

**TARAHUMARA TRANSCRIPTS FACE TO FACE WITH MODERNITY:
AN INTERTEXTUAL APPROACH**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present work evaluates an overview of original texts by and about the isolated Tarahumara of Mexico by considering key elements of their passive and active traditions, which reveal the unique values and ideologies of the group, and give understanding to the relevant past and present discourse as a form of social practice, identity, and shared knowledge and beliefs by analyzing transcripts of Tarahumara oral tradition along with modern interpretative writings, some by modern day authors from the Mexican sierra, that retain some aspects of the traditional transcripts while simultaneously suggesting a departure from some time-honored facets of the ancient tribe living in the twenty-first century.

By taking a page from Vladamir Propp's *Mythology of the Folk Tale* (1928), his structural analysis of one hundred Russian fairy tales, this work analyzes transcriptions of one hundred Tarahumara oral traditions that had never been categorized or morphologically analyzed collectively before to reveal ways that social and political negotiations have been reproduced in discourse and how this interdiscursivity with modern texts by current sierra authors connects to the formation and maintenance of cultural determination while simultaneously serving as resistance against external influence. This study of an intertextual nature signals not only the historical situation of the Tarahumara of Mexico in our modern world, but also secures for modern academia a neoteric plot on the map of pre-Colombian ideology by extending Alan Dundes's "The Morphology of North America Indian Folktales" (1980) for the first time to the works of

the Mexican Tarahumara traditional tales, demonstrating that Tarahumara folktales and myths are structured as well, not simply told in random formless tales, and can be successfully submitted to a morphological componential analysis, which will aid in the elucidation of cultural norms, values, and penchants. This study of Tarahumara texts will serve as a vehicle for understanding the perpetuation of group behavior and norms by analysis of the structural patterns, will reveal wish and wish fulfillment of the tribe, and will consequently stand as a reflector of sierra societal reality.

DEDICATION

This work is devoted to those who have gone before me to pave the way to knowledge so that I may continue to carry the torch of enlightenment a step forward. The more one learns, the more glaring becomes his ignorance. With the understanding that learning is a life-long process, I affectionately dedicate this work to my father, William Ray Parmer, Sr., an inspiration to mere mortals, a uniquely energetic and caring man who taught those under his tutelage to dream big dreams. I am grateful that my father placed no limits on the potential for achievement. He introduced me to the piney fragrant milieu of the Sierra Tarahumara and the fascinating noble tribe who for countless generations have honored the traditions of their revered ancestors. Like the Tarahumaras, I will forever cherish my father's influence and his presence in times of celebration and in moments of despair.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES.....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II WHO ARE THE TARAHUMARA?	5
History.....	5
Sierra Spaces	21
CHAPTER III WHAT ARE SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE TARAHUMARA THROUGH THE EYES OF OUTSIDERS?.....	35
Jesuit Writings.....	40
Carl Sofus Lumholtz	70
Wendell Bennett and Robert Zingg.....	78
William Merrill	88
Don Burgess	92
CHAPTER IV THE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RITES THAT CONSERVE TARAHUMARA TRADITION	101
CHAPTER V WHAT DO THE TRANSCRIPTIONS OF TARAHUMARA ORAL NARRATIVES REVEAL?	181

	Page
Tarahumara Texts.....	187
Oral Narratives	193
Structural Analysis	207
Conclusion.....	258
CHAPTER VI WHAT DO MODERN SIERRA WRITERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONCEPT OF TARAHUMARA TEXTS?.....	264
Writings of Tarahumara Govenor: Don Erasmo Palma	265
Humberto Quezada Prado, Sierra Educator, Author, and Literacy Promotor.....	299
CHAPTER VII CONCLUSION.....	326
WORKS CITED.....	337

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 Reino de Nueva Vizcaya	46
Figure 2 Female figure.....	76
Figure 3 Tarahumara dance patio	77
Figure 4 Map of Modern Tarahumara lands	101
Figure 5 Dwellings	103
Figure 6 Newly paved road to Batopilas Canyon	105
Figure 7 Goats that dot the cliff near the road to Batopilas Canyon	112
Figure 8 Lining up at the “lunchroom” in Yerbabuena	113
Figure 9 Traditional native clothing	119
Figure 10 Matachine dancers.....	163
Figure 11 Pascolera dancers	168
Figure 12 Don Erasmo Palma of Norogachi as published in El Diario de Chihuahua October 23, 2016	264
Figure 13 Don Erasmo receives “Victor Hugo Rescón Banda” Medal of Culture Merit, 2014	272
Figure 14 Tarahumara female grinding corn on a metate.....	307
Figure 15 Phallic shaped rock in the sierra.....	315
Figure 16 Tarahumara photos	336

