José, even though he didn’t want to use the same treatment that he’d recommended for me.

Setajaqui was far away, and its main house was built around a gigantic flat rock that provided a bit of level ground in a place of steep inclines. I suspected that we were getting there because from afar we could see a small herd of goats grazing off to one side of the rocks and because the dogs, who belonged to the ranch owners, began to bark, despite our many meters of distance. Seeing those goats climbing over the rocks impressed me. I was worried that they would fall and I asked José about it, and he replied: “They’re goats.” “Yes, I know that they are goats,” I

insisted, “but can’t they fall?” He looked at me as if I were messing around with him and didn’t say another word about it.

Doña Dolores poked her head out from under the roof of her house, trying to get a look at the outsider and her companion who were visiting. The latter, it turned out, was one of her worst enemies: José Zazueta, “leader of the insurrectionist Guarijíos.” She received us, but with an angry look. Although both she and her husband knew the reason for our visit, they invited us in to eat, followed by coffee on the patio where we were to explain our business. It was not easy to discuss matters in “enemy territory,” and even less so knowing that we were under threat by several Yoris. The tension thus took us into a forced conversation about Lolona’s recipe for making cheese (they call it *panela*) with goat’s milk. Her secret was in the use of a viscous substance called *cuajada* whose colors suggested a state of putrefaction. After that, Doña Dolores told us how she could cure her dental problems by herself, utilizing a suite of herbs and spices like cloves, and she told us that on one occasion she had extracted a molar by tying it to a tree and yanking herself back with all her might. In her entire life, she told us with great pride, she had never once visited a doctor.

Lolona probably thought that initiating a conversation of random themes would be a good way to get rid of me. And she almost managed to do it if it hadn’t been for José Zazueta, who grew impatient and suddenly leapt from his chair tempestuously to show me that it was time to get to the heart of the matter. And so I began with the already well-understood explanation about the land conflict and I asked for their collaboration in allowing the Guarijíos to plant. In exchange, they would receive from the Instituto medical service, free medication, and technical assistance with their agriculture and livestock. But they were not in agreement with the proposal of either loaning or selling their land, and they didn’t want anything from the INI. José remained silent the entire time. Meanwhile, the discussion grew so heated that Doña Lolona suddenly declared: “My parents, my grandparents, and I were all born and raised here. We’ve worked these lands with our sweat, with our own hands. We have suffered poverty and have lacked everything here for many years. . . . I am not going to leave here and I am not going to hand over my land. They will have to kill me first before they take away what is mine.” There was a moment of silence.

Doña Lolona, a big woman, fat, very pale, smelling of goats, and with disheveled hair, ran her fingers over her head and then nervously began



fishing in the pocket of her apron for a cigarette. I thought it was necessary to return to a cordial tone to avoid a disagreeable conflict, so I tried to be friendly, standing up abruptly to reach for my lighter. Before I could get it lit, I was being threatened by a small, .22-caliber pistol that she was holding with a trembling hand. The both of us stood there for a moment, perplexed. Then, she began to laugh, explaining that she thought I had been reaching for the knife that I carried in my belt. Then we all started to laugh, making jokes about the incident. She asked for our forgiveness, and the incident helped to relieve the tension somewhat. We were then able to talk some more about why we had come there, and, in the end, we were able to get Doña Lolona's permission to plant, delimiting the number of Guarijíos who could use the rented land and the size of the magüeches. (Dolores Samaniego died a few years ago, according to reports from San Bernardo. It has been impossible to forget her, a spirited, valiant, resolute woman—although this earned her husband the reputation of being weak. This was one of the most special encounters that I have ever had, a scene that I call, "Doña Lolona pulls out her pistol.")

We continued on our way toward the rest of the ranchos and with the same proposal. Overall, we never ran into the same problem we had in Setajaqui. Moreover, when the mestizos found out that the family from that rancho had agreed to rent out their land, they too offered up their provisional agreement, with the condition that they be able to ratify it after meeting with the other small property holders and their representatives in Alamos. The only one who was not in agreement was Andrés, one of the sons of deceased Don Agapito. He wanted to either sell the land or exchange it for a parcel down in the Mayo Valley, but his proposal did nothing to help solve the emergency of the moment.

With the mestizos' verbal permission, we requested credit from Banrural to purchase corn and to insure the crop against natural disasters. The Guarijíos bought corn with the credit not to plant but to eat; it only lasted three months, and they had no option but to return to the valleys to look for work. Not everyone could go. A few months later, two men who stayed back died of starvation.

The matter of the Banrural planting credit always seemed absurd to me, as the Guarijíos had no way to repay it. On the other hand, I kept asking myself how it was possible that Banrural would approve the loan without having seen any documentation of the borrowers' land holdings, and knowing that they weren't going to use the money to plant since the planting cycle had already passed. I said this to my director and I blamed

him for the deaths of the Guarijíos: “If we had declared the Guarijío population to be in a state of emergency, they would have had food rations for the whole year,” I added. We once again found ourselves in a heated discussion at the end of which he accused me of standing in the way of his work and of belonging to the camp of the Adjunct Office of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (up to that point I had ignored the fact that the Instituto was divided into factions: the anthropologists and “the rest”). We took the dispute as far as we could over the course of the work year: he, convinced that the only thing I wanted was to take his job; me, with the certainty that the Guarijíos were the least of his interests.

From then on, I tried to avoid the director. I restricted my interactions with him to only the most necessary things, and prolonged as much as possible my stays in the Sierra, which I very much enjoyed. During that period I felt very skeptical of him (that is, more than normal), and perhaps this is why on one occasion, while I was in the Sierra, he sent an especially urgent message to me to return to the office. The message got to me very early in the morning. I returned immediately, full of anger, thinking that for certain he was going to have me write an official letter or document, as he was accustomed to doing. The six hours that it took me to return on horseback simply added to my fury, as did the bee sting that awaited me as I opened the door to the Centro Coordinador Indigenista. Aaaah! I yelled, shutting the door without being able to say anything else. The bee sting saved me, however. Since I had been left mute, I had to listen to the director: “It is urgent that you report back to the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, in Mexico City; your plane ticket is ready, and it leaves soon.” Since I couldn’t speak, I saw that the tickets included return passage to Sonora, for this could have been a good excuse to get rid of me. With everything in order, I put together a strange combination for my suitcase. Almost nothing that I packed had been useful during my stay in Mexico City. Sergio took me to the airport in Ciudad Obregón. I boarded with nothing in hand but a bag of fries. By around ten that same night I found myself in my mother’s house, having dinner with her, and trying to sustain a normal conversation. She spoke to me in great detail about her work while I remained mute. With the bee sting still hurting, I wondered why I had been called to the INI offices in Mexico City in the first place. I knew little about the circumstances or people that my mother was talking about, and I was thinking that the following day I should buy a newspaper to find out how the situation was going for the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. How were

my friends doing? Would I have time to see my sisters? Why were there so many problems at my mother's work, in mine, in Nicaragua. . . ? Outside was the noise of car horns, people, the bustle of the school next door to the house: I was in Mexico City. And I was still mute.

The next day I found out what had been so "urgent" in the Mexico City offices of the Instituto: "Maestra, the *Handbook of North American Indians* wants to update its information and asked for our help. I sent for the Institute's best anthropologists so that in a week they could draft three monographs each. We have assigned to you the Mixtecos, Totonacos, and the Huastecos," said Félix Báez. Where did Félix Báez get the idea that I was one of the best anthropologists, and, moreover, how could I write three monographs in one week, and on the topic of three indigenous groups that I had no knowledge of? I checked out some textbooks from the Institute's library, looked over the contents of the *Handbook*, and simply tried to add what was missing.

Félix Báez liked to publish, and to motivate the rest of us to do the same, and for that reason, two weeks after my return to Sonora he sent me another written invitation. He wanted me to write an article about Guarijío customs. I turned him down because it seemed foolish. I couldn't imagine writing about fiestas, dress, and those types of things while the Guarijíos were dying of hunger. Nevertheless, after reflecting a little more I decided it was important to take the opportunity to get out information on the Guarijíos' situation. I wrote about what was happening, I spoke of the previous conditions, and made the case for the Guarijíos' possession of the land that had been occupied historically. I sent the material to Mexico City. After waiting several months, my article arrived one day with observations and corrections that Félix Báez had made, and some commentary that, to summarize, said: do not get involved in problems, Maestra, we need anthropological material. What, then, is anthropological? I then understood that the Instituto Nacional Indigenista would never publish materials toward a denunciation, and that all of this about helping the indigenous peoples was pure demagoguery. At the same time, I realized that I hadn't used my time with the Guarijíos to learn about their traditions. I had focused on the matter of the land conflict and this was grave, as I could not act as an attorney for them. I think Félix suspected my situation because when he didn't receive my "corrected" work, he sent me a terse radiogram asking me to complete it. So one weekend I sat down to write, turning to the "Guía Murdock"—a classic work for organizing field interviews—for

help in structuring it the way he had wanted it. At the end, I included two pages where I insisted on describing the conditions of the Guarijíos. The article was published in 1979, with those two pages omitted.

The days continued on with the same routine in the Centro Coordinador Indigenista. The director put us to work designing programs to carry out the next year. Each of us let our imagination run free, sometimes dying of laughter and other times realizing just how trivial our efforts were: over what geographic space would we apply these programs? Sergio made fun of all of us, reminding us of something the Guarijíos said to us as he walked past our desks: “We don’t want goats!” Rosario worked extra hours and weekends, while the rest of us each day convinced ourselves that the Institute’s programming was one of the basic contradictions of indigenismo (the other was “*El Bomberazo*”<sup>30</sup>) because the program had to get past the review of the Technical Counsel of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista, the director and administrator of the Centro Coordinador, the specialty areas of the office of the state coordinator for INI and its director, the specialty areas of the central offices, and their administrative personnel. Obviously, the comments, criticisms, observations, and recommendations never made it to the desk of the *técnico* because “there is no time.” The programs were approved not for their technical efficiency, nor because they were really needed by the indigenous groups, but because there was simply money available to move them forward or because they promised political benefits to the political party in power. There is a lot to say about this, but you can consult the “Evaluations of the Agricultural Programs for the States of Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Puebla” (Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1983, report by various authors) and the “Evaluation of the Program for Albergues Escolares” (Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1981, report by various authors).

The contradictions in the programming did not reside in its centralized character alone, as there were other problems of equal importance: at times, the program had serious technical difficulties; in other cases, authorities had failed to consult with the supposed beneficiaries about the program; there was also the drastic and surprising reduction in budgets, the imposition of “model” national programs, the lack of coordination within the technical team of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista, and many others. Perhaps it is for this reason that Sergio made fun of our work and of our uselessly sleepless nights. But it is important to remember that during that time we were all young and inexperienced, and we believed in the idea of indigenism with such faith that we completed the design of the programs. Our imaginations led us

to believe that with the programs that we proposed the Guarijíos' quality of life would be elevated by a factor of 2,000 percent by the end of a year.

A short time later four bilingual Mayo teachers arrived who had been charged with initiating "bilingual-bicultural" education in the zone and, like us, they strained to invent educational programs. Although I still do not accept the concept of "bicultural," I enthusiastically supported their arrival because I knew just how needed they were in the Sierra.

### *Sierra de Nadie*

After we presented the program proposals to the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, the technical team's activities in the Guarijío zone began to slow down, with the majority of our compañeros beginning to work in other parts of the Sierra in areas defined by COPLAMAR<sup>31</sup> as marginalized. They went over to Chihuahua, around Algodones and nearby ranchos, and worked in the Guarijío zone when it was necessary. I stayed behind to work on the Guarijío land issue, helping the director of the Centro Coordinador, both of us hoping that the state coordinator would send us an attorney. Meanwhile, I dedicated my time to initiating negotiations with the Yoris to get them to sell "their" ranchos, and to investigating the legal issues associated with their properties.

I had to travel to Bavícora, Los Conejos, and Mochibampo to make a visual inspection of the lands in order to assess their potential uses. Then I returned to follow up on the agrarian census, then once again with técnicos from the SRA so that they could make the same lands survey that we had made in a preliminary way. Then I visited the Yoris in the sixteen dispersed ranchos to negotiate the land sale. Then I went back to see the Yoris again to create a registry of their lands, followed by another visit to take careful measurements, walking each plot with the SRA's technical team. There were other trips as well: some of them were at my or the director's whim, trips to the main offices of the INI in Mexico City. Because of so many trips into the Sierra (often I was spending more time there than in my home in San Bernardo), people began to take me into their confidence and tell me stories about things like the pots of gold that supposedly appear during a full October moon, about apparitions and ghosts, and stories of comical personalities of the Sierra.

That is how I came to know about Don Cacahuatē,<sup>32</sup> the protagonist of some of the most extraordinary anecdotes, in which he plays the foil or a clever man in disguise. These tales of sex, politics, and daily life reveal

the classic dichotomies of popular humor, between life in the city and the country, between feminine and masculine, between superiors and inferiors. In all of these circumstances, Don Cacahuatate always played the role of the cuckold, while Doña Cebolla,<sup>33</sup> his wife, was the foil who made Cacahuatate see the stupidity, intelligence, or even normalcy of his behavior.

Sitting beneath the portales of the Yoris' homes I heard so many stories about these two characters that I began to imagine their faces and voices, and I almost knew how they would act in certain situations. At times I didn't understand the climax of the story, while other times they seemed the craziest things I had ever heard. But all of the stories were permeated by life in the Sierra. I saw in each Yori a potential Cacahuatate, but I must confess that I saw few Doña Cebollas. This reinforced my notion that masculine discourses are imposed on society as if they were "reality," because in general the true Doña Cebollas are dependent women, subjugated, squelched, unable to make their own decisions, and with little understanding of this situation. On one occasion the wife of one of the Yoris called me over to speak to me in private, asking me to help her perform an abortion because, she said, "I have eleven children, my varicose veins hurt me, I am afraid of dying during childbirth, but He [husband] does not want me to abort." I consulted with the doctor from the health center in San Bernardo and he gave me a lecture on morals. I then went to see the doctor at the Centro Coordinador Indigenista, and he told me that he didn't want to "compromise" himself. I then offered to accompany the woman into the city where together we could look for a doctor who could perform the operation. But her husband would never let her go, would hardly let her poke her nose out of the kitchen.

There was a second case in which I was more deeply involved. At the time I identified as a feminist and, because of that, tried to "raise consciousness" among the women of San Bernardo. I organized a committee in which only four women participated. Quite sometime later I came to the conclusion that each of those women had a certain status in the community that allowed them to endure the criticism to which we were subjected. And yet, there was little interest in confronting the issues because in the end the women were certain that there "was no need" to change things. For what, the men would say, and besides, if the women disagreed they would still have the possibility of discussing things. The feminist committee ended up becoming a local "branch" of the Lion's Club, and I had to just accept it.

I think that taking the initiative to create the committee was good for me, because it allowed me to reflect on the process of raising consciousness. On the other hand, I had access to information on sexuality in the Sierra and in San Bernardo, in which Don Cacahuatate had apparently become a real figure. I was able to confirm this throughout my stay in the region, with new tales about real people, with confidential experiences that people related to me, people with whom I established friendships, and also through a very important source of information: a community-wide study made by José Juan, the doctor in charge of the San Bernardo health center.

The study made note of two social illnesses that were supposedly rooted in sexual dissatisfaction: 90 percent of the male population suffered from some degree of alcoholism, and 85 percent of the female population suffered from some type of neurosis in the form of anxiety, anguish, and depression. To the doctor's list I added the practice of bestiality among the Yori population in the Sierra, though I could not confirm the precise percentage since I'd only heard of a few cases. Alarming data (alcoholism, neurosis, and bestiality) these were for a community of barely 2,000 inhabitants. It made me think that the bucolic country life had simply been an ideal of ecologists.

Among the cases that I knew of, one in particular impressed me. I found out about it on one of my many trips into the Sierra. To be more precise, when my relationship with the director was at its most deteriorated, he, as part of his strategy to wear me down and force me to leave Sonora running, commissioned me to organize a general assembly with the Guarijíos in Mochibampo within 24 hours. I received the memorandum at eleven at night, upon arrival in San Bernardo after spending 20 days in Mochibampo, Los Conejos, and Bavícora. It made me laugh. But it was a nervous laugh, for I'd spent the final hours of my return trip thinking of three things only: food, a bath, and sleep. So I grabbed a change of clean clothes, and set out to find someone who would rent me a horse. The one I had just turned in could not leave again because he needed to eat his corn and rest (even horses need to eat and rest! I thought). I looked all over town but could not find a horse. I was forced to go on foot, so I decided to sleep some and leave at five in the morning, even though I knew this would give the director an asthma attack.

I took to the road, walking slowly. Why hurry when it was mathematically impossible to gather the assembly by the afternoon (recall that getting to the Guarijíos of Los Conejos alone was a day's walk from Mochibampo)? Before crossing the river I went through a ranch



where a Yori lived alone. He had a large ranch, passed down from his father, and, for being a male and an only child (unusual among the Yoris), ranch work had kept him quite busy over his forty years of life. Perhaps he suffered from the same Sierran solitude that got to Matilde and José, but he had not gone crazy. He was a very nice man. He invited me in to eat and rest. It seemed strange to me that I had not met this man, since I had taken the same road many times before. He agreed. He asked me why I was walking alone, where I was headed, and for what. Then he came to the conclusion that I was lost, that I had taken the wrong road. "Don't worry, listen, I'll loan you my horse. He knows the road, and once you get to Mochibampo just give him a swat and he'll return on his own." I accepted his offer without giving it a second thought and soon I was off to Mochibampo.

He was a docile horse, calm and with a sure foot. If sorcerers exist in the horse world, I think I was riding one. I arrived in Mochibampo at night, and immediately gave the director's message. José Zazueta found nothing funny about it and became angry with me because it was not possible to organize the meeting on such short notice and also because the two of us had just traveled to the Guarijío settlements and if things had been better organized we could have let people know about the meeting then. Then he saw the horse I had arrived on and with a smile of intrigue he said: "Ah, *this* one, this is the mare of that Yori!" Yes, but it is not a mare, José, I replied. "No, tropóloga, that is a mare, and I know her, hee, hee." Well, I decided that if José was saying this it was because he knew, and we didn't bring up the matter again.

In the morning, José sent out messengers to Los Conejos and Bavícora to bring together the assembly. I sent the mare back and went to Burapaco to use the telephone that the Yoris had installed after the guerrilla attacks (it was an antiquated telephone system operated by batteries and a crank handle that you turned in order to get a dial tone. "Curiously," the telephone lines connected all of the Enríquez family ranches with San Bernardo). I called San Bernardo and left a message that the assembly would take place in two days.

The day of the assembly arrived. The central theme was to let them know that soon we would begin working on cleaning up the agrarian census. The rest of the points we got to in perfect order, because the director was not in attendance, which was also his custom. All of us said goodbye the next day and returned "home." José got Don Enríquez to rent me a mule for my return to San Bernardo. Upon arriving and after

handing in my written report to the director, I went to eat with Doña Tayde. She always had outside visitors in her house, people who worked in San Bernardo (teachers, merchants, and indigenistas). One of them knew that *that* man had loaned me his mare, and in astonishment exclaimed: "He loaned you the mare!" Then came the conspiratorial laughter, but nobody dared explain to me why.

Days later, I had waited for the opportune moment to ask a San Bernardo friend why it was that each time the case of the mare came up the men would act astonished and begin to laugh as if they were conspiring against me. She said, "Well, he has sexual relations with his mare." But it didn't stop there. It appears that he was actually in love with her because he didn't permit anyone to touch or go near her, no matter if it was a friend or someone familiar to him. Moreover, he had never had a girlfriend or a lover. They say that from the time of his adolescence, which is when his parents died, he had lived alone on the ranch, the mare his only companion. It was hard to imagine that he felt such compassion toward me that he offered me the most precious thing he had.

After hearing my friend's explanation, I began to ask for more information. She told me that in the Sierra bestiality was not uncommon; many men, she said, are initiated into sexual relations with goats, dogs, pigs, and as adults some continued the practice with cows and mares. I found this revolting and it made me see the men in a different light. As far as women's sexual initiation goes, she told me that while they are supposed to be virgins at the moment of matrimony, in the majority of cases they will have already had sexual relations with the man they are to marry.