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Tarahumara Footwear Acculturation Index	128
Table 2 Tarahumara Language Risk Chart.....	336

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Whereas many prior studies of folklore have taken a scientific approach, spending a great deal of time and effort dissecting, categorizing, and analyzing folklore artifacts, Barre Toelken, in his *The Dynamics of Folklore* (1996), seeks to humanize folklore, placing emphasis on the folk and the dynamics of their traditional expressions, rather than dwelling on the genre, structure, or text from an academic perspective. His attempt is to create a complement to prior works on folklore by considering the value in a variety of approaches, with a focus on the active aspects of the storytelling--the topics, vocabulary, and perspective--as passed from generation to generation by locals. Rather than strictly dissecting the structure of the texts of a people in a textual approach to folklore (the broadened term to include a variety of artifacts of folklore), grouping a body of works into genres, and analyzing them only for their structure and their connection with other similarly formatted texts, Toelken embraces the dynamic human elements that weave the fabric of human construction, such as in the narratives expressed in the transcribed traditional tales of the Tarahumara. While this study does analyze the sequence structure of the traditional narratives of the Tarahumara, it also incorporates and evaluates the essential human element of rites and practices that preserve and perpetuate this people group that is uniquely situated in the Sierra Madres of Mexico.

An ethnographic approach to the lore and the cultural environs within which a text is articulated and understood may ask the questions “How does a culture express its shared

values in traditional ways among members? What is shared?” A subsequent query may be, “Of what value is this information to academia?” The focus of the present study is to consider a group of people—the folk—who produce the stories and their environs within which the artifacts are expressed and shared among members.

The central focus of the past and present Tarahumara way of life has been to maintain a collective approach to perpetuate core values and traditional systems in all life circumstances from a unique geographical sierra perspective surrounded by a pastoral, organic existence. The native expressions of their own societal realities are reinforced via vernacular formats which serve to propagate their independence from outsiders, to accent their self-imposed isolation in the sierra, and to address the immediate physical rural context in which folk expression is produced: the types of *dramatis personae* who appear and the occupational (pastoral) setting. In the case of the Tarahumaras, the geographical region of the sierra certainly provides a unique context for the maintenance of traditional topics and expressions (Toelken 5). Although the Tarahumaras express many elements of their values via performance acts, the focus of this study is the transcribed oral tradition of the group from an emic perspective.

Folklore is subject to variation among regions and raconteurs of a given geographical area. Folk ideas and expressions appear in a limited number of genres in the sierra, and outsiders are just not privy to the sharing of oral tradition among the close-knit communities. The community encourages or limits the traditional context over such matters as language used, topics covered, and appropriateness of situation. Many folk ideas appear in several genres without appreciable difference in meaning or context. For

example, in both Tarahumara legends and myths, humans have reverence for elements of nature. There seems to be a spiritual bond with the Tarahumaras in their contact with the forest and its inhabitants. There is one truth about nature for them, and it is this perspective of oneness with nature that appears in varying detail in each tale, poem or legend.

A recurring motif in the folklore of many regions is the fear of the wild, of probing the anxiety that people have of untamed nature in the forest. In *Los Cuentos de Francisco Machiwi* (2007), a modern work of fiction by a sierra writer, we read the same motif of apprehension of the dark expressed first in the adult figure staggering home drunk in the windy night, and then later in the childhood character, Régulo. The wind itself also is a mysterious condition that whips up after a stone or another object is tossed in the water. The wind disturbance calls the snake to rise out of the water and kill animals in “Marcial Ortís y la culebra” (Mares 15). Such co-existence and often a struggle between humans and nature is prevalent in both the native Tarahumara tales and also in the more modern sierra texts. In the actual sierra environs as well as in the fictional settings, each animal and plant has its place and purpose as dictated by Rarámuri culture.

Since most of the Tarahumara tales were initially expressed in the native language and then translated to Spanish, some of the vocabulary may be that of a non-native translator. However, the content of the tales disseminates a unique cultural identity in an organic environment and marks culturally shared practices common to those in a shared space such as the sierra.

The specific goals of this work aims to answer the following questions:

1. Who are the Tarahumara? How does their self-imposed geographic isolation contribute to their knowledge and belief systems?
2. What are some impressions of the Tarahumara through the eyes of outsiders? Various conquerors, explorers, clerics, scientists, artists, loggers, miners, and educators have documented their individual adventures in the sierra.
3. What is important to the Tarahumara? How are their values and ideologies reflected by probing and plotting some key elements of their passive and active traditions?
4. What do the transcriptions of Tarahumara oral narratives communicate?
5. What do modern sierra writers contribute to the concept of Tarahumara texts?
6. What do Tarahumara texts contribute to general academia?

CHAPTER II

WHO ARE THE TARAHUMARA?

History

In the writings of the seventeenth Jesuit priests, the forms Tarahumar and Tarahumares were utilized for the singular and plural forms of the tribe, and the term Tarahumara was the adjective for describing persons and things. However, most modern publications and people referring to the sierra tribe use the words Tarahumara or Rarámuri/Rarálamuli and Tarahumaras and Rarámuris/Rarámuli for the plural form of reference (Burgess, 2014, 1). The terms Tarahumara and Rarámuri are used interchangeably in the present work, but it is notable that the tribe refers to itself as the Rarámuri. The term Tarahumara has become a synonymous term for outsiders, and was developed as the result of the mispronunciation of Spanish newcomers.

Relatively little is known about the history of the Tarahumara Native American tribe before their contact with Spanish ecumenicals, explorers, and conquerors in the early 1600s. Since the highlands and lowlands of the Sierra Tarahumara of Mexico are not easily accessible from maritime waterways and well-trod terrain, the vastness and the harsh conditions of life and geography left the inhospitable sierra as one of the last Mexican frontiers to be explored and perhaps one of the least willing to be assimilated. The Europeans found a New World network of culturally connected ethnic groups from the Mayan and Aztec influences in the south to the Pueblos in the extreme north, and Jesuit accounts include well-documented reports of efforts toward *reduction* (corralling the

natives to live in controlled communities) and conversion of the indigenous (Ratkay 1682, Dunne 1948, Roca 1979, Collier 1947). The Tarahumara, like most of the Native American groups, did not have a written language; therefore, they did not leave codices or other written versions of their history. Their stories have instead been handed down orally from generation to subsequent generation. The early Europeans apparently saw little value in recording the native beliefs and customs that they encountered, and those that were recorded were deemed to be pagan and in need of redemption.

María Elena Orozco Hidalgo, native of Chihuahua, Mexico and professor of pre-Colombian history at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, gives three hypotheses that she has encountered to explain the origin of the Tarahumara. She admits that these are more proposed explanations that remain conjectural than verified theories. In her experience, the most often told is that the Tarahumaras descended from a migratory Uto-Aztecan group that came from the north, from the area which is now the United States, to establish itself in the Mexican Valley. A smaller faction of the larger group, the Tarahumara, took root in the sierra about a thousand years ago and chose to stay in the territory that they occupy today. A second hypothesis proposes that the Tarahumara, who had once formed part of the ancient Mayan tribe, headed north to escape invading forces and to establish themselves where they now reside in the sierra. A third hypothesis, according to the professor, is the one that the Tarahumara themselves narrate when they describe their own origin. It is explained that they live in the sierra because they are descendants of an ancient race from which they inherited their knowledge, which has been conserved orally for generations (Orozco 27-28).

John Collier, who wrote *Indians of the Americas* (1947), proposes that the Mongloid stock ancestors of the civilizations of the American hemisphere came from Asia by way of the Bering Strait between fifteen and twenty thousand years ago. Their culture was either Late Paleolithic or Early Neolithic, and their main sources of survival were hunting and fishing until the planting and cultivating of corn revolutionized their lives (30-33).

The development of varieties of corn dates to prehistoric times in Central or South America, and its domestication brought about a lifestyle change from a wandering tribe to a settled life of agriculture for these societies. The development of corn by prehistoric Indians has been deemed one of the most remarkable achievements in agricultural history. Corn requires a caretaker and must be weeded, husked, shelled, planted, cultivated, fertilized, watered, and then harvested (Collier 34-35). Without the development of corn and other crops, these cultures could not have sustained themselves. This staple of life is still the essence of sustenance in the Tarahumara diet, an essential object of prayer in religious ceremonies, and a key to group unity.

A broad view of American Indian history from 1492 forward reveals annihilation of many disinherited native societies. The great age of the Toltecs was already ended by Hernán Cortés' entry into Mexico during the end of the second decade of the sixteenth century. The Mayan golden age was centuries in the past. The Incan Empire was ultimately dominated by Francisco Pizarro in 1535, after three centuries of survival, and thanks to chroniclers such as Garcilosa de la Vega, we have access to some of the Incan past (Collier 48). The Aztec writing system, which was pictorial and hieroglyphic, expressed poetry, as

well as political and legal records, but these works were burned by the first Christian Bishop of Mexico (Collier 79). So although there are sketches of the history of some North American native groups, some waning and others surviving, there are also those Stone Age societies whose journey through the years finds them united in the present time with little record of the past. Such is the Tarahumara of the Sierra Tarahumara. Their survival tactics, through generations of secrecy among members, have protected them from annihilation and have served to unite them with the universe and in reciprocity with Tata Dios, the Creator.