But not all of the stories told in the Sierra are equally as impressive. Just like they told stories about Cebolla and Cacahuete on the porch, they also talked about ghosts, of apparitions, of pots of gold, a variety of occurrences that have no known explanation. Along these lines, I recall that Andrés at one time was worried because his cattle were dying for no reason. They were just turning up stiff. He told me about this once when we were on Daniel's porch. The vaqueros told him not to worry, that Santiaguito had been very busy but soon he would take care of the cattle. I informed Manuel, a veterinarian at the Centro Coordinador, that Andrés was having this problem with his cattle. Manuel looked over the case and suspected that in some parts of the Sierra cattle had been drinking water with a high mineral content and that was the cause of the deaths. I thought it would be a good idea to explain all of this to Santiaguito so that he might take more care. I looked for him at Daniel's

house, and Daniel looked at me strangely and said, “Santiaguito is a ghost that the vaqueros believe in.”

The response didn’t surprise me much because before coming to Sonora I had worked in the Chiapas countryside and there, in the livestock zone, there was also a Santiaguito. I thought that quite possibly he existed in all of Mexico’s livestock regions. Santiaguito helps cowboys find lost animals, and to save them from any kind of threat. Sometimes he cures an injured or sick animal, and each night, while the cowboys sleep, Santiaguito is watching over their livestock. But Santiaguito is a ghost, and ghosts do not exist. Manuel and I kept repeating this on our trip to Bavícora to carry out our study of land use there.

The community of Bavícora is on the border with the state of Chihuahua. Situated in the middle of the Sierra Madre Occidental between Sonora and Chihuahua, the climate and vegetation of this community are quite different from those of the semi-desert areas of the Sierra. Here there were ferns and palms in abundance and streams that ran near houses and created small “streets of water” in the town. The air was more dense and fresh, and there were no goats or cows, just sheep and chickens. The Guarijíos of Bavícora also lived in extreme poverty, but they did not have to suffer the constant dismissals from the landowner, or to journey down to the valleys in search of work like those from Mochibampo. Their boss, a woman, did not want to “make trouble.”

It was a very peaceful community, with just fifteen families all related to one another by blood. Its compact settlement pattern also distinguished it from the area in and around Los Conejos and Mochibampo, and although Bavícora was near the Chihuahua border, and the Tarahumaras, it was not farther out than any of the other Guarijío settlements. This is because in general the whole Guarijío region of Sonora lies near the Chihuahua border. This is why from anywhere along the dirt roads that connect San Bernardo to Alamos you can always see rising up in the distance the enormous wall of the Sierra Madre Occidental that marks the border between the two states.

To get to Bavícora from Mochibampo you have to cross the Mayo River at a place called La Junta, located an hour north of Burapaco. From there, you begin to climb and climb. Manuel, who was an expert horseman, always tightened up our saddles before we began a steep ascent or descent. We left early because, as we knew from so many previous trips, it would take ten or more hours. I always had to go to Bavícora accompanied by a guide because I just could never remember

the way. So, Manuel had to serve this function as well as conduct the land-use diagnostic.

On this trip, we got lost. Maybe it was because Manuel was enjoying the vegetation and wildlife along the way. Every few seconds he would show me a lizard, a tarantula, a rattlesnake, and even a deer. He had a “good eye” for spotting animals in the bush. We arrived at a forested area full of pines. As we made our way in we noticed a large area full of colorful flowers that looked like a shag carpet. “Look, Manuel, how beautiful! Let’s rest here for a moment,” I said to him. “Beautiful nothing. This is a field of opium poppies. Let’s get out of here!” he exclaimed. We ran away from there as fast as we could until we got back to a part of the trail that we had already traveled on. We never realized just what a detour we had taken getting into that field.

We arrived in Bavícora after nightfall. Even though it was almost nine, there was great visibility because the October full moon was just beginning. In the morning, while Manuel was out making a visual inspection of land uses, I stayed back with the women, chatting, grinding corn. The people of Bavícora had food. They had tortillas and coffee, and once in a while cooked eggs or chicken (the chickens were very susceptible to distemper).

On the third day we left Bavícora for Burapaco. A woman named Guadalupe prepared some tortillas for the road, for which we were profoundly grateful. We began to go down and down, and in a short time we were at the crossing of the Río Mayo. Manuel insisted that we dismount for a while because he was very tired. I didn’t want to do it because I was certain that if I got off I would not get back on. I finally acceded because Burapaco was just an hour away. We lay on the large, white rocks on the river, looking at a sky full of stars and a full moon. It was about eight at night and we could see clearly the Serrano landscape. We rested for about a half hour before getting back on our horses.

We were crossing the river when a man walked across our path, hardly 10 meters away. It drew our attention because he didn’t stop to greet us as was customary in the Sierra, as he had on an enormous overcoat to cover up in case of a downpour (in that place?), and because he was wearing a large sombrero like the kind they use in the state of Michoacán. Manuel and I focused our vision and discovered that he didn’t have feet, hands, or a face, and that he moved as if he were floating on air not walking on the ground. I wanted to say something to Manuel but just as I started to do so he swatted my horse to make him run at full gallop,

which he did until we got to Daniel's house. There, before we did anything else, Manuel made me promise that I would not tell Daniel or his vaqueros that we had seen a ghost because he was afraid that they would make us take them back to the exact spot where we saw it, which Manuel was not ready to do. He was afraid. Recalling the "vision" scared me, too.

That night, while we were talking on Daniel's porch, we asked the vaqueros so many questions about apparitions that they suspected we had seen something on the road. Manuel was obviously upset. But I understood, based on what the vaqueros said, that if on an October full moon one sees an apparition it is certain that in that place there are large pots of gold, and that these must also be dug up under a full October moon. Why haven't Manuel and I gone back to do that? At the time we probably had a dozen reasons for not doing it, but we still haven't gotten over the possibility that we could be millionaires.

But ghosts do not exist, they have never existed, they are a product of our imagination, of fatigue, nerves, of strange "energy." This is how Cipriano explained things (and me to myself) on the road to Los Conejos. On that occasion almost all of us from the technical team had gone on the trip to assess potential land uses. We went in a caravan, one by one. To get to Los Conejos you have to go upriver through the arroyo Guajaray, and after crossing back and forth at least 28 times, you have to climb a low hill and there you'll find the community. This is the farthest out of the Guarijío communities. Somewhere along this road, near a tree-branch crossing below which resided the deceased guerrilla fighter, buried by his companions, someone tugged at the back of my blouse. I turned, thinking it was Cipriano, since he was the only one right behind me. But Cipriano was some five meters back, in the rear guard. I stopped to wait for him and asked if he had tugged at my blouse. "Maybe it is the dead guerrillero," he said to me, pointing to the crossing that was just in front of us. On our return trip, as we passed by the same place the agronomist, who was in front of me, suddenly cried out, "Whoa, there is a light above the dead man's grave!"

Apart from all this, Los Conejos is a very interesting place. Walking upstream in the arroyo Guajaray there are three enormous caves. Each one contains ancient rock art and has been given a Guarijío name, depending on the figure depicted. One is called "The Priest," another is "The Spotted Mule," while the third, nameless, contains an image that looks like a boomerang and is about a meter in length. Who could doubt that this was Guarijío territory? Although several times I invited

archaeologists from the Sonoran branch of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia to assess the cave art, they could never make it.

Then, on one of my trips to Los Conejos, I met a schoolteacher in Alamos who had the soul of an archaeologist and who was there in the region investigating the caves. He told me that he had walked the entire length of the arroyo Guajaray, all the way to its headwaters, and had found vestiges of houses built very near the riverbed. The structures were extremely small, he told me, which had given him the naïve impression that they had been inhabited by a “race” of dwarves. After that, he continued to invite me along on his explorations, and I lamented that I just didn’t have the time to do it.

On each visit, the Sierra never ceased to amaze us. Sometimes it was because of the apparitions or extraordinary stories; other times, it was for the simple majesty of the Sierra’s physical geography. Crossing the Mayo River in the Institute’s truck was always an adventure, like the time Sergio had to create a path along the muddy river bottom, moving little by little until we got to Burapaco by way of San Juan and Mexiquillo. Only “Sersio” (as the Guarijíos called him) could have done that without getting the truck stuck in the mud. A few times we were stuck without food for several days, and always some Guarijío would kill a rattlesnake and cook it over an improvised campfire, or a Yori would catch us a catfish from the Río Mayo using a very unorthodox system: they would throw dynamite into the river and the explosion would immediately kill a dozen fish (I’ve seen this same technique used by the Zoques in Chimalapa, Oaxaca). But I couldn’t eat any of this. It disgusted me, so I smoked my filterless Delicados and drank water from the wells we encountered along the trail. Of course, as I fasted I held out hope that soon we would come to a home where somebody would sell us even just a tortilla. But on one occasion I went for four days without eating a thing! “It’s better to not eat *that!*” I repeated to myself to reinforce my increasingly weak decision—once, as a psychological aid, I had thought about a worm-ridden beef stew we were served in Mitontic, Chiapas. As soon as the señora turned to fetch the tortillas from the stove, my companion and I quickly stuffed the meat in our boots. We thought we had solved the problem, until the dogs started biting at our feet.

The Sierra had been inhabited for hundreds of years by many generations of Yoris and Guarijíos, but the conflict during that time was to define once and for all who the Sierra really belonged to. I visited the municipal archives, the archives of the Small Propertyholders Association,

and those in the office of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform in Alamos. None of those archives contained any documentation of who had possession of land in the Sierra. I then went to the Navojoa offices of the Small Propertyholders Association and Agrarian Reform, and likewise found nothing. Then I went to Hermosillo to once again visit the archives of the Small Propertyholders Association and Agrarian Reform, and in the libraries of the University of Sonora and the municipal government.

In the university library I came across a book by the Jesuit priest Andrés Pérez de Rivas, *Historia de los Triunfos de Nuestra Santa Fe*, published in 1645, which describes the various indigenous groups living in the entire Serrano region of Sonora and Chihuahua, and who were the objects of conquest. It talks about the Guarijíos, whose traditional settlement had been moved from a place near the edge of the Sierra Tarahumara in Chihuahua down to the vicinity of the ranchos, in Sonora. It appears that a part of the Guarijíos had been forced to move to Sonora to avoid being subjugated, while another part stayed behind to help build a Jesuit mission—this is likely why today there are still two groups with cultural and linguistic differences: the Guarojíos<sup>34</sup> of Chihuahua and the Guarijíos of Sonora. This hypothesis coincides with the explanation of Guarijío origins that Cipriano had told me: “A Guarijío man came down to work these lands, and soon there were many of us.” In other words, the Guarijíos’ origins in Sonora started with a migration, since they did not simply “emerge” from the corn as did the Choles, or from the sea, as did the Chatinos.

This part of the Sierra was probably uninhabited in the sixteenth century, as were many mountainous parts of the nation back then (in fact, the Sierras were zones of refuge for Mexico’s indigenous peoples as they faced colonization). I suppose, though, they were uninhabited for only six months of the year, if the ancient Guarijíos practiced the form of seasonal agriculture that their neighbors, the Rarámuris (Tarahumaras), did. It’s also possible that the Yoris began to colonize the Sierra at least by the eighteenth century, according to my calculations based on the Enríquez family history. Therefore the Sierra belonged to the Guarijíos, given the fact of their permanent possession for two centuries before the arrival of the Yoris. But the Guarijíos had no land titles to back up their claim to possession. Did the Yoris have them?

The Ministry of Agrarian Reform representative in Hermosillo refused to see me on my first visit. On the second I was accompanied by Cipriano and José, and we were ready to camp out on the SRA doorstep if it was necessary. We waited for three days in Hermosillo, until finally the SRA



representative let us into his office. We explained the case to him, gave him copies of all the evidence we had, all of the data and figures that we had gathered up to that point that showed the Guarijíos' socioeconomic situation, the locations of their settlements, the size of the Yori ranches, and their lack of registered properties. Was this man the kind of positivist functionary whom we could dazzle with our survey data? He most definitely was not. He didn't even want to have a look at our paperwork, saying that he was just far too busy. We were to leave our "archive" with the secretary and make an appointment with the representative for a later date. As we left the office, the secretary made note of everything, but also offered to help us out on his own time. He promised to research the various parcels to see how they appeared in the registry. He made the appointment with the representative and told us that by then he would have the results of his investigation. He also asked us to be careful, and to avoid going into the Sierra alone because "in Sonora land issues are resolved with gunfire."

I was very nervous about the entire situation, and the secretary's words made me even more nervous. That night we stayed in an Hermosillo hotel and I went to the pool for a swim, to calm my nerves. There, at the edge of the pool, sat a woman reading a book, waiting for her husband to return. We talked for a while and she told me about the book she was reading, a very uncommon text, I thought: *The Story of the Gray-Car Gang* (*La Historia de la Banda del Coche Gris*). It was the tale of the criminal underworld with detailed color photographs (it was an expensive book). Why would a woman like that read this kind of stuff? And why, at that moment, was I having this exchange with her? She was the wife of a judicial policeman who specialized in narco trafficking and political intrigue, "not just any *judicial*," she said to me. And to better understand him, she was reading books like that. This is where we were in the discussion when suddenly we heard a very loud boom that I thought could only have come from a cannon or from a shootout between cartels. I immediately remembered how to dive, and I went straight for the bottom of the pool. All I could think about was that according to the laws of physics, a bullet could easily hit the water and change direction. After a few seconds, I poked my head out of the water. The woman looked at me with astonishment. "It's okay. It was just a light bulb exploding in the kitchen," she said to me calmly. My response to this imagined threat worried me. How would I react in the Sierra if confronted by a real threat?

In the meantime, since I had discovered a copy of Howard Scott Gentry's book in the University of Sonora Library, I decided to continue on with my investigation of the history of Guarijío settlement. I also went to Tucson and Phoenix, and upon my return found out that our director of the Centro Coordinador had commissioned one of our drivers to conduct research in the Alamos municipal archives (which I had already done). "We can't stop work because you go on vacation," he said to me. Vacation! I was furious. He himself had authorized my trip to Arizona (and had given me such a small per diem that I was forced to subsist on Coca-Cola and fast food). It was clear to me that the director was looking for a way to make me disappear from his sight forever. But I continued on.

The lawyer who worked in the Alamos SRA office suggested that we should form an agrarian committee as soon as possible, as the previous one had been disbanded. He also confessed to me his suspicion that our director had a secret agenda in the Guarijío land negotiations and for that reason didn't want me standing in his way. He also suggested that I be very cautious with the Yoris in the Sierra, and he even offered me a pistol. I thought about everything he told me, but really I didn't believe it. It didn't seem possible to me, and I didn't have reasons to think otherwise, even though the director and I had had our problems. I told the director that it was urgent for us to re-constitute the agrarian committee, and he said we needed to wait for the attorney from the INI state office. I then went to look for the lawyer in Alamos to see if he could convince the Centro Coordinador's director of the need to reconvene the committee. He responded kindly that he could. A few days later he arrived in San Bernardo, and was able to convince the director. Then, we convened an assembly in Mochibampo with the attorney present, along with his boss and the rest of the indigenistas from our team. Months later, however, this committee was also disbanded by the Hermosillo SRA, which claimed that the proceedings required the presence of the state representative as witness. The Alamos attorney thought that this was not the main reason for the disbanding, but rather it had more to do with the wishes of the candidate for state governor, who wanted to be there as part of his campaign. He had been in the region, making all kinds of promises, handing things out, and a short time later he became Sonora's governor.

But I believe that the creation of the second agrarian committee was stacked in the Yoris' favor, as a few weeks later, when I traveled to Mochibampo to pick up José and Cipriano for the meeting with the SRA

representative in Hermosillo, a Yori approached me on the trail and pointed a .38 Special (a gift of the judicial police) at me, and said: "You have come once again to agitate the Indians. Get out of here or one of these days I will kill you." It took me a few seconds to react to the threat and to realize that what he had in his hand was a pistol and not just a bunch of metal; the only thing I could think to say was: "I am an employee of the federal government, and the only thing I am doing here is my job. If you kill me you will have problems with the government." I turned my back to him and continued down the road. My counter-threat had worked, and a few short seconds later I heard his horse hoofing away. I continued on for quite a while, feeling like my legs were going to collapse under me from fright.

That night in Mochibampo I had a nightmare (this time it was me, rather than the director). The soldiers were looking for José, Cipriano, and me. Their footsteps made the same rhythm as the soldiers who had oppressed the student protestors in 1968 with the difference that none of us managed to escape and we died, riddled with more holes than a vegetable strainer, shot up by a pair of automatic Uzis. Luckily, nightmares, like all things, come to an end, but this dream was symptomatic. There had been very real threats, and the Guarijío region wasn't even the most dangerous, as our assistant director reminded us: "Try going to Chiapas or Oaxaca."

A year before, when I was in Chiapas, I had attended a meeting of indigenistas in Ocozocoautla, and there the chief of security for the state drew close to my ear to say to me: "Be careful because, in this state, we don't like communists." I was not a communist, unfortunately, but I was working for the Institute of Anthropological Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and during that time UNAM was on strike. For a small-minded person like the *judicial*, a strike was a communist activity. As it always is with small-minded people, one must always proceed with caution, and even more so when they come armed. I understood this to be the case in Chiapas, but I also know of many other similar or worse cases in Chiapas, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Puebla, Hidalgo, and throughout the country.

On the other hand, it is also true that the places where the Instituto Nacional Indigenista works are generally very isolated, with little or no contact with government offices, and, because of this, there is often a lack of basic services and the absence of basic constitutional rights. The indigenista presence, therefore, does not only work across different issues, and it is not simply an agent of change, but rather at times it imposes a

form of regional or local order such that it can become a kind of third force with which different groups in conflict must negotiate. Margarita Nolasco has recently suggested that one of the great accomplishments of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista has been to enforce the officially guaranteed price for corn in indigenous regions. I would add to her comment—made in 1990 during a seminar on indigenismo—that in the most isolated places the Instituto has been able to accomplish even more, given that it is oftentimes the only government institution servicing these populations. The indigenist presence, therefore, becomes a third force of regional regulation with such strength that a Yori, who felt intimidated by it, had to threaten me with his pistol.

But the nightmare I had in Mochibampo robbed me of sleep, and I spent several hours looking at the starry sky, as if I were intuiting what might happen and how sad that would be if it were my destiny. I liked the Sierra, I enjoyed drinking water straight from the river, from the clay pot placed over a forked tree trunk on the patio of a Yori or Guarijío home. I savored those enormous flour tortillas as if they were sustenance from the gods, and I can't recall enjoying a bath more than in the Río Mayo, or in the arroyo at San Bernardo, accompanied by Rosario. Cots made of agave fiber or strands of cowhide were the most comfortable and cool to sleep on, and I came to identify with the horses and mules I rode, like the noble *Difunta*. I remember on one occasion, after Cipriano and I had been traveling a long while, my mule had been bleeding from the chafing of the saddle, my weight, the heat, and because of many hours of work. I decided to dismount. Then, Cipriano said to me: "No, Queresa (sic), that is a *mule*, fuck it. Why else was it born an animal." But I couldn't keep going that way. Maybe I didn't need anthropological training to know the region, to understand my co-workers, or to make decisions. Or maybe I did use it but unconsciously, because after the first visit to the Sierra I don't remember having read any of my books. Devereux had probably not been very explicit about the concept of adaptation and about how the field researcher comes to know otherness. It was possible that *I* could have been the object of study in those moments of reflection. But I only had a few nights left in Mochibampo, though at that moment I didn't realize it. The next day, as soon as Cipriano arrived, we all left for Hermosillo.

In Hermosillo, the SRA representative had told us: "We are investigating the case. Please return within fifteen days." That was all? How dare he? I said to José and Cipriano. We then left his office to go

look for his secretary, since previously he had offered to investigate the matter on his own. "They [those in the Guarijío zone] are part of the national territory," the secretary told us. "There is not a single property title, and they're not even paying fees for a government land concession." The secretary promised to give us a copy of this statement in our next meeting with the representative. We jumped for joy. I invited José and Cipriano out for a few beers, but they did not want to break with the pledge they had made together as a group to abstain from drinking alcohol. So we drank sodas instead. José and Cipriano were so happy that they offered to hold a *tuburada*—a ceremony with many meanings: to give thanks, to make requests, to commemorate—in Mochibampo.

But we didn't realize at the time that the secretary was never going to give us a copy of that statement. The SRA representative had prohibited it as soon as he found out. We also didn't know that the representative's delays were a tactic to buy time enough to inform the Small Propertyholder's Association of our investigation so that they, in turn, could advise the Yoris in time to register their lands. We also didn't know that the representative, since the time of our first visit, had been investigating the three of us. We arrived back in San Bernardo and while I typed up my report for the director, one of my *compañeros* came over to tell me to be careful because the director was looking for a way to dismiss me from the Centro Coordinador Indigenista. I thanked him for the information, although by that point I thought that my situation should seem obvious to everyone.