Two ethnographers have used archaeological evidence to ponder the origin of the Tarahumara. William Merrill reports in *Rarámuri Souls* (1988) that the meager archaeological evidence available indicates that the prehistoric inhabitants of the northwest area of Mexico gradually shifted from being nomadic hunters and gatherers to becoming engaged in farming. While they continued to depend on wild plants and animals for food, they also utilized native plant fibers to produce textiles (31). John Kennedy also points to archeological evidence that indicates that the earliest peoples in the Sierra shared the Basketmaker culture, which preceded the Pueblos in the American Southwest (11-12). “Though the Tarahumara seem to have maintained ties with other Indian groups west of the Sierra Madre, they appear to have had a minimum of contact with the Casas Grandes culture (Lister 119)”. This Pima civilization flourished in the extreme northwestern area of Chihuahua, the region directly south of modern day El Paso, Texas between 1100 and 1400 A.D. There is confirmation that a later Tarahumara culture, dating from about 1000-1500 B.C. attained a more progressive way of life as evidenced by discoveries and

documentation of the remains of stone dwellings and storage houses or cupola-shaped granaries called *ollas* (Lumholtz 64), blankets woven from an agave fiber, woven mats, pottery, grinding *metates* and *manos*, and the extensive use of cultivated gourds (Kennedy 12).

Peter Masten Dunne, S.J., Ph.D., former Professor of history at the University of San Francisco, proposes that “...thousands of years before the time of Christ the Tarahumares were part of a great migration from the north, their ancestors having crossed from Asia (4)”. It is thought that early during the Christian era they descended with the Aztecs who settled farther south. Like Professor Orozco, Professor Dunne’s research has led him to believe that the Tarahumara are grouped ethnically with the Uto-Aztecan tribes. Groups that were affiliated with the Jesuit missions, besides the Tarahumaras, are the Pimas, the Yaquis, the Mayos, and the Tepehuanes, which presently reside to the south of the Tarahumara near Baborigame. The languages and customs among these groups are related, as are those of the Ópatas and Cáhtas, the Varohíos and the scarcely-numbered Tubares (4)

Today, many facets of the Tarahumara everyday life is just as it was recorded in the centuries-old Jesuit journals. Father Juan Ysidro Fernández de Abbe, S. J., wrote from Misión Jesús Carichi in 1744 that “...the Indians live at great distances, separated from each other and scattered. They prefer to live in the ravines and canyons and in the cold, inhospitable mountains where they have their dwellings...laziness and sloth incline them to this...From infancy they are brought up to be mountain vagabonds with no training in...morals (Fontana 7-8)”. The same apparent carefree existence with an indifference to

organized religion is still true in the early part of the twenty-first century, where the Tarahumaras who live in the high sierra and *barranca* areas away from the settlements are more primitive in custom and dress and seem generally less influenced by modern civilization than *los bautizados* who dwell in regions near a mission. Many who live in the highlands still wear native dress and have continued to live in caves just as their ancestors did for centuries. The cave-dwelling men wear a decorative girdle (*zapeta*), handmade cotton shirt and a headband, and in the winter, the men carry a wool blanket over the left shoulder. The women wear several layers of colorful handmade skirts and blouses, all cut from the same pattern. Handmade sandals are worn year round by men and women alike, even in frigid temperatures. Life in the sierra has changed little over the last few centuries.

The Tarahumara or Rarámuri survive today, as they did centuries ago, mainly on arable mountain terraces in the Sierra Tarahumara, and/or in the depths of the canyons of the *Barranca del Cobre*, the Copper Canyon area in the southwestern part of the Mexican state of Chihuahua. The average height of the peaks is seven to eight thousand feet with a few at ten thousand above sea level. The mountainous areas support juniper, oak, and fir trees while on the lower side of the barrancas, one would find mahogany, manzanita, and typical desert varieties such as yucca, agave, nopal, and several kinds of cacti. There are mahogany, ash, poplar and cottonwood trees around the Rivers Conchos, Verde, Batopilas and Urique. A distinct dry season runs from February to June and the rain from July to September account for seventy-five percent of the annual amount (Naylor 4). Weather varies according to the elevation factor and the seasonal changes determine travel plans

among this semi-nomadic group between the sierra and the barrancas. This group constitutes an important vestige of the semiagricultural people who populated the Sierra Madre Occidental in Chihuahua, Mexico during the time of the arrival of the Spaniards in Mexico in the sixteenth century. The majority has not integrated into mainstream Mexican culture, even in the twenty-first century, but instead has continued to speak a variety of dialects of Rarámuri, one of many Uto-Aztecan languages.ⁱ This tribe carries on the oral tradition of ancestors and holds fast to the isolated mountains and canyons to maintain a distance from the encroachment of outside interests.

The Tarahumara Sierra region was not a major economic or political center in Mexican history, and was not widely populated until after Mexican independence. There were a few discoveries of silver (Batopilas) and gold (La Bufa), but the area was inhospitable for farming and families. The Tarahumara were gathered up by civil authorities to labor on nearby Spanish farms. The Tarahumara were under the direct control of the Rector of the Tarahumara missions and many were forced to work for free in mines and farms. From 1767 until after 1825, the sierra was relatively untouched by the Mexican government and was populated by only natives and the Franciscans, who had not made efforts to learn the indigenous languages, thus their cristianizing efforts were less vigorous than those of the Jesuits. Campbell W. Pennington says that between 1767 and 1800 there was a rapid disintegration of the missions because of lack of priests and other personnel and due to conflicts between local civil and religious authorities as to the status of the sites (16). Efforts were made to eliminate forced removal of Tarahumaras from their settlements to work on Spanish haciendas and in the mines (Pennington 20, 23).

However, in 1821, when Mexico gained its independence from Spain, new laws encouraged settlement in what is now the state of Chihuahua, and Mexican citizens were given the opportunity to claim land and begin colonization of plots of “unclaimed” land around populated areas. The mestizo efforts to take over lands and assimilate the indigenous into Mexican institutional life have been in motion since that era. The return of the Jesuits in 1900 to the sierra opened new boarding schools and the Order opened orphanages and catechism in the Tarahumara language. In the 1950s, the Instituto Nacional indigenista (INI) was established by anthropologists to further the goals of the Mexican Revolution to mediate in land disputes, offer education to indigenous children, and to provide medical care.

This sierra society has remained among the largest and most preserved groups in North America (Bennett 15) with little consensus about population numbers, perhaps due to the inaccessibility of persons at census time in the remote region and the probable unreliability of self-reporting. On its website in September of 2015, Universal Life Church Ministries lists 50,000-70,000 as the population (<http://www.themonastery.org/guide-to-divinity/tarahumara-beliefs>); Cynthia Gorney reports 106,000 members, according to an article in *National Geographic* (2008); Loera Gonzales (2008) gives an estimated population figure of 75,545 (19). In addition, Jeff Biggers (2006) submits that there are “more than eighty thousand Rarámuri...as the last remnants of a pre-Columbian Mexico (2).” Fontana (1997) believes that there are “possibly 50,000 of them (xvi)”, Don Burgess says that 40,000 Indians live in the sierra (1981), while John Kennedy (1978) claims that this group numbers between 45,000 and 50,000, and is “the largest tribe of Indians north

of Mexico City, apart from the Navajos (1)". Fried (1961) states that the Tarahumara "number some 45,000 (111)." María Elena Orozco H. (2006) posits that there are about sixty thousand Tarahumaras that make up this society. Although the members depend heavily on tribal partners for survival, they choose to reside long distances from their closest neighbor. The expanse between the houses of each community are measured in kilometers, not meters, which requires the members to walk long distances daily. That's why they call themselves *Rarámuris*, "he who walks well (xii)".

The dispersed and quite conservative Tarahumara society has maintained a distinctive identity despite more than four centuries of foreign influence. The tendency to avoid the Other is an organizing principal of the group. There is little interaction with non-group members unless doing so involves conducting business for survival purposes (Bennett 183-184). The family unit is the basis of all social groups (Kennedy 157-180). If a Tarahumara has need to leave the forest or his cave to intentionally go to a public marketplace, rather than initiating or reciprocating a handshake, the Rarámuri may greet others with just a palm brush and avoids looking directly in the eye of the Other (Bennett 186).

In addition to a historic pattern of avoiding direct human contact with those outside the group (*chabochi*), the Tarahumara use evasion and euphemisms when referring to plants, animals, and at times, identify themselves with an alias in the presence of outsiders, because doing so perhaps has survival implications for them. The author has witnessed this first-hand when patients appear at a clinic (*brigada médica*) for a medical consult. Representatives of medical institutions with scientific approaches to patient care who visit

a local community are announced by radio in the Sierra Tarahumara ahead of time, so patients seek out the doctors, but often approach the clinic cautiously. Since most illnesses are routinely treated first with herbal remedies made from local plants that are readily available in the surrounding sierra, the recommendation from an outsider to allow a dentist to drill or fill a tooth or to take commercially-prepared pills or liquid for a grave infectious disease may seem other-worldly to the Tarahumara. Language and cultural barriers may be broken if the pain is excessive enough and a bilingual neighbor or community member steps in to help to translate and allay fears.