I went to the *tuburada*. José asked me to lead the prayers to the Holy Cross, and say the rosary. It was a great honor for me, and I told him so. But I couldn't do it because I didn't know the rosary. Juan Enríquez, a Yori healer, took charge of the prayers, as is the custom; the Guarijíos likewise don't know the rosary. Years later, when I presented my bachelor's thesis on the Guarijíos, maestro Francisco Córdoba observed that "all field anthropologists should have with them a copy of the rosary, just as much as they should have their field diary." Well, I think that each person approaches fieldwork in a different way, has their own way of "skinning the cat," and if there was anything I learned in my experience with the Guarijíos it was that I had no reason at all to disguise myself as an anthropologist. On the contrary, I just had to be myself, just like them (Others don't need to disguise themselves from each other).

When I returned to San Bernardo, the director had one of his attacks of hysteria, this one provoked by the report I had left him before leaving

for the tuburada. In that report I revealed that the Guarijío lands were actually national lands, and I had requested that he insist that the INI office for the state of Sonora send us an attorney. Until that moment I had not understood one of the basic rules of the indigenista bureaucracy: never tell your boss what needs to be done, no matter how critical the matter. To understand this lesson, I had to go through a most unpleasant evaluation and audit, which the director had requested from the Mexico City offices. They sent to San Bernardo an arrogant investigator, whose first demand was I show him each and every one of the pieces of paper I had in my desk. Then, I had to show him that all of my reports were up to date, and, after that, prove to him that my reports all corresponded to the tasks I was charged with carrying out. Finally, he forced me to show him some hospitality by feeding him and allowing him to stay at my house. Then, we had to travel together into the Sierra so he could see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears what I had written about in my reports.

We went to the Sierra, but because it was the month of June, the investigator became dehydrated along the way. When we arrived in Burapaco, Juanito Enríquez prepared for him a “magic” serum. The remedy brought him back to consciousness and also forced him to rest for the entire afternoon. I told José it was urgent to gather together an assembly for my evaluation. The next day we came together, but because of the late notice, only the Guarijíos from Mochibampo showed up. The auditor began to address the crowd: “I am here from the main offices of . . . blah, blah, blah . . . the Instituto Nacional Indigenista in Mexico City. I was asked by Mr. . . . what’s his name . . . to conduct an exhaustive investigation of the work of this anthropologist. As you know, there are times when the Instituto Nacional Indigenista must . . . blah, blah, blah.” Nobody said a word. They all sat there staring at him, waiting for him to say something else. José, with his characteristic lack of tact, spoke first: “Queresa, tell us why this man is here.” This is one of the few luxuries that a field indigenista has: to have the trust and respect of the people whom she is working for to such a degree that, when an arrogant functionary arrives, it comes clearly into view. In that assembly, the Guarijíos threatened to have the auditor removed from his post if they ran me out of San Bernardo! Guarijío humor is incredible sometimes, seeming to be somewhere between that of the Seris and the Yaquis for its combination of creativity and indignation.

When we returned to San Bernardo, the investigator wrote his report and read it out loud in a meeting with the Technical Council. The ruling was that my work could be qualified as “good,” if it weren’t for having

usurped the functions of the director and also because “the anthropologist, because of her bad temper, does not get along well with her co-workers” (sic!). I agreed with the first criticism and even accepted that I had usurped the authority of the director without knowing it. But even so, the supposed usurpation was surely because the director, in the more than one year that we worked together, had only gone into the Guarijío zone four times. As for the second criticism, I argued that they had hired me as an anthropologist, not to be a clown for entertaining everyone. The auditor returned to Mexico City.

I continued with my visits to the Yoris to negotiate the land issue. Of the fourteen families that had land holdings, six had agreed to sell (among those, my new friend Andrés). Then, around that time, I received a radiogram from the state coordinator requesting my immediate presence in his office in Hermosillo. Once there, the interview centered around three types of “requests.” First was that I “confess” to whether or not I was part of a “plot” that was being organized against the general director in Mexico City. “No,” I responded—although I did know something about this charge from a letter sent to me by a friend. The second “request” was that I reveal which wing of the communist party I belonged to, because he knew from a “trusted source” that I was a guerrilla! This part of the Holy Inquisition showed me that *judiciales* aren’t the only ones with small minds, but that small-mindedness also exists in institutions of social welfare. I told the coordinator that I had no part in any of that, and that I was worried about the impression they had of me because it was suggesting to me that I was risking my life in the Guarijío zone without any institutional support. The third point was more like a news flash: from that moment my research project with the Guarijíos would be cut off.

I returned to San Bernardo feeling down in the dumps. While the director walked happily by my desk, as a way to forget my sorrows, and the feeling of impotency faced with this type of authoritarianism, I just wrote and wrote about nonsensical things. The study of land tenure in the Guarijío zone was the only project that truly interested me—the rest of the projects were, in my inexperienced view, focused on folklore: recovering handcraft traditions or descriptions of culture. The director knew quite well what was happening, and even commissioned Toño, our driver, to continue on with the research in my place.

Meanwhile, our doctor, who had so deftly cultivated good relations with the director, announced that the Instituto Nacional Indigenista had just promoted him to the position of director of the Centro Coordinador



Indigenista in Chihuahua. In his place came another doctor who quickly gained our trust and even the affection of the Guarijíos. This doctor, Antonio Alcocer, possessed anthropological talents, and immediately went to work looking for cultural information that would help him better understand the illnesses that plagued the indigenous. He had worked in Chiapas and, during his stay with the Tzotziles, had learned their Tzotzil language. Antonio's professionalism made me see that in more than a year, I had not learned a single Guarijío word. Antonio was very enthusiastic, and he was in love with the idea of indigenism, with indigenous cultures, with the Indians themselves.

Years later, we came across each other in Chiapas, just a few days before the eruption of the Chichonal volcano. He was the director of the Centro Coordinador Indigenista, and along with Héctor Jiménez and Fernando Aceves, was one of the first indigenistas to lead the evacuation of Francisco León and other nearby towns. Antonio later told me about the difficulty of getting people to abandon their towns:

They did not want to leave. We explained to them that the fire, the gases, and the ash would devour them, but many sought shelter in the church, convinced that it was the end of the world and that their saints would protect them. Then, it occurred to me that I could load the saints into the Institute's truck, and that then the people would follow me. As they left the church, the roof caved in. Fortunately, nobody had stayed inside. Then we walked as fast as we could to get out of there. But saving lives was very difficult. Snakes, birds, all kinds of animals running in our path to save their lives. The gases hovered along the pathway, about a meter above the ground. I saw one man throwing water around to clear the air. As I walked past, I noticed that he was missing an ear [from the explosions] . . . it seemed like the end of the world.

I told Antonio that he should write about that experience, but he said: "I just don't have time right now, *compañera*."

During the time I had spent with him in Sonora I had really caught Antonio's fever, and it had helped me forget about the Holy Inquisition. And it was around that time that I decided to do a training workshop on the federal Agrarian Reform Law with the Guarijíos. Of course, the director was against it. So I paid for three books on agrarian law from my own pocket, and on my days off I would go to Mochibampo with José and the Guarijíos to study the law. It was extremely complicated. I don't know how much they learned, but at the very least I think they

came away knowing that every piece of paper that they sign should carry an official stamp and that any and all of their declarations should be signed by a witness. This was proved to me when, later on, I saw José request that the SRA director sign an informational bulletin distributed by his own institution! The bulletin gave notice that soon technicians would be arriving to form the agrarian committee, for the third time.

But we could not hold the training sessions in Los Conejos or in Bavícora because once the director found out what we were doing he prohibited me from going into that area. This was just too much, and I immediately went to Mochibampo to talk it over with José. I stayed there for a few days, talking things over, until I came to the conclusion that I should just resign my post at the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. I asked José to call an assembly so that I could gather my thoughts.

I reported to the assembly on the general situation and advances in the legal negotiations on the land. I also handed over to Cipriano, José Zazueta, and José Ruelas the books on agrarian reform law so that at the very least they would have them as a reference. I also gave them a copy of the project that José Zazueta and I had put together for the proposed three new population centers for which we had designed housing, laid out the sites where potable water service would be provided, the health clinic constructed, the school, and also the areas for crops, livestock, and for uses of the Río Mayo floodplain. The project was a model to be applied in Sototanchaca (Los Conejos), Mesa Colorada (Mochibampo), and Bavícora. Two years later, the project became a reality. The satisfaction I felt to see things wrapping up in Mesa Colorada made me recognize how the gratification of anthropology goes much further than publishing an essay or a book.

In the assembly, the Guarijíos insisted that I stay. They said they were going to speak with the Institute's general director. And José declared: "We are going to remove the director and you can take his place, Queresa." I couldn't accept the offer. I had my reasons. First of all, I didn't want to be director of anything because I didn't feel capable and I wasn't interested in performing those duties. Second, I was just tired of all the problems, of being in that political, existential, economic, and work uncertainty, having to renew my contract every six months. I was confused about my work, my profession, my life to such a degree that I didn't even feel like continuing on with what I had been doing. They understood. I promised to help them however I could from Mexico City. They pledged the same to me and with that we said goodbye, as if we would see each other the following morning.

The help I could give them from Mexico City and outside of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista was very important: filing a formal complaint about the Guarijíos' situation with a media outlet. This produced excellent results, as it applied political pressure to the state governor and to the Yoris who were still resisting. A few months later, the man in possession of the land in and around Mesa Colorada sold it to the Guarijíos, while the other landowners who had agreed to sell did the same. The Instituto Nacional Indigenista paid with funds from COPLAMAR. Then, about a year later, the government gave the Guarijíos provisional possession of what are now their ejidos. The agrarian reform process was expedited and in 1982 they received a presidential resolution that gave them approximately 20,000 hectares. The edicts, published in the *Diario Oficial*<sup>35</sup> (May 7, 1982, and May 6, 1983), describe the dimensions of the Yoris' plots, their legal situation, and list the various technical details. After reading the decrees, I realized that the more astute Yoris had registered their holdings almost immediately after we had begun our research with the SRA. In reality, though, the Sierra, from a legal point of view, has always been *una sierra de nadie*.<sup>36</sup>

Three years after my departure we celebrated our triumph. José and I were drinking beer on Guarijío land. The promise had been kept. Cipriano, excellent singer and dancer that he is, danced the *pascola*<sup>37</sup> the entire night in the tuburada, taking his turn at the harp with the other musicians. José Ruelas played his classic role as singer and leader of prayer to the Holy Cross.

José Zazueta died in 1987. I visited his grave for the first time in May 1990. There, at his grave, we remembered his courage, his women, and that unforgiving river with no place to cross. But most of all I remembered the moment when we had said goodbye in that last assembly. In less than 24 hours I had packed my bags, handed in my resignation, and abandoned San Bernardo, leaving behind a personal experience and a collective history that I was unable to fully understand until that moment that I stood at his grave. To my back were the small gray hills, the aridity, the lizards, friends and enemies, a handful of good Yoris. There were also the bad ones, the passionate ones, the dreamers, the victims, the cruel ones, and hundreds of Guarijíos, "dying of hunger." With me I took their stories, their fears, their hopes. I kept the best gift of all, and it was something that Cipriano said to me: "When I say that I see you, I am not only saying that I *see* you, I say that you *are*, that you exist. . . ."

*Mixcoac, Mexico City, 1990*

## LIKE A PAINTED FOOTPRINT

CIPRIANO BUITIMEA ROMERO AND MARÍA TERESA VALDIVIA DOUNCE

*In memory of José Zazueta Yoquibo*

Once when Naty took me for a walk along the river, I saw something jump behind the rocks. It was very agile and quickly disappeared, which is why I thought it might be a deer. So I asked Naty, "What was that?" She replied, "A Guarijío. They are the Indians who live here, in the Sierra."

—*Taydé Parra, San Bernardo*

*Of Cipriano's Life*

I was born near Guamúchil, about four kilometers down, in a place called Cueva Larga. Guamúchil is just before you get to Los Bajíos. That's where I was born. I have four sisters and two brothers, plus one who died of sickness because in those days there was no doctor. We were very poor. We didn't have anything and our father worked with the people who had resources, with the ranchers. They paid him very little, at that time about 5 pesos.<sup>38</sup> My father worked from sunup to sundown. Sometimes he went to work and they would pay him with five liters of corn for the day, for the whole day, from the early morning until the sun went down, just to earn five liters of corn to feed us. That's the way it was in those days. Everyone worked with the only people they could, the ranchers. To some of us the ranchers provided steady work and often they would let us sharecrop. But the people got nothing from that [arrangement] because to work and support ourselves we needed provisions—five liters of corn, or often they would give them a liter of salt, and that's . . . that's how they supported themselves back then, that's how it was when I was old enough to understand.

Paid in provisions, it was very little what people earned back then. Our mothers would go out to look for—when there was fruit—pitaya, etcho, *tempisque*, which by the month of May is beginning to give a little ripe fruit.<sup>39</sup> Everyone ate wild fruits. Since they had nothing else to eat they had to look for it in the *monte*.<sup>40</sup> There they found the well-known spots with beehives and honey. And there was a root called *chíchiguo*—it's a little

root that sends up a shoot and it turns yellow when it dries out.<sup>41</sup> Those they had to dig for us to eat. All of this is what the poor people ate.

Often people would put together traps to hunt deer. Back then there was nothing to kill with, no rifles or anything, so they hunted deer with this trap that they made with a rope tied to a branch. The deer would lasso himself in it, and there they would grab and butcher him. With the javelinas it was the same. If they had a good dog he would chase after them and run them into the caves. Then they would light a fire: with just the smoke the javelina would die inside the cave. They also looked for fish in the arroyos and rivers. Before they built the Mocúzarit reservoir there were catfish, *mojarras*, and before that there were mullets and shrimp that we Guarijíos called *cochirones* (Spanish speakers called them *cauque*, not shrimp).<sup>42</sup> Now none of that is left.

Then I got big enough to work, caring for calves and making money, and that way I could help out my father. I earned five liters of corn. That is what they paid me, and also some extra clothes that the bosses would give me. I was never too shy, probably because hunger made me look for food wherever I could find it, and the same went for clothing. After that I could buy a little bit of clothing for my father and mother. I was the eldest son, so I had to work.

At around twelve years old, I left for the valley. I went through Quiriego so I could sell four sacks of corn, since there, I heard, they paid better. I ended up selling them to a man who offered me work, so I stayed and didn't return home. And that's when I began to move around. I said to myself, "Maybe I can make a little more money further down" [near the coast]. I went with one of my uncles. My father was too shy and wouldn't go farther away to look for work. So I ventured out there, out in the valley to see how much I could earn, to see if I could make more money. Back then men earned two or three pesos a day, but in the beginning they were paying me five. Then they started paying me the same as everybody else.

I liked working down there. For ten years I was working in the valleys without coming home. I was in Obregón, Caborca, Tepic, and Navolato, harvesting tobacco, cotton, whatever there was. I left my father and mother here, abandoned. I came home because my mother sent me a letter, saying that I should come home to see her. She was alone with her five small children because our father had gone out looking for beehives in the monte. He had gone far away and died. When they found him all that was left was a bony corpse. He had been dead for fifteen days or so. He had gone into the monte looking for meat and honey.

Maybe a rock fell on him, or maybe it was the dogs that he had with him . . . I don't know what happened. So I came home. At the time I was in Sinaloa and I had to leave my work to come home.

Back home, I was planting corn for about four years, near here by Maquipo, near Los Bajíos. At that time the Guarijíos were not planting sesame, just corn we planted. After those four years I left to look for work and I took my mother with me.<sup>43</sup> I had to find a better job, a more consistent job. I earned 15 pesos [per day] at the Borboa Ranch, in Quiriego. I worked there for two years, working on fences, clearing land and all that, and planting sesame, but planting it for the patrón . . . you could not plant it for yourself.

Leaving that work, we had to go further away, further down, because there wasn't enough work to support my brothers and sisters and my mother. We were seven siblings, four women and three men. I took all of them with me. We went to the area they call Arenera, in [Ciudad] Obregón. There I was working in a brickyard. We made money, and we were there until my siblings had grown up.

When I was working in the valley I did not miss the Sierra. There, I was always able to do whatever I wanted because I went to unfamiliar places, worked peacefully, and ate well. I had little desire to return to the Sierra. I could see myself staying down there. Here [in the Sierra] there was more poverty and nothing to eat. So I did not miss anything. My family did miss it, but because I liked it so much down in the valley I couldn't come back. Then, I left my mother in the valley and came to Los Bajíos. Since my siblings were working by that time, they didn't want to come back. They liked it there because they were not hungry. There was much to eat. But there was a woman I liked here and I had to come back to be with that woman because she was from here. I liked to plant corn and by then they were letting us plant a little, so I came back to plant corn.<sup>44</sup>

If I had been born in a town, I would have looked for a way to work in a place where there was more action. There in town, ever since white people began to live there, there was always a school. I would have studied whatever I wanted, and I would have got work. I would like to have studied engineering so I could be in the campo. That is why at about ten years I left to explore, to seek things out, to ask questions. But always with the same consciousness as my people, not just for pleasure but because of the hunger. I left the Sierra to understand the problems of which we were victims, the Guarijío tribe. All of that I remember.

Well, that was how my life went. At that time almost no one from here, from the Sierra, left to work in other places. Maybe it was because they just did not know . . . but they did not go anywhere else. They just stayed here. And they all lived in a backward way.

### *How the People Lived*

Here in the monte we were suffering. It was very little, what we earned, and we were poorly clothed and poorly fed. I remember well that that is how we lived. We planted as sharecroppers and they took all of the harvest from us, the ones who we owed money to, the patrones. We paid them in corn, and that is why they made us plant, so that they, the Yoris, could take it. And that's the way we lived, all of us who are here in the Sierra, all of us the same. Those who lived in Mesa Colorada, in Bavícora, in Los Conejos, in Burapaco, and in all the ranchos, it was the same for them, too. Then everyone went to work down below, looking for better-paying working, because here they earned nothing. They would work for a week in the valleys, or two weeks, some working twenty days, thirty days, depending on the type of work they could get there. But they always returned here.

For us, we like living in the Sierra. We are not used to town. We have always lived dispersed; that is, we are all living scattered across the Sierra. This custom nobody can take away, that's what the Guarijío tribe says. It is not our custom to create towns, although they tell us we should come together in a big town. Since we are used to having animals, we have always lived dispersed, our houses apart from each other [hidden] in the hillsides, that is what this means.

And I also say this because I know my people and I know myself, and I would never want to live in town. Only the ones who have money can live together, not scattered. They all live together, they like each other, and they have the money to build a town, that is each house is built to last a long time. It is not the same for us because we do not have the resources to build a house that will last for a long time. We have only provisional homes. From time to time we change to a different house. We also have huts made of palm thatch, or royal palm as they say. This palm grows from the ground, and we bring it from its source and with it this is how we have been living, making our little houses, and with the palm that is how we protect ourselves from the rain. This knowledge comes from our parents. We have always been backward. During all the



time that we have been in this world, do not believe that we have ever had the opportunity to build a good house. It has never been that way. We came into this world to be the worst off, to even be without clothes.

I do not know what year the Mexican war happened, but from then on there was never room for indigenous people to dress well, or to own anything.<sup>45</sup> That was our style of life. Everyone, all of us here in the Sierra, have never owned a decent house, just a palm shack. To this day we have not been able to have a decent house because we don't have the means. As the saying goes, "A person who is born poor will always be poor." There is nothing more for us than just work. And just enough work to feed ourselves, not more.

We Guarijíos have never missed a day of work, the same as all poor people—since there can also be poor white people. We poor have to work to live. We work for our needs. That is why we can say that just we Guarijíos work, because all poor people have to work. But white people, they are not all poor. There are very few who don't have money, those who work as day laborers. We Guarijíos are all equally down and out. No one will tell you that so-and-so is doing well, that he is eating whatever he wants, or that he has money to buy things. We are all equally poor.

And before, when our children were born, we would not register them<sup>46</sup> because we lived like animals, our children growing up without schooling, doctors, there was nothing. . . . Well all of that was lacking, but no one thought of saying, "I am going to put my children in school in Quiriego or in Alamos." Nobody said that. On the contrary, they were afraid. People then were kind of wild. And they didn't register their children.