Herbert Passin addressed ideas on Tarahumara evasiveness in his article, “Tarahumara Prevarication: A Problem in Field Method” (2016). This article, although it may be considered by some researchers to be dated, serves to confirm the longevity and pervasiveness of the avoidance observation made by outsiders. He suggested that this indigenous group is secretive around outsiders in order to hide individual economic progress (such as not wanting to admit to a neighbor that he killed a deer because he does not want to obey the *korima* concept of sharing), to hide parts of their culture (so as not to betray the tribe), and to hide something that would “affect their prestige” (235-247), because since they are the children of God, the *chabochi* are indebted to the Tarahumara for being the saviors of the world by dancing at ceremonies (Burgess 13).

Due to early seventeenth century culture clashes with the infringing Spaniards, the Tarahumara steadily moved toward the south and west to avoid the newcomers, mixing with other indigenous groups, in trade and intermarriage, who shared a *rancheria* dispersed settlement pattern and who also spoke a variety of Uto-Aztecan languages

(Pennington 21). During time of the Jesuit era (1607-1767), the Tarahumara occupied a large area of approximately forty-five thousand square kilometers (Pennington 11-13, Merrill 30). They gradually moved from the areas along the Fuerte and upper Concho Rivers and around Papigochi near the Río Yaqui and several tributaries of the middle Conchos (Merrill 30). The Concho, Tubar, Témor, Chínipa, and Guazapar tribes have diminished over time, but the Yaqui, Mayo, Pima, Guarijío, and Tepehuan are still distinguishable groups in Mexico with a declining, but surviving population (Pennington 1-13). Some Tepehuanes reside on the southern rim of the Sinforosa Canyon directly across from the Tarahumara descendants at Otovachí and Ciénega Prieta, where it is still evident that a percentage of the indigenous are intermarrying, migrating, and blending, just as they have been for centuries.

The Spaniards found the dispersed *ranchería* living style of the Tarahumara and other groups inconvenient and counter-intuitive to their programs of *reduction* to organize, Christianize, and civilize the inhabitants. The key to success was for each unit to be self-sustaining, but due to raids by hostile Indians, droughts, and other natural disasters, the crops at the missions began to suffer. Often the natives were forced to work on Spanish farms, giving them insufficient time to care for the missions' productivity (Merrill 32-33). While at first, the Tarahumara who lived in the eastern areas of the Sierra and the plains were accepting of the Jesuits, it was not long until the efforts to organize the indigenous sparked intolerance with those who would change their way of life. A very important revolt occurred in the Balleza valley at San Pablo in 1616 among the co-existing Tepehuanes and Tarahumaras under Father Juan Fonte's mission, where the padre and his

assistant were massacred. Spanish soldier reinforcements took two years to calm the rebellion, and six Jesuit priests and four hundred local ranchers and miners were killed. The Jesuits had opined that the Tarahumara were more pacific and friendly than other tribes, but this Tepehuan-led rebellion served as a model for later uprisings of the Tarahumara, especially after the large silver strike at Parral in 1632 (Pennington 15-16).

A notable Tarahumara resistance hero, one of the few Tarahumara warriors honored today with a statue in at least one town, Aldama, Chihuahua, was eventually betrayed by his own in his effort to lead a rebellion against those who would alter the cosmovision of the ancients. A literate former Christian, known as Tepórame or Tepóraca rose against the mission at Villa e Aguilar, crucifying the Father along with his protector, a soldier. Teporaca rose in arms against policies favoring the intrusion and taking of indigenous lands for missions and agriculture. Not only was the priest murdered, but they burned down the mission, as well (Pennington 75). Tepóraca, who had commanded as many as two thousand warriors in an extended revolt against the missions, had several successful runs against pueblos to the east before Spanish soldiers with their horses and more modern weapons were able to extinguish the uprising and punish him for his deeds, killing him in 1652 (Kennedy 17).

As a result of the violent uprisings against foreign intrusion, the Jesuits withdrew representatives from the Alta Tarahumara for several decades until Father Joseph Neumann arrived in Sisoguichi in 1681. He labored for fifty years among the Tarahumara (1681-1732) and had a successful career first in Sisogichi and then thirty-one years in Carichic, where his traveling companion from Spain, Juan María Ratkay, originally a

Croatian nobleman, had served for only two years (Dunne 138). However, perhaps due to his eurocentric attitudes and behavior, a bloody rebellion was ignited in 1698 (Pennington 18-19) when Padre Neumann discovered a group of Tarahumaras having a *tesgüinada* (beer party) and became furious at the disobedience exhibited contrary to church teachings by excessive alcohol consumption. The good *padre*, however, did not accept that communing with Onorúame (God) via ceremonial *tesgüinadas* was the Tarahumara obligation to honor the directive of the Creator of corn, the base ingredient for their fermented corn nectar, *tesgüino*. “Like a wrathful Moses discovering the golden calf (Dunne 165),” the *padre* destroyed barrels of ceremonial *tesgüino* and then delivered a sermon on the sins of drinking and deceit. Padre Neumann’s writings seem consistent with the narrative of Augusto Monterroso’s Fray Bartolomé in “El Eclipse”, a short story that suggests a critical view of Catholic evangelistic efforts in the New World. Padre Neumann’s writings reveal a lack of understanding and an outright disregard for native beliefs when he says that ...”They show no aversion to sin, no anxiety about their eternal happiness...an irresistible habit of getting drunk,... and so we cannot find them and bring them into the fold of Christ (Pennington 18)”.

Much to the vexation of the Jesuits, the introspective cultural practices of the Tarahumara have remained in play over the centuries. The fleeing natives would not be controlled by the *padres*, and they sequestered themselves in a southwesterly movement to the depths of the canyons and on peak tops away from the efforts of evangelizers and civilizers. When the earliest Jesuit contact, Padre Juan Fonte, then missionary to the Tepehuanes, first reached the Tarahumaras in 1607, he and others had pursued

evangelizing and assimilating the “pagans” with measured success. However, in 1767, the king of Spain issued the final decree expelling the spirited Order of Jesuits from the New World, and a huge vacuum was created in the sierra (Kennedy 20).

The ensuing one hundred and thirty-three years (1767-1900) saw native customs mesh with memories of Jesuit ways, which had been learned from a negotiated coexistence. Even though the Jesuit influence of the Catholic Church had been diminished, miners continued to haul away precious metals from the canyons, foreign settlers moved into claimed native lands, government officials made efforts to organize and assimilate the indigenous, and Spanish soldiers continued to protect foreign interests. Many facets of Spanish culture continued to flow into Mexico and assimilate the indigenous cultures.

Peter Dunne (1948) writes that in 1900, the fathers reopened the missions after years of absence. In 1946, eleven Jesuit fathers, six scholastics, and several brothers were working in six mission centers: Norogachic, Cerocahui, Narárahic, Sisoguichic, Chinatu, and Guadalupe y Calvo (239). The nuns were teaching the children in twelve schools: The girls were learning to read and write in Spanish, cooking and sewing in seven schools, and in five locations, there were boys training in literacy and the dogma and morale of Christianity, with a total of five hundred pupils (8). Father Dunne laments that “beyond Sisoguichic in the high Sierra Madre, and in the...inaccessible *barranca* country and among the gorges, the modern Tarahumar roams and lives his primitive existence practically untouched by Christianity or by modern civilization (8).

Other evangelical efforts to redeem the *gentiles*, during the absence of the Jesuits, such as those of the relatively inconsequential Franciscans, followed along with gold

seekers, all on a mission to “cull the living treasures of the Sierra Madre: Rarámuri souls (Biggers 91).” Since their return in 1900, the Jesuits have maintained a significant presence in Creel, Chihuahua, an important sierra city, not far from Guachochi, the capital of the Tarahumara nation. Many of the native syncretic religious traditions are based on the Jesuit teachings, and have been reinterpreted in the symbols and local cultural rites during the celebration of Holy Week and in the art displayed in the local cathedrals, particularly in Norogachi and in a mission established in Basíhuare in the nineteenth century (Merrill 50).

In addition to the gradual southwestern migration of many Tarahumara after the arrival of the Spaniards (Pennington 3), the Jesuit era brought several other changes to the Sierra. One was a series of epidemics, mostly measles and smallpox that caused many deaths in the indigenous communities in 1693-1695 (Pennington 17-18, Merrill 33). Another type of change in Tarahumara life was impacted by the introduction of domestic animals into the subsistence pattern, along with peaches, oranges, apples, and other crops from the Old World, as well as the Spanish plow, the axe, and methods of farming, which enhanced the economic situation of the indigenous (Kennedy 21). One of the most valuable commodities of the farmer in the sierra is the fertilizer from goat herds, even today. If a neighbor in the tribe does not have any goats, it is common practice to borrow a neighbor’s animals to enrich the soil for their crop production (Merrill 19-20).