The Yoris were the ones who had judges, schools, everything. But they too did not say, "We are going to build a school here." They did not help anyone, even seeing that there were so many people in the Sierra without schooling. Not one of the ranchers who lived out here helped us out. But they also lived almost exactly like us. A few of them put their children in school, but for the most part they lived like us. They were ignorant, too, because they hadn't moved into the city where there were many people. They did go to the city, yes, but only to purchase goods, not to stay and study.

When people got sick they looked for remedies in the monte. Back then there were a few people, as there are now, who knew how to heal the sick. But there are very few of us who know how to cure, and they don't practice medicine. Well, they do practice medicine, but only to cure people suffering from fright, or who have been cursed, things like



*Cipriano Buitimea and family. (Photographer unidentified)*

that. There are still people who can cure children and the elderly. There are bonesetters, healers, people of all types, depending on the illness. But doctors who came from outside, doctors from the city, from other towns, we've never had that here. So we struggled, using whatever remedies we could find here in the monte, and with that we would take the illness out. There are remedies here, many, but there are few people who know them. That's how we were, struggling. That's how I was, struggling, and so was my father. Because I know very well that when I was little and got sick, my father would go out to look for remedies out there in the monte, trying to see which one worked to alleviate me. Everyone struggled the same way. When a child got sick, we could not just say, "I am going to take him to wherever there is a doctor," since we didn't have the money to travel. We were also ashamed to go down to the town, or to the city, because we didn't have good clothes. Here, among the Guarijío, we always wore whatever clothes we could make. Back then there was no place to buy clothes. When I started to become aware of the world, I knew old men and women who still wore the *zepeta*, which is a loincloth. They also wore a *contesie*, which was a square piece of fabric, tied round the neck and fastened to the belt, that they used to cover their shoulders. That's what they still wore when I awoke in this dream. Some of us, those who had them, wore pants that were full of holes and patched up everywhere. I later saw some people who were going around without a shirt, without pants, with nothing. Only a few had pants. It got to the point that people would say, if you had pants, and they were not patched up, more or less you were a rich person.

In those days, people made their clothes with one or two meters of cloth. That is all they used. They made shirts with sleeves, and pants. They also bought cuttings in San Bernardo or Alamos to make denim jeans, as they called them. The adults, the parents, had to walk some three days to get to where they sold clothes. They bought very little, but they still had to leave to get it. In the same way, many people went all the way to the sea to bring back salt when they needed it. They took burros with them, and they went all the way down to Navojoa, walking for as long as a week just to get there, and another week to get back. All of the Yoris also had to go all the way to the sea to get salt. They paid people to go for them; they didn't go themselves, but they would get mule drivers to bring it back from Navojoa.

We could only purchase things when we had no debts with the patrón. We would look for used pants, but even then people did not have enough

money to buy pants. And we didn't wear factory-made hats or shoes. The hats we wore back then were made of palm from right here in the Sierra. The huarache sandals we wore were made of uncured leather, ones that the Yoris gave to us. They would give us a piece of dry leather, we would soak it, and from that would make huaraches. Leather belts were made the same way. Men cut their hair short, but they left a tuft in the front that they would comb to the back, to the nape of the neck, the way this old man from Chinahuiro does, Don Rómulo. That's how people went about back then.

I had to like it back in the day, too. I was like everyone else. If I was wearing a pair of raw-leather huaraches I was feeling good. But once I had grown older and was walking around barefoot, everywhere I went I was getting stuck with thorns lying in the path. That's the way it was, the thorns never went away, not even for a moment. Here in the Sierra it is very thorny. And the women, well it was the same, and they wore huaraches even less in those times. They all went around barefoot. They also wore torn dresses and went around without a *rebozo*. One or another wore a *rebozo*, those big ones, but today they hardly wear them around here.

I never thought, never imagined that our lives would change here one bit. I lived my life without thinking about that. I don't think that the [state] governor knew much about how we were, or he just ignored the indígenas. He had us there, forgotten. We sometimes heard about the governors of the republic, municipal governors, but we were not capable of confronting them because our mothers and fathers were wild, like animals. But the *pequeños propietarios*, they were the masters of everyone in the Sierra. The rich did not want to hand over the land, and they acted fiercely. "Do not give them anything," they said. But the Guarijío tribe made them rich because we were the only ones who worked. Where did they work? They were not even capable of cutting a single fencepost, or of running wire. Nor did they plant with their own hands. All they knew how to do was give orders. They would say, "This year we are going to plant." Lies! They never planted. The people who planted were the poor. That is where our hand would be, the hands of the rich, I think, because we made the Yoris wealthy with our work. The poor worked because we were very backward. But even then, as much as we worked for them, no one ever said, "Well so-and-so doesn't have a place to plant, so we are going to give him a little plot of land to help him out." No. Never. They never think about anyone but themselves.

The *pequeños propietarios* never gave us poor Guarijíos a chance to



plant. Instead, they would let us sharecrop. But those of us who were poor sharecropped because we knew well that they would give us something to eat. They would tell us, "If you want food, well, come with me, I will give you a little bit of corn." But what happened was that they would give us five liters of corn, and they would tell us that it would have to last a week, but how are five liters of corn supposed to last a week! And even worse if one had three or five kids, and here people had kids. . . . And after the Guarijío harvested, well they did not even pay the poor guy, and he would have to pay his debt in payments. Many times we did not have enough money, and so were left poor and with nothing to eat. We worked so hard, clearing fields, planting, plowing, all of that, and we just stayed the same. Everything we harvested, even what we had sharecropped, they took it all. For as much as he worked, a poor man could not hardly earn a cent, and he was always in the same place. We just kept working the same, and because of that the fight began. We wanted land so that we could stop working with the Yoris. The whole tribe was tired, even more tired than our animals because they made us work from sunup to sundown. We no longer wanted it that way. We didn't want to work with them anymore. We had grown old from all that work. Many of us had died working from the fatigue that got to them. *There were almost no old people left!*

The patrones would rise early to seek out the people who owed them money, they would go right to their homes, get them out of bed: "Now, come with me, back to my home so you can cut me a little firewood." And that is how they would give them tasks on their fenced-in lands, and that poor man would work. But he was always beaten down and poorly fed. All the more reason to fight. Because of this, when we were in the struggle everyone agreed that it was the right thing to do, and we were organizing. If we had continued with them [Yoris], if we hadn't found a way to fight back, if we had continued working with them, well who knows what would have happened. Maybe they would force us to work with whippings, they would have forced us to work.

But when we first started to assemble they would beat our leaders, those who were leading the people. They would send us to the judicial police because those with money did not want us to join together. They wanted to keep us working all of the time because they do not work. Well, they do work, but in a different way. You can think of it as working but with money. Those with money do not work with their arms, but a poor person has to work, he has to bash up his hands, arms, body, and

he has to do it while tired. But those with money do not have to beat themselves up so much, they just order around the workers as they sit comfortably in the shade. Such is the life of money.

A poor person, no, he has to work in the sun, and when it is most punishing is in the month of May, when the sun is very strong. But that is the way one has to work, he has to suffer and to sweat in order to eat. If he does not, he will die of hunger. One has to plant and harvest in order to eat. All of this is what we have among us: suffering. We were like animals, just living and working with the rich, and like with their animals the rich would give us just a little bit of salt, and with that we would have to be satisfied because the hunger made us work. Just a little bit more and we would not have made it. Because of this, we fought even harder, and when they saw that we were organized, in groups, the pequeños propietarios went against us.

#### *A Little More about Customs*

Before, those with money, the Yoris, would hire musicians with a phonograph for their dances. None of us Guarijíos were willing to get close enough to hear the music. We were always embarrassed because we had no clothes. The women were embarrassed, too, for the same reason, and that is why they did not go either. The only custom we had was to hold a fiesta called *tuburada*, and we continue to do it. That is our entertainment, the Guarijíos. It is a custom that we have. The *tuburada* is part of the faith in God. First it is about faith in God because that is what a grandparent told me. He also once told me a story from long ago, when I could hear him speak. He was already old when I was little, and he told me this story. He said that the fiesta was a custom that we Guarijíos had, that we always had to keep holding the fiesta.

When back then I didn't know why we had the fiesta, my grandfather told me that it was to bring down the rain. And I would ask, "What do you mean, bring down the rain? Is somebody going up there, above, to bring down the rain?" But, well, no. They said it was faith in God. If we held the fiesta then it would rain, it has to rain. God is going to send water but one needs to have faith in him. We all had to pay our respects at the patio where the Santa Cruz [Holy Cross] was placed. Before arriving at the patio the men would take off their hats, and everyone, men and women, we would have to go first to where the Santa Cruz

was placed and pay our respects, then we would have to greet the people. All night they sat around the cross without their hats, talking. A few of them who knew how to sing, well they would sing. Others danced the *pascola* and *tuburi*, and others played the violin and harp, off to one side of the Santa Cruz. That was how we were then, when I was still little, that is how I knew it, and I remember all of that. But people had more respect in that time.

The tuburada fiesta is our custom. I think that the tuburada is so beautiful . . . I always go to the dances, too, and you hear the happy sound of the music. But then I get bored. It is not the same as the tuburada. In the tuburada I have to stay awake all night, either listening or dancing. When I hear the beautiful music of the harp and violin, I get out and dance to take away the boredom. All of that is what I really like about the tuburada fiesta.

I also remember that once I asked my grandfather, José Ciriaco Romero, already very old, where the Guarijío tribe came from. He knew about the beginning of the tribe, when they first came here. He said they were crossing the mountains with the Mayo tribe because here, from the [Mayo] River on up people there were almost all Mayos. Who knows how many years ago that was! This man was very old.

The roots of the tribe, the first ones, well, they would tell me that they were in Chihuahua. Then came a man named Tomás. He was a Tarahumara Indian. From him and from the Mayos came the Guarijíos. Here in Sonora there were many Mayos. They lived in the mountains lower down, by the river, and all the way down in the valley. My grandpa, Guachín Romero, was a Mayo and my grandma, too, but they were mixed Tarahumara, too, and because of that they spoke Mayo, Guarijío, and a little Spanish.

When the family of that Señor Tomás got here, they came from Chihuahua, passing through Quiriego, and on to where I am from, Los Conejos. They say that there were many royal palms at that time.<sup>47</sup> Now there are none. Back then they would say, "Let's go there, they say there are many palms there." The women knew how to make hats and mats [from the palm], and the men knew how to clear land, plant corn. That was what the people did. That is what the man [Tomás] said they did. They didn't have to do much, because at that time the land hadn't all been taken yet. There were not any Yoris, no ranches, and they were not surveying the land, either. It was still open . . . and that was how the people grew. They were able to do much more.



But when the Yoris arrived they began to survey the land and each one created his pastures. The first Guarijíos were caught in the middle, and were not able to say: "I also need a piece of land." And they were being left behind. The ones who took possession of the land came from Navojoa. This is what my grandmother told me. And so it is that the Guarijíos came from Chihuahua. Aside from that, further back, I do not know how it would have been. This is all that they told me. I have it in my memory, a story that I was able to put together to tell my tribe.

I think that that is how it was, because the same language that we speak is almost the same as the Tarahumara tribe. We can understand well the ones from Chihuahua, the same as the Mayos. So it is that our words fall between the two tribes. But now we are more Guarijío than Mayo. Only a few words are different. How it is pronounced and what you call people, well the Tarahumaras and the Mayos speak the same way, and the words are almost the same as ours. To say tortillas, we say *tacari*. The Mayos say *taca*, and the Tarahumaras say *temei*. Further up [in the mountains] the true Tarahumaras speak a different way. The Tarahumaras that say *temei* are the ones who are closer, but the real Tarahumara lives further up, in Chihuahua, and they call tortillas *renec*.

I was talking once to a group of Guarijíos from Chihuahua when we were at a conference in Mexico City. They speak the same as we do, but the only difference is in the pronunciation of words. The Mayos speak the same, but sometimes their words clash with our words. We understand those from, but not the true Tarahumara, from up in the mountains.

But a Guarijío you always know, he is the same race, and you can speak to him in your own language, that is how you know him. Many no longer want to speak Guarijío. You see them out there, and you speak to them and they reply in Spanish. But we, the Guarijío tribe, we are really strange. We are shy, and we are not able to have a conversation with the white people. We have always been shy. When they speak to us, we always talk to them with that same shyness . . . it is always the custom we have. Maybe it is because we have no schooling, we are not very experienced with other people, we do not know many people, because in our community we have always lived far away, secluded. We have never lived close together. We have houses set away from each other all over the Sierra. Before, people lived far out there, in the monte, and they only left when the Yoris hired them for work.

We call white people Yori because they are white. It is just because they are white. That is what our elders called them, and that is what we

say still. The Yoris are always more advanced. I think that they started by helping each other with cattle. I believe this because many have told me that they shared the land. They came looking for land to own, but they are all from down below, from Navojoa. They moved across the Sierra with their animals, looking for pastures to possess.

We are different than the Yoris because they are, no matter who you ask, more brave, they never hold back. They are always looking to speak quickly. They do not wait around. The Guarijíos, on the other hand, are more timid, shy. If we go to a town, a store, we will be standing at the corner waiting to go in, while the white people arrive quickly, make their purchases, and leave for home. But to me, I prefer to be indígena as it is less hassle. The Yoris are different than we are because they are always getting into problems. Well, some think straight, but those who do not are always pulled into it. They always have problems and are always looking for them. For us it is not the same. We Guarijíos are not bad. We are living our lives and we do not like to get involved with one another. We have small struggles, but we solve them the next day. But big problems that we cannot solve in two days, well no, not that. In turn the Yoris compromise themselves, make problems from which they cannot find a way out. Often it is for this reason that they kill or fight each other.

I am fine being Guarijío, and if I had to be from a different tribe it would be fine, as long as I were an indígena. If I had been a Yori, well, whites are people too. But I would prefer to be an indígena because one's behavior as a member of the tribe should be to look for ways to improve our way of living and to work for the community, for our well-being. Well-being is when we are living well and we are sustaining our families correctly.

We indígenas should not behave like the others, like those who have money. They are free to move around because it is the money that moves them. We Guarijíos do not have the ability to go anywhere, not even to take a trip [for pleasure]. We have to stay in one place because we do not have the money to move. And if we were more easygoing I think we could go wherever we wanted. And if we do get to travel far away, we will need someone from that unfamiliar place who knows that area and can guide us, someone astute, and who knows different areas. Why would we go to someplace that we know nothing about? We are here living in one place, with no ability to leave, and nobody wants to leave either, because oftentimes there are accidents, crashes on the road, or other things. Because of this our families do not want us to go to other

places. They worry because on these trips we risk our lives. The only ones who can take the risks of travel are those who have official business for the ejido or those who are advising us. These are forced to leave because they have to go and meet people where they are called. But those of us who do not have business or duties, those of us who do not have to leave, we stay here in the Sierra, here in the hills. We are native to the Sierra.

### *Those Who Take Action*

We began to fight for land because we wanted to live better and have a bit of peace for our people. We had to look for a way to do it and so we drew from experience. I never imagined that anything would come of this, that we would get our own region, in that moment that I began to look for somebody else to help the people. I thought it was okay, and I had some meetings with people to see if we were in agreement. And when everyone said to me, “It is okay,” then I accepted. “Yes, of course I will help you,” I said.

When we had the first assembly to fight for the land, to bring people in, I already had an idea of who would join, who would be at the forefront. We had a small meeting to come to agreement and to explain what this was all about because many of us didn’t know each other . . . we were very naïve. In that meeting no more than sixteen showed up, and that was because we went house to house [to tell people about it]. But the rest, almost the majority, did not want to meet because they said it was all lies. “What are *you* going to do? You have not ever even been to Navojoa,” they said to us.

I was a little more aware because I had grown up down in the valley and I saw [what happened there]. At one time I was down there in the fight. There were many of us, something like 80 groups of campesinos asking for land. In one group alone there were 56 people, all Yaquis and Mayos, and something like 100 in another group.<sup>48</sup> I was with them for a year or more. They said we would get ejidal lands for everyone. One time we went to the main plaza in Ciudad Obregón and were there for many days, waiting for the governor to see us. But no, of course he was not going to see us! They sent in *los guachos* [soldiers], *federales*, and they kicked us out of there at rifle butt and with tear gas bombs. That same day they grabbed three of the leaders and threw them in jail. It took us a year to get them out and bring them back to health. We had

to pay for their doctors, hospital, medicine because they almost beat those poor guys to death. One of those leaders said, "It doesn't matter if I die. You need to continue with the fight, and maybe tomorrow or after our children will have land."

But then I left, from hunger, because they were more hardcore there, and I went back to work as a field laborer. Then I understood a little more about what it meant to bring people together, and that is why my *compañeros* said to me: "Do you know what an ejidatario is?" I did know, and I told them that working together people could solve their problems. They could invade and occupy the land. That was an ejidatario, one who joins together. The people who acted together would win that fight and get the land that they had occupied. Those are ejidatarios, I said to my *compañeros*.

They did not know what that was. Then they said to me, "Well, since you know, we are going to follow your lead and we are going to help you figure out what to do, but you are going to be leading us." That is what my *compañeros* told me, and I accepted: "But you cannot leave me alone with the problems just begun, because they are heavy and dangerous, too. But now that you have put me in charge, leading you, I am ready to follow you." This is what I said to my *compañeros*: "We have to move forward, when we look for problems, we have to continue on until they are finished." And that is how I began to advise them, and they began to understand the struggle that it was to be an ejidatario. Later, others came to explain it, and they gave us more understanding and from there we began the struggle.

We proposed that we form a group. It was also good for me to have that meeting to talk about why there, in the place we were, that it was certain that we would at least get something because we were united. Many people were with the Yoris, but those people could not join with us because they had *animales* [livestock], they had the means to make a living. They had cows. They had ranches. But even still they wanted to form a separate group. They wanted to form their own ejido among themselves. There were also other people who were frightened of the rich and because of that they did not join with us. "No, I will not join with you," they said. So those people were with them, with the ranchers. They did not want to be with us.

And with sixteen people we did it, we came to agreement. "It's good, it is better this way because in the first place we are going to fight to get schools, because, yes, it is certain," I said. "It is because we lack an education that we are so humble here, no? Let's see, who doesn't want to see our

children improve, the community get better, or, with time, someone can leave here to help us [from the outside]. She could be a teacher, a university graduate, all of that. They must study.” That is what we were thinking. That is what we were talking about. We went in there fighting for a school and later on for food, to see where we could plant. So it was a matter of looking for a piece of land to benefit our children and from there we continued on the path . . . one thing at a time, we were thinking.

At the time they proposed that I become the leader, to go out and find out how and where to do it all, they had already had someone to help, one of their own, who shared their desire to do it, to look for ways to help the people improve. He was in Mochibampo, this first one, Señor José Zazueta Yoquibo, but he died. Our *compañero* José Zazueta got the hardest part, because in all of the ranches where his people worked, the Yoris were *puro cacique*.<sup>49</sup> That is why José was the most important, because he was the first and it was a lot of work to confront those *caciques*.

Before that, Señor José Ruelas, a *compañero* from the area of Bavícora, had started the struggle. José Ruelas had for a long time been the *tuburi* singer, and that is how he knew Edmundo, a man who visited us here, asking questions about our customs and what we did. This Edmundo took Señor Ruelas all over the place to perform the *tuburi*. After that, he advised us to organize, to fight for land. That is why José Ruelas began to seek us out. He went to Mochibampo to visit the [now] deceased Zazueta and he told him about all of this. He also came here to Los Conejos to tell us that Edmundo wanted to help us. And yes, he did help us. He told the president [of Mexico] that we Guarijíos were up here and he also took us to Mexico City, to the president’s house, but he did not receive us.

So we returned to the Sierra and that was when we went on organizing the people. At that time, Señor José Ruelas was the tribe representative in Bavícora, the now deceased José Zazueta was in the Mochibampo zone, and I was here, in Los Conejos. Then our *compañero* Ruelas started to back away from his post because he was traveling a lot with Edmundo, and the now deceased José Zazueta took over the leadership of the people of Bavícora. There was always a leader in Bavícora but the true leader was José Zazueta.

So between the two of us we carried on with the struggle. I was the second in charge, but we were always together, fighting on. He also said that first was the school: “Our children must study. It is our duty to do this now. We are old but we are going to find a way.” That is what we

told ourselves. We would talk about where we were headed. Sometimes we would stop along the road to sleep, tired from so much walking, thinking about how we were going to do it, how we were going to get there, how we were going to get wherever we were going. We organized well, José and I, and he was my *compañero* and we were fighting for the people. That was our idea.

At that time, the Yoris treated us harshly. They sent the *judiciales*, who they had bought off, out after us, and they would beat us. They would tie us up and take us to prison, but how does the saying go? But as the saying goes, those who are hungry have nothing to fear. We had to just keep fighting on. We had to keep searching. Need pushed one forward.

Once we were in the struggle something very sad happened, because they beat the now deceased José Zazueta Yoquibo. He is now dead, he no longer exists in this world, but he fought as much as he could for our people. And so did I, but I had some luck because nothing ever happened to me on the roads that I traveled. But something sad did happen to our *compañero* José, because the Yoris knew that we were involved in all of this, organizing the people, and they had the custom of buying off the judicial police, and that is how they did in our *compañero* José.

A judicial police officer came and grabbed him, put him in jail, and beat him. All that happened to my *compañero* José Zazueta Yoquibo, but he never said: "I have had enough." When he left the prison he continued on. He never turned back. We moved on, with even stronger will. I went to visit him in jail when they threw him in.

The Guarijío tribe never had any guarantees of anything. When the rich did something bad, often they blamed the poor. They would say: "No, it was so-and-so, and you must put him in jail, give him a good beating." That is what the rich did. They imprisoned their workers, the Guarijíos. Once in a while hunger got the better of someone and he would grab an ear of corn from the harvest and the Yoris right away would accuse him: "It was so-and-so who stole it." That is what they would say. Three or four Yoris would make a plan, go there, and grab the man and beat him. That is what the Yoris did with us. That was the law here, the law of the Yoris. And they did it often.

That is why, when they didn't want to give us any land, we did everything possible to fight. We also said that we were not going to treat them the way they treated us. "We are not going to treat them poorly, but if by chance we get some land to plant, we will not help them out,

we will have to see what happens, to see how they like it.” It seems like they have never liked that because it is hard for them to give us a piece of land because they do not work. That is why they never want us to have anything, not even a single beast [livestock]. This is what they would say (because I swear I overheard them say): “So-and-so is going to get some money and he will not want to work. If they get some land to work nobody is going to work, nobody is going to want to work.” That is how they said, that is how they spoke.

The rich did not want us to make a group because they knew that we would take away their land. But no, it was not by force, no, always the government would put in some part, some part of it. But as it is here in the Sierra of Sonora, the ranchers, the rich, did not understand how the problems were moving along, and they were against us, they wanted to fight all the time. People would often tell them: “Things are not this way,” and it was not the way they had been told. They would say: “No, these Indians get in our way. It is better to bring a few in to the judicial police. We were going to tell them to beat them all so we can take away that idea of forming a group. Let’s see if that way we can pacify them.” They bought off the judiciales, they controlled them, and they would tie us up and beat us.

But never, never were we afraid. In our meeting, all of us *compañeros* came to an agreement. And when they harmed our leaders our leaders wanted to get mad, too. And the leaders really wanted to [fight back] against the rich but they did not have a way because none of us had anything to do it with, we did not even have a single knife. What could we do to them, all of us poor people? We did not even have the money to buy anything, not even money to pay someone to speak for us. At one point someone gave me an old pistol. It was a .22. I do not know if it worked because I never shot it, but it was useful because the Yoris respected me. I showed them that I was carrying a gun, tucking it into my belt, and I would talk to them at a distance, and they would not come near.

But I alone walked around with that .22. Nobody else had anything. We did not have any money to pay off the judiciales, like they [the Yoris] were doing. They paid off the judiciales and the heads of government. Money is a beautiful thing. Everyone took it and they would come here, into the Sierra, and beat us. And we were never frightened by that. We kept on going straight at it, to get the land. We never fought to do anyone harm. We did it for our children. There were many of us of the Guarijío tribe living here in the Sierra. And that is the way we continued fighting until someone finally took notice and came to investigate.



*Fearing the Fight*

Every so often, every month or every three weeks, we would have meetings and we would come to an agreement about the things we had to do or the problems we faced, and you would hesitate because fear is hell, and where there is danger you have to have fear because it is not just about jumping in. And this all takes time. You have to be patient to understand things. Just to go into someone's house, if you don't know them, you have to stand there outside on the patio because you don't know who they are. So you think, how is the person who lives here going to react? It is the same problem lots of times because if you speak too loudly with someone they will not let you in, and so you have to be patient. To enter a home you need to go through all kinds of motions until they know who you are or until they finally get tired of you, because often they say: "Well this guy keeps coming back and if we do not let him in he is never going away."

That is the way it is with all problems. One has to be on top of things to get what he needs, to solve his problems. If everything depends on some place where they handle paperwork, well that is where you have to be, day and night you have to stay put, even if they don't want to see you. One day they have to finally get tired, they have to say: "You have been waiting there so long and no one has seen you, well, come in," and they let you in to see you. But you need a lot of time to solve these problems.

That is how we started in Los Conejos. It was not just me alone. There were two of us, then later three or four working together, to see and to be seen by all the people who ignored us. They would say to us: "Ignorant people, what are you going to do? They do not even know who we are. You are not going to achieve anything." That is what they said to us at first, even our friends here, who were against us. They did not want to join the group for that same reason, because they did not believe us. They were against us for the same ignorance, that is what they had, but we did not pay any attention to them. They wanted to form a separate group. They were the Armenta family together with the pequeños propietarios. They wanted to invade [the property of] Juan Félix, the man who gave away pieces that he had hoarded. Later, they wanted to take everything from Señor Félix. We also had possession of that land, but we saw that Juan Félix had never taken land from us, and we said: "Better to begin organizing ourselves to see if we can create an ejido." But the organizing had already begun in other parts, other

communities. In Mochibampo, in Burapaco, in Bavícora and all those ranches that the renowned José Zazueta was organizing. We were going that way, too, and we were meeting with them and gaining strength. Some Guarijíos who did not agree, who were with the pequeños propietarios, were the day laborers of those same ranchers from Los Conejos. They were against us, but I say that it was for ignorance and because they were afraid to fight. Because when we were truly out there, getting in to see the governor, they changed their opinion and they changed their way of viewing things. But when they were against us we hardly paid them any attention. We were something like 57 families there together, the majority [of the Guarijíos]. And when we got the *maestros* [teachers] to take a census [of the land and communities], many of them [who were previously against us] were with us. Later, I was able to get the nurse from Etchojoa to come, and I brought her up into the Sierra on horseback. We also took some cases of medicine all the way up to Sototanchaca, up there by El Cura.

We were taking care of some business up there when the maestros said: "Build a provisional school, and some of us will come and work here." So we built a schoolroom and the teachers came. But not many of them came . . . they did not want to participate in the census but it was their own ignorance.

In any case, we were sure that we were going to win because this fight was not just with us, because we knew well that there would be a lot of help. But, still, other people wanted to break away, to form another group, to group with the Yoris. We said no, Guarijíos only. "How are we doing right now? We do not have anything, not even livestock, not even goats. And we need all of that. We need to become ejidatarios, we need to fight because we do not even have a place to work with our own hands, not even to sell. We do not have anything, not even a goat, a cow. That is why we need to become ejidatarios, to ask them to give us a place to plant, to plant corn."

That is how we started to advise them [the ones who did not agree], but they replied: "No, you are just being childish, these are all lies," they said to me. "What are you going to achieve? You do not even know how to read. They are going to kill you out there, the pequeños propietarios. You will be left out there in the road [to die]." And the Yoris said: "That *güero* over there is worthless," that is to say he was not even worth a cent.<sup>50</sup> But I did not pay any attention to them. That is why I say that they were giving bad advice to the rest of the compañeros, because at

the same time we had begun to take the census, together with the pequeños propietarios, the Flores and Cásares families of Quiriego. Those were the Yoris. A few Guarijíos were [allied] with them, some 20 or 25 people. They all wanted to conduct the census and they were going around saying that they were going to take land away from Juan Félix.

So we were two groups who were involved in all of this. I traveled around to other parts, and then I would come back here. And they [the other group] would also take care of things there [in those other places]. But then no, they figured it out and stopped what they were doing. So one day I went to see their leader, who was Pancho Flores, because he had sent for me twice. Seventeen others went with me, accompanying me to see what he had to say. "Listen, what are you doing?" "Me, what am I doing? Well, I am doing what you are doing," I said to him. He responded: "But you do not even know how to read. How are you going to do anything. I do not think we are going to solve anything."

"Well, okay," I said to him. "Let us follow you. And if you [referring to the others] want to follow him, too, and if you know how to read and I do not know anything because you were in school in Quiriego, then I think you all have more right than I do. And so that we do not hurt the other compañeros we are going to get everyone together, and here we are going to form a group with all of us. Pancho, I have known you since we were children. You were also little then, and don't you remember when we would take care of the calves and we would fight." "Yes, yes, I remember," he said. "And now we are old," I said to him. "We should have some experience."

"Look, Pancho," I said to him, "it is not right for you to be gathering people together because you are a pequeño propietario, and this is for those who do not have land. You already have a piece of land that Señor Juan Félix gave you. He gave all of you a little piece of land. That land that you all have he gave to you. You already have your papers, and you are even paying taxes. But, us? No. And now, why are you going against Juan Félix? And why are you against us, too?"

"You all have a means to earn a living. We are doing this because we do not even have a field, and we are just working here for the patronos like you, well, yes, you are the ones with money. And how do you pay? I do not think you even get tired. And how is it that you want to become ejidatarios if ejidatarios are those who do not have land, like us, the Guarijíos? You already have a place to work, you have your possession [land]. And tomorrow or the day after, if you win the struggle, you are

going to work, you are going to put poor people to work, because I have never seen you work. You have always used poor people.” “No, but for that reason we are not going to fight,” he said to me. “I know how to work, too.” “That’s really wrong,” I said to him, “because I’ve known you since we were growing up together.” After that, he never bothered me or sent for me again.

But the Guarijíos in that group continued to follow them because they told them that the engineers were coming to survey the land. It was a lie. A man came but he was just someone from Quiriego. I think it was someone who the president [of Mexico] had called in to calm them down and so they would not continue. But we did not pay any attention to him and he went back down. After three meetings that we had, they calmed down a little and conducted the survey. They left it in Quiriego for someone to take to Hermosillo. Pancho went, but they still had the paper in Quiriego. They had not sent it to Hermosillo. And the paperwork that we were doing had already been validated in Hermosillo because at that time the *licenciados* from INI were [working] here.<sup>51</sup>

Later there were problems with those people. Now and then one of them would go to our meetings, but I didn’t let them in the group because I already had something like 57 families with me, and the group should have had no more than 20 families. I had a little more than two groups. Little by little those from the other group joined us, but they were never well liked. “Do not pay them any attention, they are ignorant,” I would tell my *compañeros*. “They do not think, and they are stubborn. Just like the *pequeños propietarios*, the same, ignorant too, because they live here in the Sierra and here one believes everything, but being down in the towns it is different.”

When we started to receive help, they started to get interested. “Oh, well I want to join that group too.” “Well, do it,” we would tell them. I let in many of them, though they were those type of people who spoke badly of the group. They would say that the Yoris were going to kill all of us who were in the group. They would shout this at us from a distance but we wouldn’t respond. Shouts do not hurt, [especially] when [people] were already coming to beat us. Then, one by one, they would come to us and say: “I do not remember them talking to me when they took the census.” Then I would say: “This census that they are going to take will be the last, and whoever is in it will be in it. This is the good census, and those who do not want to [participate] well that is the way it goes. We cannot force them, they have to do it voluntarily.” Well, then everybody

went and said to us: "I also want to be included." "Of course, but come back later and say you do not want to work. Here, he who joins with the rest of the *compañeros* must work, that is all. Okay, so from here on you will have to work to build the school, a little schoolhouse over there. We all have to work together. It does not matter if someone does not want to work, that someone says 'I do not want to work.' That is why someone joins us as a *compañero*. Look at what happens when ants work. They haul trash, others carry sticks, and others carry leaves, and others are putting pebbles in place." I made that comparison to them, and they said to me: "Are you going to let me join?" "Well, of course, whoever wants to join. But tomorrow or the day after, do not come to me and say that we forced you to join. You are going to enter at your own will, because back then when you were giving me such a hard time, and you see that I did not pay any attention to you, and you all were going around saying that I was not worth it, that they were going to kill my group members, and where are the dead? We are all still in one piece.

"Things should not be that way. You need proof to be able to say [things like that]," I said to them. "You need to know what is going on here with us, investigate, rather than just going around talking. I am not going around doing bad things. I am only trying to fight so that we can get land and a school to live better. Look how many children we have here in this place, in this *municipio*! We must not be so ignorant! We know very well the things we lack here. We cannot live just running around all over the place. Because what our children need is to be learning how to read and write, and when they learn to read they are going to recognize the problems, they will be reading very important papers." They began to figure things out, and all of them finally came together and came along with us, leaving their leader behind. We are all together now, from then until today. We even let in people from the outside who are not from the tribe, because even if they were little Yoris, they were [also] children of Indians.

### *Paperwork, Bureaucrats, and Functionaries*

To come to agreement we would always assemble. We had to come to agreement between all of us, but I was mostly the advisor. I gave people advice on how we could do things and how we could get what we needed. But it was not like I was just thinking. Many of my *compañeros* said the same thing, that I was a thinker. [There were] those who did

not really think, understand, ourselves, [and there were] those who did know more or less, and they oriented us to see how and where we were, and what steps we needed to take to get the land.

I was on the move for four years without stopping, and I was never in one place. I would be at home for one, two, or three days and from there I would leave to find out what the *compañeros* were thinking. Each time I arrived in my pueblo, where my people were, I had to hold a meeting, I had to agree to the things the *compañeros* needed.

We were taking the struggle all over the place, even all the way to Hermosillo. And there they also ignored us because they did not know us. They had not even heard of the Guarijíos. But here we were, they had us hidden away, working, nothing more. And because we also did not know how to read, not even a letter, they looked at us as if we were nothing. And because they had money, they could pay so that everybody would ignore us. They had [official] reinforcement from Hermosillo and Alamos. And because of that it took a lot of work, lots of trips. We went everywhere [looking for help] so that they would come and investigate, and register us [in the census], so that people all over would know of us, so that little by little people would know where the Guarijíos were.

In some places we would get the word out so people would help us, to the point that the government finally realized where we were from and they sent some people from INI, from Mexico City. Many people came investigating, asking where the tribe was. Then came the *tropóloga* [Teresa Valdivia]. When she came we told her how we were, how we lived, all of that. Then licenciado Gómez Rubio came with the *tropóloga*. They came to help us. From that time we started to get better. We got strength, and now you had accompaniment when you went to Hermosillo, we were no longer alone, it was not the same [as before]. We had help. We went all over the place with that *tropóloga* that the government sent us, until they finally registered us, and they finally knew who we were.

I like to remember the first times that they came from Mexico to meet us, the Guarijíos. The *tropóloga* came, Teresa, that was her name, and she is from down in Veracruz, well she is from Mexico City, but she studied in Veracruz. That woman who came knew about many things to help us, as she is educated and knows how to manage her thoughts. She came from Mexico City to understand the problem that we Guarijíos had here, and she came just to help us. She was the one who came to lead us or stand with us. The first time we saw her was in Burapaco. She had on a really long skirt and well here [that is not the style] . . . but she

looked educated. So we called a meeting when she arrived, and when people saw her, many people said, that woman would not be able to walk in the Sierra. But it was like she took first place. She went wherever she wanted to, on horseback or on foot, and those from here, from Sonora, no [they could not keep up]. Even the engineers and doctors from INI shied away from the work. But not her. The engineer (Luciano was his name) alone killed two of our horses. They went down on the road. He could neither ride a horse nor walk. He could not even go by car. He always complained of fatigue. That woman did everything possible. She helped us so much. It makes me happy that she was always out there in front of us, because I am here to say that during that time Teresa was with us. I was the *gobernador* of Los Conejos, and the gobernador of Mesa Colorada was José Zazueta Yoquibo.<sup>52</sup> One time we were going to Alamos with the tropóloga, and I remember that I had asked her where we could find out the situation with the pequeños propietarios, and she said that it [the information] was there in Hermosillo. "Why don't we go there?" "Yes," she said to me, and she spent a week down there and returned and said to us: "Now we are going to the Ministry [of Agrarian Reform] to look into the pequeño propietario business." She had made us an appointment with the director. And so we went.

There were some really big problems with no end in sight. After our meeting, she remained in San Bernardo. We began to get to know her well and she started to go along with us, to get things that we needed, and solving problems. It makes me happy because she worked so hard, harder than those who they had sent before her. Many of them [INI officials] had come from Mexico City or Chihuahua, many licenciados came but often they did not help much. Tere helped us a lot, I am here to tell you because I was also with her and we took her all over the place.

We were in Navojoa investigating, in Obregón, in Hermosillo, in Vícam, with the tribes [the Yaquis and Mayos]. We were in different places. And how did we solve the problems? Calmly, and we were never in a hurry because she gave us advice, she offered thoughts that she had, and she told us how we could get land. She was also reporting the problems we had to Mexico City, and news was moving from Hermosillo to Mexico City. That is the way we went along so much with her. She worked so much with us, and that is why we have so much trust in her. A woman, well, is not the same as a man. Often she is calmer than a man. A man at times gets in a hurry and often goes out and gets drunk.

First there was a licenciado from INI named Mr. Jaris. He got drunk



a lot and when we needed him we could not find him. That Jaris was a Tarahumara from here above [in the Sierra]. He was always irritated and because of that he fought with everyone, even with the people from San Bernardo, but there he lost because they beat him. Then came licenciado Gómez Rubio. He was also irritable but he never went to blows. Gómez Rubio worked a lot with us. He helped us until they finished giving us the land. We have Gómez Rubio and Tere in our thoughts. There were no other people who worked with us like those people did. They always remember us. They have come to visit us here in the community, they often stop in, and they still do not forget about us. We will never forget them because they were the ones who spoke up for us. They were in total agreement with us. These are the two people who let people in Hermosillo and Mexico City know the problem we had in the tribe, the things we needed for our families. That is why from INI they still send someone out to investigate. Every two years there is an investigation. Each year they send someone from Hermosillo to find things out, and they come from Mexico City, too. They send out trained students who know how to investigate, men and women come from there when they call them. Oftentimes tropólogos and tropólogas come to ask questions about the problems we have here, and to give a short talk. Sometimes, when there is an assembly, they ask us: "What problems do you have, what problem have you had." And that way we talk about any problems. The problems never end. They have always been here in the community. But grave problems, those we do not have. We only have the small problems of things we lack here in the community. When they come, we have to tell them: "This happened, and that is how things are." And we ask ourselves how can we do it and where can we get it [help], and they [INI] help us out.

As I was saying, with those [investigators] from Mexico City we gain strength. We had help. As they are licenciados, they are educated. They understand the problems where they have worked. They knew how to get the land. But when they first arrived here they found us alone and sad, because we did not have any help at all, absolutely none. We didn't even have help from someone who knew how to read. Of the Guarijíos nobody knew how to read or write. We were all ashamed. When we had to talk to the white people Señor Zazueta put me in charge because he did not speak good Spanish. It is almost the same with our current gobernador. He often asks me to speak when there is a meeting with people from the government. I remember one time something happened to us in Mexico City. The night before, the gobernador of Burapaco

asked me to sit in front of him at the table so that if they gave us the microphone he would not have to speak. "That is fine," I told him. And when we arrived at the meeting that is what we did. But things did not go the way we thought, and they gave the microphone to each one of us, and the gobernador got very nervous. I think of that and it makes me laugh, but the thing is we are shy.

Well, there we went, thinking, little by little. We did not accelerate things much, just little by little, because if we created a big problem we would not get the land. We had to look for distinct ways to do it. We had to talk with someone, with the very leaders of the *pequeños propietarios*, with the Ministry of Agrarian Reform and all of those types. We had to go there [Mexico City]. The Ministry of Agrarian Reform asked us, "Why do you suffer? There in the Sierra there is much national land, and those lands have no owner."<sup>53</sup> No, we said to the Agrarian Reform that people occupied those lands, and that for us there was no chance. "Everything is fenced off in the Sierra. There is not one piece that does not have a fence, and they do not want you to have anything fenced of your own up there, even a little fenced-in place to plant a little corn." That is what we told him, too.

The Agrarian Reform said: "Well, you will have to have a little piece of land, you will have to get it, but do everything possible, look for a way to secure those lands, but you cannot fight with anybody." That is what the Agrarian Reform said, and they were sure that it was national land, they knew best, and those who had fenced off the land were telling us lies. Those *pequeños propietarios* would say: "I have lands there, so do not go in there, because the land that I have is assured, paid for, and I have title to that land."

But you see that it was nothing, nothing more than pure lies they gave us. They had not even paid the taxes. They just had it hidden. They had stolen it. Where the ranchers liked the land, they just made an agreement and came in and took it. They said to themselves: "No, so-and-so owns that part. Grab this other piece and fence it in there." They did not even let the authorities play a part, not even so they could say: "I have a piece of land there, I am going to pay the taxes." They just fenced it off and had their livestock there. That is what the rich did. They had their land hidden from the Ministry. Later, they called them to Hermosillo to investigate and see how they had their land (because I heard all this, I had been there with all of those *pequeños propietarios*, and my compañero José Zazueta and Teresa had been there. We were

together for all of this), so they asked them [pequeños propietarios] to come up one by one, present their titles. And all of them said, we do not have anything, not the title, that they had only paid the tax. And that is how it was, and that is how we came to understand little by little why the pequeños propietarios were the way they were.

When I first started, I asked myself: "Why are they so aggressive, or why do they [seize the land] so strongly." That is what I thought, and I would tell my compañeros: "Maybe they have [legal] possession, maybe they have good title to the land and we are going along in a daze, we are getting into things when the land is already parceled out and where we have no business getting involved." But no, nobody had title to their land, they had just occupied it, and they were not even paying taxes on it. And that is how we found out the lies of the pequeños propietarios here in the Sierra. And there we found ourselves confronted with it, in the Ministry. The authorities from the Agrarian Reform asked them why they were in the Sierra and why they were denying the Guarijíos, why they had them imprisoned, and they told them to stop doing that.

And so we went on with the [bureaucratic] procedure. We brought paperwork to the Agrarian Reform, to the INI, and we held assemblies and worked over the problems. And then one day I thought, well, if Juan Félix had lent us land, we could talk to him, because he is not like the other Yoris from the area of José Zazueta [Mochibampo]. Why don't we talk to him, someone who can fix the problem? So I said this to my compañeros, and everyone was in agreement that we should do it that way, and see if we could get out of the problem more quickly. We went to look for Juan Félix at his house, which is in Navojoa. I asked licenciado Gómez Rubio if he would accompany us to talk to Juan Félix, and we all went together.

In the first place, I wanted Juan Félix to loan us a piece of land to build a school, because we knew that INI was going to help us, and we did not have a place to put it. I also had to tell him that Pancho Flores had been fighting against us having land, that all of it was for them [the Yoris], and he was not going to let us plant. And that the Cásares family, in the same way, was saying all of it was theirs. So we did not have anywhere to plant. I told all of this to Señor Juan Félix. "Look, you know me. My *tata* is from Los Conejos. She was born there, she lived and worked there all of her life. I am Cipriano and I have worked for you, too." "Yes," he said to me, "I know you. And I remember that your *tatita* had some land in Los Conejos, but my *tatita* fenced off that

land, and took it away from her. And what is the problem that you have now?" "Well, we want to ask you for a piece of land to build a school. You know that there are many children, and they are all ignorant."

I said all of this to him, and then I told him about Pancho Flores and the Cásares. When I told him that Pancho was trying to take all of the land and that he was forming a group of ejidatarios, he said to me: "No, I gave Pancho a piece of land but I did not give it all to him." Then he said to me: "Look, what we are going to do is this, I'm going to send for Pancho so I can speak with him, and you are going to take a letter, signed by me, where I say that I am giving you one-half of the land so that you can build the school and plant and have your livestock." I do not think that Señor Félix was interested in the land because he was living well in Navojoa and he had other business there. And the land is not good quality. There is lots of what they call flat rock. And there are not level places to plant. So he gave us the letter, with his permission . . . well, it was not permission but rather a donation of land. So we began to clear it.

We were working on the clearing when the Cásares came by. That family has always tried to cause problems with us. You say one little thing and they want to fight. But the Cásares came armed and pointing their pistols at us. And they said: "What are you doing! This is not your land!" "Yes, it is," we said to them, "here is the letter signed by Juan Félix." "No, that signature is not valid. Leave now, or we will see what happens." We had to leave because we did not have anything to defend ourselves with, and we do not like problems. And the clearing ended without finishing.

Later, we informed the licenciado [Gómez Rubio] and the tropóloga about all of this. They then held a meeting with all of the pequeños propietarios and with us, to clear things up. The Cásares came, and Pancho Flores and Señor Juan Félix. I remember that when the tropóloga arrived, almost all of the Cásares left the meeting and went to hide nearby. She always carried a knife in her belt and I think it scared them. Well yes, I say, that is how the brave ones are. It is easy to be brave when your opponent does not have anything to defend himself with. But if he does, well, things are different.

Well, as I was saying, we had the meeting there in Sototanchaca. Everyone went. There, Señor Juan Félix told them that he had already given possession to Pancho Flores and that he had also given us that letter. But the Cásares said that the land that he had given us was theirs. "No," said Señor Félix, "how can that be if I know my land well! You

are not going to tell me how it is. You have from here to there, and Cipriano's people from there to here. And I gave Pancho Flores this piece of land. And if you do not agree, well, then, ask the Ministry to investigate to see how things are, and you will see that not one of you has registered land." With that, they said nothing. Everyone was in agreement. The licenciado drew up some papers where it says where each one has land, and Señor Juan Félix signed everything and we all signed. We did not sign because none of use knew how to write, but we put our fingerprint on the papers.

After those talks was when we began to make the school. But it was not from material that INI brought but rather from palm thatch. And then in the area that the deceased José Zazueta was from they were also making an agreement. The government was saying that the land had to be paid for. And when Señor Juan Félix found out, he thought that it was better to pay, and he told all of us that he was going to sell us the land. The government paid for our land. We didn't pay anything. It gave us our region to help us, so that we could move forward. And we are still doing that.

### *Indigenous Alliances*

You might say that it was easy for us to get the land, but no. Well, yes, it was easier here in Los Conejos than it was for the people of the deceased Zazueta [in Mochibampo]. But it was not just for us that we were fighting for, but for the whole tribe, so that all of the indigenous families like us would have our piece of land. The government helped us and we also had the help of other tribes, from those who were educated. We went to ask the Yaquis to do their part. We also had help from the Mayo tribe, as they were educated and, apart from that, they had been organized for a long time and we did not even know it because we hardly know each other. We [indígenas] who are here in Sonora, we do not even know each other. We do not even know the Seris, the Papagos, or the Yaquis. We would see the Mayos down there but we never went to visit their towns, and they did not come up into the Sierra either.

Later, when we were getting everything done, those same tribes from here [Sonora] came to see our community. The Papagos came, the Seris came, the Mayos came, the Yaquis came. They all came to visit us. When they came to talk to us, the Yaquis told us not to give up, that if they

[pequeños propietarios] did not want to give us the land, then they would help us with everything we needed here in the Sierra. That is what they told us in the beginning when they [the Yoris] were beating us, when the pequeños propietarios were getting aggressive. The Yaquis were riled up because they saw how we were when they came to visit us.

The Mayos gave us that [same] advice. They came to visit us and one of their leaders was talking in our meeting. "Do not give up, *compañeros*. We have to get the land and we have to continue the struggle. Do not grow weary. You have to continue on." That is what they told us. The Mayos had a leader, and he came all the way here too. Soon, all of the tribes were on our side, the same *compañeros* here in the state of Sonora. What we wanted was to get some land, to see how far we could get, as we had many problems. We had many meetings to come to an agreement. We made agreements with others, too. They were *ejidatarios* who were very well known in other parts, but from here in the state of Sonora. They were also on our side. They were old *ejidatarios* who had already got their land, and they said that if by chance we did not get ours, they were going to help us.

In the beginning we started with the problem of the lack of knowledge of the different tribes. We did not know what was here in the state of Sonora. Four indigenous tribes and we did not know one another. We had also never gone to talk to them, as at that time we did not have a way to go and see them. And we did not know the Mayos very well, or the Yaquis, Seris, or Papagos, or any of the *compañeros* that there were from the tribes. Later, they invited us and we talked about the needs we had, and the Mayo *compañeros* said to us: "What needs do you have, *compañeros* Guarijíos? You do not have a way to support yourselves. You do not have a place to plant?" The Yaquis asked us the same thing, and we replied: "We do not have a place to plant so that we can eat." That is what our *compañeros* of the other tribes asked us. And they were here close by in the state of Sonora. They helped us a lot. They came to visit us, and they came up here into the Sierra.

We welcomed all of those tribes with a fiesta so that they would come and visit us and know us. They came to be with us equipped with their music and we came together right here. Later, one thing led to another and we also went to visit them there in their community, with the Mayos, with the Yaquis. Those are customs we will never forget. Always, whenever we have visits from those indigenous tribes, we have to put on a fiesta, and they do too. We do not just go to visit them. We go to see their fiestas

because they are all different. We here in the Sierra have different customs.

In some other places it is almost the same. For example, they play the violin for the pascola down there with the Yaquis and with the Mayos. The only thing that the Yaquis and Mayos lack is that custom of planting the Holy Cross and singing the tuburi with a *bule*. Here in the Sierra we Guarijíos use *cantares*.<sup>54</sup> The Tarahumaras also do the tuburi, but in the pascola they don't use the harp, just the guitar and violin. And we don't use the guitar for the pascola. With the singing of the tuburi, the women, at least those who want to dance, dance. With the pascola there is also violin music. There is the pascola and the tuburi, those are our customs. And that is the way we began to visit other indigenous communities and that is how we got to know each other. The traditional fiesta is different for each tribe. From here on, we now know the Seris, Papagos, Yaquis, and Mayos.

Of the Mayos who came to help us was a man named Alfonso, who is also now deceased. He was a good talker. He was good for problems. He was from Sinaloa. He came here several times to talk with the pequeños propietarios. The other indigenous people always looked out for us because they are more educated, as they live closer to town they understand the problems and how to fix them. That is why we went to Alamos, Navojoa, Obregón, and Vicam with the Yaquis and with the Mayos.

Once they got to know me, they investigated whether or not I was a true Guarijío. There were people who asked me to speak in our language, in the Guarijío language. And I would tell them what you call each thing that they would ask me about. I explained to them what things meant in our words. They asked me many questions. They wanted to see if the Guarijío language was different. It is different because the other tribes do not understand what one says, and we Guarijíos do not understand what they say in their words. We understood a word here or there, but nobody else knows our language. The other tribes don't know how to say things [in our language]. And that is how they got to know me, and I began to know them.

In that way we were getting to know our brothers from the other tribes who we did not know before because we did not have a way to go visit them. We were very poor and we had no one to help us. We did not have money to visit other places. We could not say: "I am going to go, and I am to spend this much money." What we earned working was very little and it is always expensive to travel. How would you travel without money, if to travel you have to pay? We knew where the Yaquis



were, but we were not able to go talk with them. They are better educated. A few of them have degrees, all kinds of degrees.

In the beginning, when we went to visit them, the Yaquis said: "Why don't you move here? Here we have extra land." That is what they said to us. "But if you do not want to come here, up there is also a lot of land. Fight for it and if you do not get it, we are going to help you. Let's see what we can do together." That is what the Yaquis said to us. And yes, they helped us. The licenciado that they have there came to see us, and all of the tribes helped us. They linked together, they all joined together. And it was the same here with the Guarijíos. We helped the Seris when they had a problem. And all of us helped the Papagos, too.

All of the tribes were in Hermosillo, in a meeting that we had there once. The licenciado went, and we went and we had to sign [a document] so that they could give something to the Papagos. I am not sure what. I think they let them take possession of their lands and all of us helped. They made a document and everyone signed it. This was about eight years ago. At that time they said that the licenciado who was at the meeting would always tell them the same thing. Another day arrived, the same thing, and again, and another day, the same. Finally a woman there began to cry because she was sad that they could not get their land, because they [the officials] did not want to help them. I think that the licenciado had sold out and he was just deceiving them until they finally realized what was going on and threw him out. The Papagos told us who he was, that he was so-and-so, and there they all came together and asked for help. The Yaquis signed a document, and the Mayos, and us, and the Seris too. And then in another meeting we had another day they said that had got it [land]. That is how we went, backing each other up. And that is what the other tribes did for us, too. We linked together with them and also with the old ejidatarios from Guajaray. Among the ejidatarios of Guajaray were Guarijíos and a few poor Yoris. They had granted them an ejido ten years before. So all of us signed [a document] so that they would give us land. People from Topiyeca also signed, and others from here, nearby, also helped.

### *Life Changes*

And that was how the struggle was. We went carrying the struggle forward and continued until a notice arrived that it was best for the government to do its part. The government of the republic saw that we

were fighting to get land and so that our children would have an education. The government did its part instead of us getting involved in national lands by force because it thought: “The tribe might get into it with the Yoris.” They [the government] did not want us to fight. It said: “No, it is better [this way]. I put in my part. The land that the Guarijíos need would have to be paid for. One must pay so that there are not any problems. So that they have a place to plant and so that their children have schooling. They should stay in their lands, and those lands should be recognized [as theirs] in all parts. They should have their national flag, and they should be the same as the other tribes.”

And that is how it was that the president of the republic personally handed us our papers for the land. It was in Guadalupe Victoria. There, they gave us our papers in a folder, all signed by the president, by the governor. The signatures are there. There were [President] José López Portillo and [Sonora’s governor Samuel] Ocaña García, and Ignacio Valle (who was always an indigenista). There were [signatures of] others who accompanied them. When they handed us that paper, well the land had been bought. We were now in possession. Now we had a school.

And how great that the government remembered that the Guarijíos are also Mexicans. Many people said: “They have the right to have their land. They have the right to have their school, so that their children can study.” The government understood that and gave all of us Guarijíos what we needed. To this day we remember the president of the *República Mexicana* because he gave us recognition that all of us are Mexicanos, that we have only one flag.

Now we have a doctor in the region. If one of our compañeros gets sick, we do not have to take him to the city. There is a clinic in the ejido of Burapaco. It is far, not very close to Los Conejos, but we go there to ask for medicine or so that they will cure us. And for those people who do not get well, they let them go to the municipio of Alamos, and there they cure them. There is also a brigade that comes into the Sierra for vaccinations. Before, we suffered much because the patronos did not care enough to take you to get help. They just acknowledged that so-and-so had died, and that is how it was. The people with money never cared about the poor. We knew that well.

Now, a few kids are studying in Mesa Colorada. There are a few kids who have left here to go to school. A couple of them are now teachers, and they work there [Mesa Colorada] as teachers’ aides. They are training so that they can become real teachers. It is the same with the school in

Los Bajíos, in my community. One or another kid knows how to write. But for them to go out and become teachers, secretaries, well no, not yet, because they have not been trained. They still have very little schooling. It is because we Guarijíos are very shy and the teachers who come to help us are from other tribes. They are Mayos. They come to teach our children how to write, but they are more civilized. We are not. Not long ago we began to have schools. That is why kids still do not know how to speak very well. That is why they are slow to learn. It will take some time for them to learn.

But that is why we struggled, so that our kids could study. And it is good for everyone that the school is here in the middle of the Sierra, so that anyone else who wants to have their kids in school can have them there, even if they are not from the same community. The school is for everyone because the pequeños propietarios, the ranchers, their children are equally ignorant. It is pure ignorance here in the Sierra. Many Yori kids grow up the same way as the Guarijíos. They stay here around the ranchos, working. They are not able to take them to the city and put them in school there. All of them can come to the school. I have never said: "Do not put so-and-so [in school] there. You need to go down to the city." That school is good for everyone. Everyone who lives near should have schooling. The only thing is, those who go to school have to work. They have to pay something.

When we had assemblies we would talk about that, and all of us said the same thing: "We cannot fight with the school. The school is for everyone, not just the tribe." That is why we got the school, and that school was built on the orders of the government of the republic. The teachers come from the government. The government pays them so that they can help us, and so that they can look for the problems we have with the Guarijíos.

Now we are more organized. We have now got more or less what we needed, and, well, I feel good. Before, I did not feel at ease because the people who had schooling and money had you beaten down. The rich did not take notice of the poor unless they wanted you to work for them, yes. Before, we had to be constantly looking for work to support our family, because if we did not, what would we eat? But even then we did not eat. We were poorly fed. There was no good food. It is true that many people died of hunger because the food [we gathered] in the monte was not enough, and day labor was not enough. It is true that the elderly could no longer go out into the monte in search of food, and they could

not work either. I saw them get sick and die. We Guarijíos no longer had old people because they would just get sick from so much work. They died of the fatigue they got from so much work.

We are not as bad off as we were before. Before it was all work, and now well we are always working but doing our own work. A poor person has to work, and to this day we continue working but it is different now. We no longer work with the people who have money. Now we are doing our own work and we can see where we have cleared land, where we are going to plant, where we are going to plant during the rainy season. Now we are building fences and clearing paths for roads to where we need to go.

The government gave us a few head of cattle. There were something like 60 for the community of Los Conejos. There were few but with those we were helping ourselves, and now we get money from Banrural and they help us with the credit that we have.<sup>55</sup> With that we are paying, we are lending a hand, and we have to pay it back year after year with calves, with the offspring that the animals produce. Before, no, you could not see not a single animal near us.

Before, as I was saying, we lived like animals. We did not have a school, and the kids were not even baptized or registered [in the civil registry]. Now, all are registered and baptized. The priest from the municipio of Alamos also comes to visit us in Mesa Colorada. And almost everyone goes to the traditional fiestas that the other tribes have. We go there to visit the other indigenous tribes as we have to see each other as brothers.

For my part, I recognize that the [other] indigenous, the Mayos, are the same, the same color. They are indígenas too, and I love them like brothers. And the same with the Yaquis. They are also brothers, and the same with the Papagos. All of the tribes are indígenas. They all suffered the same as us, and, like us, all of them worked hard to get what they need. What's more, the Yaquis also fought to have lands, except that they live on land that is better. They plow it with tractors. But here in the Sierra where you plant, they are not irrigated crops like down there on the [coastal] plains. Here one plants on the hillsides, on top of a rise, or in the skirts of the mountain. What we have is *eventual*, as they say. The harvest comes when it rains, that is when we do well. When it does not rain well there we are, having to fast, because there is not even a single ear of corn.

We are always a little behind here in the community because the harvest is not secure. Sometimes it does not rain here. Rain is not the same as

having water stored up, like those who work down below in the valley. They get help because they have reservoirs. Here, with just the rain, it is like a gamble that we are taking here in the Sierra. When it rains good we harvest. When it does not, then we end up fasting and without being able to taste an ear of corn. There we are, bearing the hunger. We have to find some way to feed ourselves, and so we go to Ciudad Obregón, where they pay better. Here in the Sierra what they pay me never reaches 15,000 pesos. They pay you 10,000 pesos and the provisions that they sell here are very expensive. All of this happens to us here in the Sierra. But everything comes from the Sierra. There is something for everyone, make a living, to eat, and the land is good for many things. And if you have enough land you can raise livestock, goats, whatever, or you can get food like corn. That is what the land is for, to work.

Now we have a school, and we have land and a place to plant. Now we are fine. The backwardness that we had before we hardly have anymore. We are even ranchers now. We also have the help of the bank and of the INI. Those people help us with our problems. There is a dentist, and there is a livestock doctor. They go out to work in the community.

As I am saying, it takes a lot of work to do the paperwork. You have to go out, you have to investigate. This all took us a lot of work to get. That is why now we are more calm, because we now have a place to plant even if just a little corn plant, as here in the Sierra we mostly plant corn. You cannot plant anything else. Just corn and beans and sesame, that is all, just those three things is what we plant. One or another plants a little bit of *macuchi* tobacco, or sugarcane, or melon.<sup>56</sup> But that is all just for our enjoyment when it is in season. It is just a little bit that we can harvest in two weeks.

But now we are a little more comfortable living our change of lifestyle. We are a little more relaxed as now nobody bothers us. The pequeños propietarios too, they recognize us, and they are at peace because their land was not taken away. They sold it. Now, we are all more relaxed, they and we. Sometimes it is a reversal, with them offering to help you out. Now they understand, now that there are schools and everything. They will know that we are not harming anyone, that we are fighting to educate our children. The pequeños propietarios also saw how it was done.

And that is how we struggled, but it cost us a lot of work. For four years I walked alone. There was neither a car nor road near San Bernardo. From there [San Bernardo] down, there was. We would start out walking from Sototanchaca, then we would go to Los Bajíos, which is located

below Sototanchaca, they were the same people of what is now the ejido of Los Conejos. I continued working for four more years, and in total eight years I was in the struggle for my community. For eight years we were the tribe representatives, my *compañero* José Zazueta and me. Actually, my *compañero* José Zazueta was in the job for a longer time. He was the first. Before, we were two gobernadores. But later it was only him for all the Guarijío tribe. Except that he only lasted a short time as the sole gobernador because then came the misfortune that he died. He died of illness. But we always remember him. This past year we gave him his final *velación* [remembrance]. We will continue to give him a tuburada each year for as long as we can. That is my thought. The children and young people must know how we suffered to get the land. They must not forget *compañero* José Zazueta Yoquibo. Now, other people are the ones who lead and they are also fighting to see what they can get. We still lack some things, but we are there, more or less.

All of that happened in our tribe. It is like a history. I remember that it happened that way. We had a lot of work, a lot of running around. Day and night we walked without rest, and I walked more because I lived further out than *compañero* José Zazueta. From Los Conejos I had to come in alone, without a *compañero*, with the danger that they might kill me on the road. But, well, I had good luck, and nothing happened to me. Now, the people who are among us, those who have money, now they behave well. Because what we had was not a bad thing. The only thing is we had to fight to get the things that one needed.

### *Today's Small Problems*

There are still things that we lack in our community. We need a road. There in Mexico City we were requesting that the road connect to our community, but they never resolved that. I do not know what happened, but when I stepped down from my post, I handed it in along with papers that showed that it [the road project] had been approved, that they were going to do it. But to this day they still have not built it. It is the only thing that we need, for the road to connect to the community of Los Conejos. That is the problem that the teachers have here. They have to walk for something like 40 or 50 kilometers carrying their goods, provisions for the school, the *albergue escolar*, as they call it.<sup>57</sup>

Now, a small part of our region has a road. Near the ejido of Burapaco they have everything they need. But all of those who go to work in my

community go by foot or on horse or mule. All goods are transported by burro and sometimes on people's backs. This is the only thing that the community of Los Conejos lacks. I do not know when they are going to get it. Municipal presidents have often promised roads, but they never build them. There they have us with nothing but lies.

With all of that we continue to suffer for all of the walking, as the Guarijíos suffer because we have to carry provisions from far away, on burros, walking. When we built the school with material from INI we carried everything in ourselves, bunk beds, mattresses, blankets, all of that. We also had to bring in sand on burro back. You know that sand is very heavy, and how much can you carry in on ten burros in one day? We worked at that for a whole week, and at the end only had a small little mound. It is not the same as with a car, because in one trip you can bring in a lot of sand. It is a lot of work, right down to that.

I remember that when we had brought in the doors on our backs we could not install them because you had to weld them in place, and here, well, with what [could we install them]? So we had to go down to San Bernardo to borrow that instrument and also the gasoline motor [generator] because there is no electricity in Los Conejos. And we brought those two things back here on foot between eight or ten men. And after they had put in the doors, well there we go returning to San Bernardo once again.

Now, everyone helps bring in goods. All of the people, in groups, bring in the provisions for the kids. With burros we travel down the roads that they call trails, where only burros can go. And that is why the provisions arrived damaged. The cans are dented, sacks of flour ripped, and we cannot even carry fruits or vegetables because it usually does not arrive in one piece.

The teachers also struggle to get to the school. Sometimes they come on foot. And all of them come from far away, too, people that are sent from afar, from Hermosillo, and from Mexico City, too. All of them. When there are no mules or horses, they have to walk something like six hours. And those who do not know how to walk around here can take up to twelve hours on foot. We in the community of Los Conejos are always suffering because there is no road. And the municipal government does not want to help you out. Maybe if we sent more letters from all over we could get it. But the trick is to get some movement, and the authorities also have to participate and play their part in thinking things through.

As they used to say to me when we were going to Mexico City, all of



these people who are working are getting paid by the government, and they have to help us because the money they are paying them is the government's. We are just asking for help and the government is assisting everyone. In Mexico City they also said to us: "Now that you have assistance, you must demand [things]. We are going to send someone out there to help you to find out and solve problems. Someone who will accompany you wherever you want him to go. But you are the ones who give the orders. They are not going to give orders. They are going to be just working out there in the offices. But if you have problems and you do not request help, if you do not tell so-and-so, he is just going to be there in the office and he is not going to move, because they are just waiting for the community to tell them what to do. One of the things they need is for you to create a request. If you need a road in there, first you have to create a request by the community."

But when the community requests one of those problems that it wants to resolve, they have to go see the licenciado from the INI. He has to be there listening and helping to participate, too, to go and give a talk to the whole assembly, with all of the people, so that the problems come out very clearly. Then he has to send the request to Mexico City to see who he can get to do it. But the tribe has not moved [on the road]. I think it is that way because if they knew about it, there would have been some movement on the problem. And the Guarijíos still do not have good houses, but just palm huts. That is how we are still. We have more houses than we need, but what we wanted most was land where we could plant and [build] schools. With a good *jacal* [hut], the water does not come in. But we do not give too much attention to having a good house, like those who have money, because they have good houses but they also have to spend their money. That is a question of money. But no, where are you going to get [money]? We are very poor and we continue to be poor, and with work we are planting to feed our children. We plant nothing but corn and beans.

I would like for other people to know about this, what I am talking about right now, that they would have an opinion and continue to think for the rest, so that someone else would come forth with the same sense I have, that things, problems, should continue to improve. You could get everything [you need], and you can get it but you need to get things moving, you need a lot of movement. When someone has a [leadership] position they cannot just stay in one place, in their house. They need to go out and look for problems. They need to go out and ask someone and together with the licenciado and all of that. But when one has a position,

if he does not demand or does not look for the problems or ask questions, where those things will be, like a thing that does not move forward. You will never get things moving because you are not fighting to make things move. But getting things moving, yes, yes, you can get it done.

Those little problems remain. Everything that the community needs they are getting. We already got potable water, except that the pump got screwed up and when I left [the post] they had not fixed it. I do not know what is going on. But what we had suffered before is now going away little by little. We suffered. We had no doctor, there was much illness, molar pain, fever, pneumonia, and, well, there was lots of illness. People of the tribe died. Besides, it was hard to take them there to the city, to cure them, because we are also very poor.

We Guarijíos suffered all of that. Before we got the land, we suffered more. We fed ourselves with nothing but food from the monte. Fruits from the trees, with that people fed themselves. And they worked just to get five liters of corn. That is what the *pequeños propietarios* paid. But they fed themselves well because they had the means to live, but the Guarijíos, no. They always looked at us from under their feet, they went around stepping on us.

All of this that I am saying, all of this is true, all of this that happened to me from the moment I began to get into the question of the struggle for the land and the school. I know about the problems that are here in my community. They are not serious problems. It is not something that can trip you up. They are small problems and one has to go out and look for food where you find it, and return to the ranch where you live, in our land, here where they gave us a piece of land.

Everything I am saying here will move on. People who study this will understand how we lived before. Before, we ate fruit from the monte and with that we supported ourselves. We still eat the food that is here in the monte, for example, *quelites*, the fruits of the *etcho*, *pitaya* fruit, and when they are in season, *tempisques*, and the sweet honey from a bee that builds its hive in the hills. [We eat this] instead of eating sweets. We Guarijíos eat that. Except that the bee is very aggressive, and not just anyone can get the honey, not just anyone can knock down a hive. All of that we have here among us, in the community. All of that, other people must know, the new people, now that they have it better than we did. I was never in school, as our father did not even think to look into that because he was half wild, because the people were wild and they never went to talk with the authority from the *municipio*. They

never looked into anything. They just went on working with the patrones from sunup to sundown.

For my part, I put in everything, my fatigue. I worked so much because I did not even know a single letter [of the alphabet]. I still do not know. Because it is not the same when you know how to read and write. It is not the same as thinking from just memory, because it is very difficult to think about the problems that you want to talk about. But those who know letters, well those same letters tell you in what form you can read them. And with someone who doesn't know how to read, well he works in thought only, always trying not to forget things. It is not the same as if he were reading. It is very difficult.

The problems we have now are small problems, because [we have] the matter of the teachers. They used to work very well, but now the teachers hardly want to work. They do not want, or they have, other problems. We do not know. But how many times do they come and just leave. And they leave the kids there in the school, and they do not return for a long time. Sometimes, like now, they start [classes] late and they have hardly done anything. That is the small problem that we have now. But more serious problems we do not have. We all have a place to plant. The problem now is that we spend our time lazing around. But that depends on the person.

### *Morality, Crime, and Law*

I often ask myself, how can the Guarijíos live better. How can we solve the problems of our community and families. And I tell you that, yes, there are problems. We also have our authorities. But in the last few years they have killed many people in the Sierra because some are going in bad ways and from there they have to come before the judicial police. Sometimes it also happens that a woman leaves her husband and the community does not punish her because we do not have laws to punish her. But sometimes she will leave him and, after a while, she will return to be with him again. In those problems, the authority, the gobernador of the tribe, can say what has to be done. But there is another way to think about it: if someone wants to do something about it, he will. If someone hurts me in my home and I want to take him to the authority, I can take him. But if I do not want to take him I will not take him. But, knowing people and who they are, it depends on who they are.

All of those problems begin with someone, in someone's home, and [depend on] how he thinks about things. Since the man needs a woman

to prepare the food and the woman needs the man, as the saying goes, to not work. That is where the problems begin. Love does exist. Yes, there should be love, and the two must love each other, kiss, and try not to fight, to get along well. That is important. The two of them have much work to do. The two have responsibilities, and the two both work [at it].

I will tell you all, something beloved that we have in this world, as human flesh [we who] live together, God made it so that women and men would accompany each other so that we would not become sad. We have to live together. It was the first thing that He said, *tatita Dios* who is in heaven. And we should remember our experience with our elders who have spoken these words to us. That is the advice they gave us. That love is the love of having a woman, to have her near. Moreover, [with a woman] you have help with the kids, and when you have a family the mothers are the ones who guide them, and give them love, too. Oftentimes you have to go far away to work, to find food or look into other problems, and then the woman is the one who takes care of the family because she is keeping the place where we live tidy, the place where we have our home.

And who—one says—shall live? First—one says—the woman.

What does one ask for? The love of another. A home. Where does one live? Does he have a house? If he does not have a house, how is he going to live? Under a ramada? Under a tree? We have to think first about having a house. One must build a house, a jacal, eventually a little home, as they say, just a poorly made home, that is an eventual house. And then your heart fills with joy for that woman you are to be with or marry. One has to take responsibility like a man.

When we love a woman we have to take responsibility like men. That is why our mother said: “This one is going to be a man. My son is a man for the woman who needs him.” That is what she said. And when we grow up, we [feel this] very deeply, to the point of wanting to offer the whole world when we are before a woman.<sup>58</sup> It is an affection that you have, an affection that calls to you. . . . A man cannot live without a woman, he cannot live.

As long as a man does not have responsibilities, he gets lost. It is the same with a woman. A woman needs her boss, and a man needs his licenciada.<sup>59</sup> He is the one who rules, installed in a house and with all of the family. That is why we men need to see many things. We have to go out into the countryside, far away, and stop on a hilltop and think. “What,” we will ask, “do I give my family to eat? What shall I take back home with me? What do I take back to my woman?” There on that hilltop a lot of thoughts come out.

“Look, what do you think”—what do we men think? We have to ask ourselves this, explain in our thoughts what we can take back to our home. What to think, what can we do? In the first place, we must think: “I have a family, I have kids, I have a woman.” Okay, I am going to climb up that hill, I am going into that monte to look and see that that hill has nothing. The only thing it has is a view of everything, to see. It is a dividing line. Then I come down from the hill and I ask myself: “Should I look for food in this monte that I am walking in? Where should I look? I have to bring something back. I have to look out for my children. Just a little bit of food that I find here in this monte.” I also have to think: “One day I am going to work, to look for a day-labor job, to look for a patrón. Even if he pays little I am going to earn a wage, but I am looking out for my children, for my family.”

There are many people who do not care about their families. It does not hurt them. They worked hard the day they worked or the week that they worked, and what happens? Instead of feeding their family they do not think of taking them food or of feeling their suffering. Well, the man wants to buy something and he goes to the patrón. The patrón has a lot of alcohol, whatever you want. If you worked hard and earned thousands of pesos during the week, first the patrón says: “No, I do not want any money. First, I want you to take provisions to your family.” “Okay,” says the poor man, he takes all kinds of supplies. “Whatever is left, give to me in alcohol so I can have fun during my week.” And the next day he is dying from the hangover.

No, compañeros, I say this to everyone, that this is no good. You must take whatever you can to feed your family. That is the way to live right. To find a hardworking woman. She is working alone, and you work but only for your own life. And for your life there is work for nothing and that is where it ends, work without meaning. And when you have a family, you need to ask yourself things, to know where your feelings are going for your family. Look, I say that our children, because they see what we are doing, the steps that we take, are also living [what we do]. That is why often we need to correct our children, our family. So that for however humble we are, however drunk we are, we have to stay focused on our thoughts. Our heads tell us. We should not let our heads be navigated by other people, by some other idler, because soon our children will be there too, drunk like us. But if we keep focused on our thoughts it is not the same. The child says: “My dad is a drunk, but I am not going to be the same way.”

There is a little stairway that is the change in the lives of our children.

Do not put them in our life because in our life if you have vices you are never going to leave it. If you have vices in the home where you live, you should not get angry with your family or with the woman you have. You should not be jealous. Besides, being jealous will quickly take over your thoughts. The affection that you have, affection for a woman, will take over, even though she loves you. In the beginning she accepts you with that pleasure, with affection without anger, without a fight. But after a while the problems begin and she studies things, finding out why you are that way.

We should not ignore our thoughts. We must carry forth with a formalization of our thoughts, thinking straight, like *tatita Dios* taught us to do. Often we ignore our thoughts. We do not have experience for life but we must make ourselves aware and question our own thoughts. We, who live far away, who live out here alone in the Sierra, what would happen if we respected our thoughts? *Tatita Dios* left our companionship that way. That is why he produced women at a distance from men, because he said: "So that we may have more people." That is what our *tata Dios* told us. I think that *tata Dios* had some other religion because he never was married or was a *Don Juan*, and he was not burlesque. He always lived alone. That is how it was then, as we are saying.

So there you are looking at and hearing everything that is going on there, and it should not be that way. But, even so, if you try to give advice to somebody it is as if the winds come and sweep him away. But if what you want is to learn, if you want to have your experience, you have to take things with seriousness. You should not get involved in other problems. I have experience. That is how it is living in my home. To my people I say the same thing that I am saying now. The best advice that you can give your family.

Often we have people who do not respect each other or do not respect themselves. Lots of people try to play with people or with their children, and they should not play with them. They should make them see the problems and make them respect their mother and father so that tomorrow or after they will say: "I respect my father and I respect my mother, and they gave me this advice." That is how everyone should be. But now there is nothing. We think that no, that everyone is equal, that each to his own. And now we even have children who have become killers. And we have their parents helping them. Their parents support them in prison. Often, they like that they are going out and killing people or stealing. That is no way to live. To live is to be at peace. To look out for our children, to give them the right path so they do not bother

anybody. To march forward little by little, but moving well. And in this way, whoever, wherever, we have family, we have friends, we have people who know us. I have certainly done something here because those who are hot-blooded do not even live to be 60, or 50, or 40, or 20 years old. Why? For the boldness that they have. With hot blood soon comes fire. It is better to be cold-blooded.

Often in our families when our sons are Don Juans, we have to counsel them. It does not matter that it is a lot of work to calm them down. But the mother and the father must be very consistent, that is how they have to manage their family. If they do not manage it, other people say to them: "This one has no mother, he has no family, and this is where it ends for him." But when these problems happen, when they kill people, they rob them, and the family tries to help them, it is already too late. You cannot help them because they are the ones who go looking for it. That is how the laws are. The law finds what it seeks. Firstly, we have to calm those who are hot-blooded and if we cannot calm him down he will die, another cold-blooded [person] would kill him. Why did he do it? Because your son is hot-blooded, and the other, to avoid death, had to defend himself. Self-defense, as they say. That is my thought. That is why with the family you always have to be careful. You have to operate carefully and with compassion. And a man must have compassion with women and care for them, most of all.

Do not think that this is a lie. It is true. I have experience because my grandfather was a serious man. He only talked about important things from the past, about how they said they respected people. I learned many things from my grandfather. Thanks to God I am still alive and I have 45 years of experience. Everyone has something to contribute. That is my experience.

### *Epilogue*

Everything I am saying is so that others can know about it. I am giving my opinion here of what has happened to me, of what has gone on with us, of the problems that we had. I am talking about how our life has gone so that people everywhere know how we were living and how we are now. So that everyone knows how there was justice for we who were here, forgotten. I know all of this because I was the leader of Los Conejos. The community put me up for it because since I was a kid I had gone to the city to work. I liked working there, earning my money, and then I came back to the Sierra and with that money I bought my clothes.



Because of that [experience] I was a little more conscious, because I knew other people down there in the town, in the city. I heard what they were saying and I understood more [than others].

Those who did not leave were those who were here in the Sierra. Those people did not go anywhere. They were ignorant, well, they were wild, and they never came face-to-face to talk with the Yoris. On the contrary, when they were about to come upon one [Yori], they would just break for one side of the path and would hide out in the monte so that they did not have to confront the white people. They were afraid of them. I too was afraid like that the first time I went down to the city. I was afraid of cars. I thought they would run me over. But no, after I had ridden in a car I started to gain more experience. I also had other people to orient me and tell me good things. So that, as they say, is how I became more awake, how I opened my eyes, to see, to live, and I think that because of that they wanted me to be the leader [here in Los Conejos]. They named me in an assembly and I told them yes. People said that so-and-so will be our leader. I had to accept because I was from there. First I had to go around investigating without any help. I did that for four years, and after there was help from the government, kept going for another four years. It was eight years of walking from my community to where there was a car. Until we got all the things we needed most.

Yes, it caused us many problems, and more than anything I want the children to know about it, the new students from the Guarijío tribe, I want them to know about the problems we faced, how we got what we needed, and how we fought. That with this talk tomorrow or after they say: "It was a lot of work for our leaders and we have to work more to improve ourselves." Those to come will not work much to solve the problems when they have them because everyone will be literate and it will be easier for them to figure things out amongst themselves. Those who know how to read can defend themselves a little better. It is easier for them to leave and go far away to solve the problems they have and the things that they lack in their community. Or they can send out information to whatever place. Wherever you go, with written papers people will receive you because they know well that you are educated. It is like everything, he goes without fear, he goes in the right direction. And someone who does not know [how to read] goes out there and he cannot even say: "Here is where I go, down that street." He arrives there in a big city and he is just looking all around, because he does not know how to read. "Where is the place where they will solve the problems,

where can it be?" You just do not know. But with signs, because each street has its signs, this or that street. Those who know how to read go directly to where they are going. It will be easier for those Guarijíos who know how to read as they will not struggle as much as I did.

Because I was always working from just my memory of the problems that I had to think over. But I always went straight ahead because I never carried with me a bad thought. The only thing I was thinking about was that our children had to go to school and also about how to calm our hunger. Many people from those places that we went to thought we were just going around back and forth, and that we were all ignorance. But no one can know another's thoughts, no one knows. But still, you look for a little bit of the thoughts that another has, you think about the necessities that are in the community, and I always tried to help out my people of the Guarijío tribe. I was always thinking of them. Why are we always so messed up? Is it the lack of a leader or of help? We were always thinking like that, my compañero José Zazueta and me. We walked along in search of a solution to our problems.

I am talking about this so that tomorrow or after there remains a history of the problems that we had around the land. So that people know about how the struggle was, how we got the land and the school for learning. I want this story to remain like a painted footprint that stays in place for a long time, for many years. It was very important for us because we did not have a place to put a little corn plant. Now, we all have enough land to work, for our planting, to feed our children. We are now better off than before. Before, we were very backward. We went around with patched-up clothes and with an empty stomach. That is how our history went. Well, I have now told you everything that I know. I am going to stop here with my words. And who is this man who is speaking, you might ask? And who is this man who has told you all of this? Well, I am Cipriano Buitimea Romero, leader of the Guarijíos of Los Conejos, born right there in the Sierra, in the middle of the monte. My name should be in Mexico City, as I went there something like four times. I am 45 years old and I am still alive, and the only thing that I do now is plant corn for my family and care for the livestock of the ejido. I also go to the tuburadas to dance the pascola, to scratch the harp, to play the violin. I still go to the assembly, and I still look out for my community, for the Guarijíos.

PORTFOLIO OF PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
DAVID BURCKHALTER

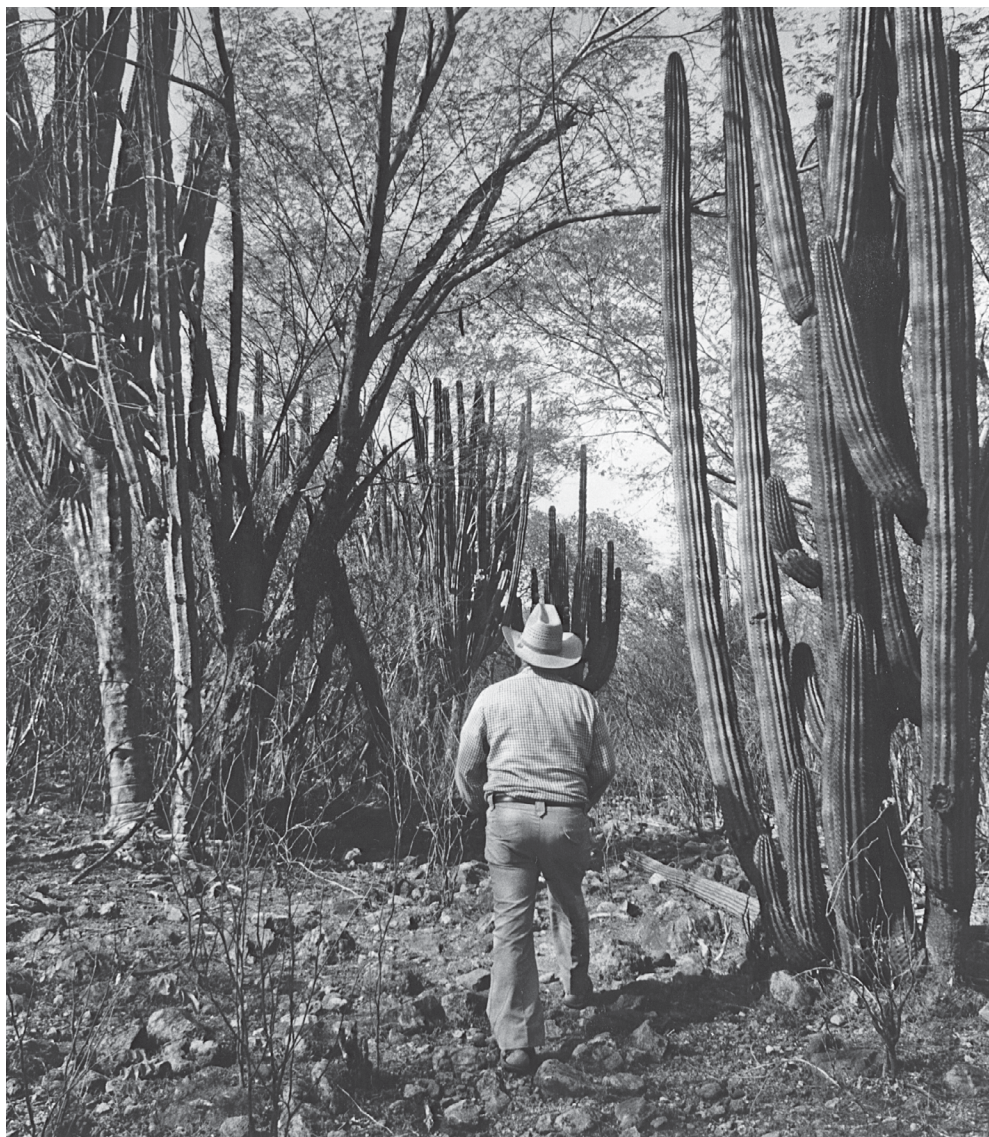


*Hoofing it down a San Bernardo lane toward "Los Pilaes" (1992)*



*The road to Rancho San Pedro and Guajaray (1995)*



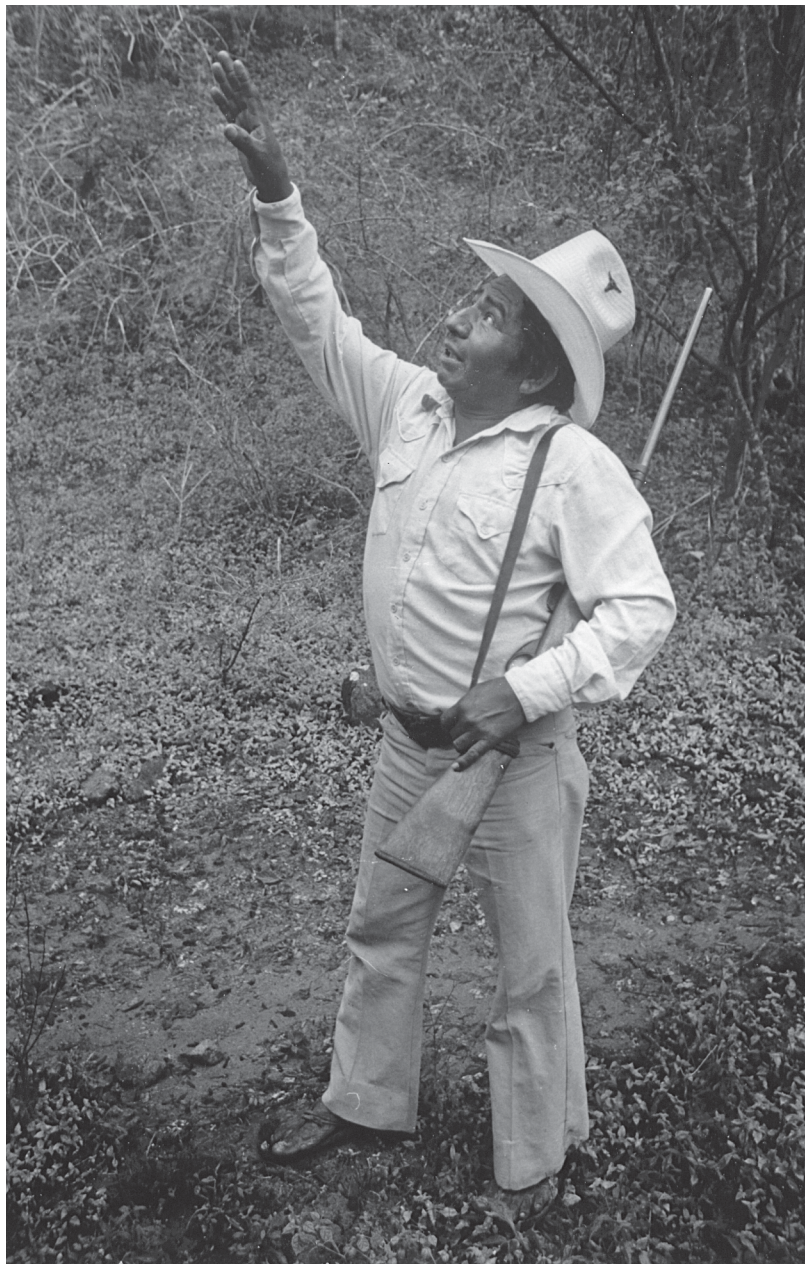


*In the forest above San Bernardo (1995)*



*Cipriano on the trail back home to Jánaco (1995)*





*Cipriano in the forest (1995)*





*José Ruelas relaxing at Rancho San Pedro (1995)*

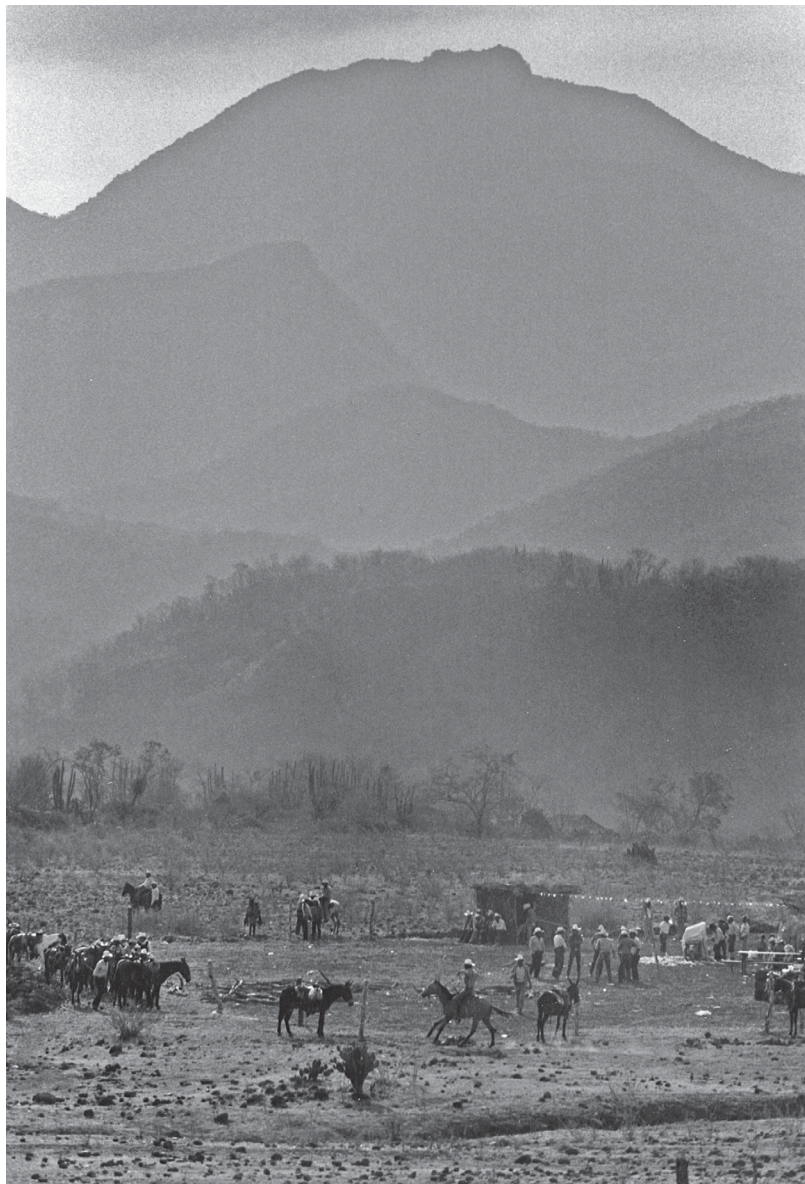


*Homework (1995)*





*Making corn tortillas (1995)*



*Fiesta of San Isidro Labrador at Los Bajíos (1995)*





*San Bernardo, looking south (January 2012)*



*San Bernardo street scene, looking north (May 2012)*





*“Los Pilares” from the high road to Chorihoa (January 2012)*



*Site of the “Los Pilares” Dam, now under construction (January 2012)*





*The Mayo River and the forest in summer, south of Chorijsa (August 2013)*



*The Mayo River below Chorijsa (December 2012)*





*Mayo River landscape near Chorijoa (December 2012)*



*A pool on the Mayo River at Chorijoa (December 2012)*





*The Mayo River carrying summer rains, Chorijoa to the northeast  
(August 2013)*



*On the trail to Rancho Las Chollas (October 2012)*





*Looking south across the Mayo River to “Los Pilares” (January 2012)*



*“La Herradura” from the road to Mochibampo (January 2012)*





*The Mayo River south of Mochibampo (March 2013)*



*Foot bridge across the Mayo River at Mochibampo (August 2013)*





*Herding cows at Mesa Colorada (December 2013)*



*The Mayo River and Mesa Colorada, looking to the southwest (August 2013)*





*Foot bridge across the Mayo River connecting Mesa Colorada with Burapaco  
(January 2012)*



*Planting wild tobacco at Mesa Colorado (March 2013)*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to the University of Arizona's Southwest Center and *Journal of the Southwest* for publishing *Among Yoris and Guarijíos: Chronicles of Anthropology*, and to the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México for providing the financial support to reproduce David Burckhalter's beautiful photographs. I am especially grateful to Dr. Jeff Banister for his English translation of the manuscript, which has allowed this work to traverse linguistic borders and become available to a new and different audience. His efforts with this manuscript have been brilliant and exemplary, producing the kind of high-quality translation that can only come through hard work and a deep knowledge of the local and regional forms of the Spanish language present in this research. Perhaps this is why it has taken so long to complete an English-language version, despite a longstanding interest on the part of other researchers at the University of Arizona in doing so. I hope that Anglophone readers find something of interest in this book, and that they enjoy it as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

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## NOTES

1. The word "Indigenist" here is not to be confused with "indigenous." The Instituto Nacional Indigenista was developed within a longer history of "indigenismo" (literally, "indigenism"), a movement which in Mexico began largely in the three or so decades following the 1910 Revolution. In broad terms, indigenismo—and its promoters, *indigenistas*—advocated for the rights of Mexico's indigenous peoples. INI was indigenismo's state institutional form. I use the Spanish term *indigenista* throughout because it has no good English equivalent. In terms of the subject matter of this narrative, the closest English-language equivalent would be an Indian agent employed by the federal government—the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for example—to implement social programs in indigenous communities.

2. Roughly, this is an indentured servant living on the rancher's land rent-free, but who is also deeply indebted to the rancher.

3. "Yori" is the term used by the Guarijíos, as well as their neighbors to the west, the Yoremem (Mayos) and (Yoemem) Yaquis, to refer to non-Indians. At various points in history it has meant "white" or Spaniard as well.

4. An ejido is a form of communal land tenure developed in the wake of the 1910 Revolution and put into practice through subsequent agrarian reforms and

in many cases the breakup of large estates. Ejidos and communities are often one and the same thing across Mexico, but they are not synonymous. Production on ejidos can be conducted in a collective manner, but typically it is done individually. Ejidal commons are sometimes maintained for things like gathering firewood, wild harvest of edible and medicinal plants, and hunting and fishing, among other uses.

5. The tuburada is a Guarijío ritual that consists of prayer and dancing for three consecutive nights. The prayers are called tuburi, and the dance is the pascola, or deer dance. The ritual is carried out to give thanks and make requests of God, or to say goodbye to the dead.

6. In November 1990, *Sierra de Nadie* won first place in the national book competition "Fifty Years of Indigenismo in Mexico," sponsored by the INI, which published the book in 1994 with a print run of 3,000.

7. Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution among other things created the basis for Mexico's far-reaching agrarian reform, and laid the foundation for the creation of the ejidal land tenure structure. It declared that lands and waters were "originally owned by the Nation," essentially nationalizing soils and surface waters. Reforms introduced in 1992 were a fairly radical break with this provision, making legally possible the fee-simple titling and privatization of ejidal lands. For the Guarijíos, becoming "comuneros" would have meant legally constituting a *comunidad indígena* (indigenous community), a juridical classification that would have given them some added protection for their lands.

8. *Entre Yoris y Guarijíos* includes a longer bibliography on the Guarijíos containing the work of several of these important authors: Alejandro Aguilar, Andrés Ortiz, Armando Haro, Claudia Hariss, David Yetman, Donancio Gutiérrez, Isabel Barreras, Leticia Acosta, Mario Camberos, Patricia Salido, Refugio Palacios, Sergio Sandoval, Vidal Salazar, and Walter Dodd.

9. *Sobre los Testimonios Indígenas y la Tarea Antropológica al Editarlos* was published originally as "Voz de los Sin Voz: Notas sobre el Papel de los Testimonios Indígenas en la Historia Oral y la Perterbante Tarea de Editarlos, Una Perspectiva Antropológica" (1994). We have omitted this portion of *Entre Yoris y Guarijíos* for this translation and reproduction in *Journal of the Southwest*.

10. EZLN: the Zapatista National Liberation Army.

11. A term used by those who would claim to be descended from the original Spanish colonizers of San Cristóbal de las Casas and, thereby, establish their aristocratic pedigree.

12. Roughly, "On What the Field Anthropologist Should Record" and "Voice of Those without a Voice: Notes on the Role of Indigenous Testimonies in Oral History and the Perturbing Task of Editing Them—An Anthropological Perspective."

13. "Tropóloga" was a misunderstanding of the word *antropóloga*, or female anthropologist.

14. Gentry was actually trained as a botanist, though much of his published work in the region reflected an anthropological sensibility. See Gentry's *Río Mayo Plants* (1942), and its redux, *Río Mayo Plants: The Tropical Deciduous Forest and Environs of Northwest Mexico* (Martin et al. 1998).

15. Again, Gentry was not a trained anthropologist but rather a botanist with anthropological interests.

16. Trained in everything (todo), but lacking perhaps in the kind of depth that Gentry possessed.

17. See note 4 for a brief definition of “ejido.”

18. San Bernardo and much of the Sierra Guarijía fall within the municipality of Alamos.

19. DIF—Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, a governmental social safety net organization focused on families.

20. Sonorans often shorten the word “sí” to “ey.”

21. She uses the term “castellanización” probably to denote the deeper cultural project of assimilation implied in teaching the Guarijíos to speak, read, and write in Spanish.

22. Traditional healers.

23. Instituto Sonorense de Seguro Social—public health and social security institute.

24. The owner of a hacienda, a Spanish-colonial form of land tenure and production.

25. This was probably the Arizona State Museum at the University of Arizona.

26. CONASUPO—Compañía Nacional de Subsistencia Popular, a national food assistance program in place since the early 1960s. Conasupo was dismantled with the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s.

27. With some creative license this might be translated as, “The Fibbing Mantis.”

28. Scooping up water from a bucket, using a halved gourd.

29. “Magüeche” is the Guarijío word for corn patch.

30. “El Bomberazo,” in reference to firemen, is bureaucratic-speak for “we need it yesterday.” Because of the urgency of the demand, whatever it may be, the response typically lacks planning and foresight.

31. Coordinación General del Plan Nacional de Zonas Deprimidas y Grupos Marginados, an anti-poverty program begun in the 1970s.

32. “Cacahuete” is Spanish for peanut.

33. “Cebolla” is Spanish for onion.

34. This is the correct spelling.

35. The federal public registry.

36. Belonging to no one.

37. Deer dance.

38. Less than US\$1.00 per day.

39. Pitaya (*Stenocereus thurberi*, or organ pipe cactus), etcho (*Pachycereus pecten-aboriginum*), tempisque (*Sideroxylon tepicense*).

40. The bush.

41. *Dioscorea remotiflora*—a plant with a tuberous root; a close relative of the yam.

42. Mocúzarit is officially known as the Adolfo Ruíz Cortines reservoir, and it dams the Río Mayo. The “shrimp” (cauque) referred to here are crayfish.

43. Ciapriano’s mother was Mayo (Yoreme).

44. By “they” he is referring to ranchers and other landowners, who had for so long discouraged Guarijíos from planting their own corn.

45. He’s referring here to the 1910 Revolution.

46. In the official birth registry.

47. Palma real—*Sabal uresana*. It is the favored palm for baskets, hats, and *petates* (palm-thatched mats).

48. During the 1970s and into the 1980s, southern Sonora's two agricultural valleys, the Yaqui and the Mayo Valleys, were the sites of large-scale campesino mobilization for land. Some of their claims dated to the 1930s and the Cárdenas-era agrarian reforms that followed the 1910 Revolution.

49. "Cacique" usually means political boss, but here it more likely means tyrants or despots.

50. Cipriano used "güero" here because he heard the Yoris referring to it as a derogatory term for whomever they wanted to disparage.

51. "Licenciado" has different meanings, ranging from a lawyer to someone with a bachelor's degree. In Mexico, a licenciado can be someone who occupies an official post, even if he/she has no degree. Here, the "licenciados" were INI personnel.

52. Each of the Guarijío villages has an elected "*gobernador*," or governor.

53. "National land" here refers to land with no private title but rather held by the federal government.

54. Cantares are chant-like songs with a narrative storyline. "Planting the Holy Cross" here refers to the practice of beginning a festival by sticking a small, carved wooden cross in the ground at the southern flank of the festival site.

55. The federal Rural Credit Bank.

56. Macuchi, also known as *tabaco rústico*, is a native tobacco plant that Guarijíos plant on moist sandbars along the Río Mayo.

57. A boarding school dormitory.

58. This statement is based on a saying in Mexico that goes something like, "I would bring you the stars." But this is the way that Cipriano said it.

59. By the term "licenciado," here Cipriano means something like "the maximum authority." It is a statement of paradox—they both rule each other.

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