A third significant change brought to the sierra during the Jesuit period was certainly a religious transformation. The first Jesuit mission was founded in 1630 in at San Miguel de Las Bocas, and at San Felipe de Conchos, San Gerónimo de Huejotitlán

(Pennington 14), and San Pablo Balleza missions were built in 1639. By 1648, there were six mission churches (Dunne 36-37). Records show that there were 29 Catholic missions and 55 *visitas* established in the Tarahumara country (Pennington 16). In 1678, Jesuits reported ten thousand “baptized Indians”, but many more yet to be converted (Naylor, 5). A mission report from 1725 lists a total of 4,528 families under mission control, and about 20,000 natives out of an estimated population of 32,000 followed Jesuit leadership in 1784 (Kennedy 21-22). The year 1763 saw thirty-nine thousand under mission supervision (Naylor, 5). The introduction of Catholicism had caused a division of the Tarahumara nation between the baptized, *los bautizados*, and the unbaptized, or the *gentiles*. Many Christian religious beliefs and rituals were adopted and blended with the aboriginal beliefs and practices. Both the unbaptized and the baptized have adopted a syncretic form of spirituality on a continuum that ranges from regular participation in church weekly events to occasional attendance at fiestas on holy days.

The baptized Tarahumaras seem to go through the motions of participation in the Catholic religion and influence, but in their homes and terraces, one will find a patio with three crosses in a sacred space where they practice the learned traditions of their ancestors. Many still live in caves or wooden and stone huts with dirt floors and without running water, and electricity. Hand-made tables, chairs, or beds are rudimentary, and many sleep at night on their straw *petates* on the floor. Today, as during centuries earlier, the Tarahumara “withdraw from the pueblos to mountains and gorges, where they practice their idolatries and commit outrages against the Faith...to revert to the former mode of life and to the savage freedom which prevails in this sierra...(Escalona 1744)”.

Sierra Spaces

In order to study and consider the social identity and tenets of the Tarahumara, one has to appreciate the geographic reality of their natural environment. The region boasts canyons, mesas and peaks that oscillate from the northwest to the southeast from the Mexican state of Sonora toward the states of Sinaloa and Durango to the south. The sierra residents generally live between two ecological zones which are quite different. The Alta Tarahuara (highland area) is a cool mountainous region where many reside and till crops on sloping terraces during the Spring and Summer months. The other ecological zone is the Baja Tarahumara (lowland tropical region), an area of four large canyons known as the Copper Canyons.

The semi-nomadic inhabitants will return to the Alta Tarahumara in March because there will be enough rain then to plant the summer crops. After the summer months, the farmers and hunters will move to the canyons to prepare themselves to stay the winter. During the year, the goat herds travel during the day to eat grass, and return to the current family lodging to be gated during the night. Tarahumara children serve as goat herders for the family at a very early age, as documented by Erasmo Palma in his autobiography (1992), and this image is very prevalent in many of the primary texts (Murray 2006, 96; Parra 2003, 153, 178). The children herd the animals alone and even spend the night away in the elements. Even these materially poor natives possess more than one dwelling and travel between a log hut or cave and a place in the canyons in order to maintain their land and the domestic animals that fertilize it. The Tarahumara share the forests and trails with not only the Mexican population, but also with the Tepehuanes to

the south, Pimas to the north, and other indigenous groups, some which are considered to be descendants of the Paquimé (Fisher 17).

The Tarahumara home sites, crops and animals in the canyons and the sierra are at times great distances apart partly due to the inheritance laws of the society. The parcels of land pass from parents to children, not between spouses. If a man dies, his children take possession of their father's land. For this reason, a man and his wife may inherit different pieces of land and must travel on foot many times between a cave in the mountains and a log cabin in the canyon, in order to maintain their only material possessions, the land and the domestic animals that fertilize it.

The Tarahumara occupy a vast geographic area that has been and is today very attractive to many regional and global interests. When the European explorers discovered silver mines in Hidalgo de Parral in the seventeenth century, the natives were captured like wild animals and forced to work like slaves in the mines (Bennett 77) near Batopilas, the second city in all of Mexico to receive electricity after Mexico City. The natives who were able to escape from forced labor sought refuge in the Jesuit missions that were established to organize and educate the indigenous. During the conflicts between the Spaniards and the Rarámuri, the Catholic priests described in their chronicles that the Tarahumara were a gentle people (Biggers 41). Today, some indigenous have converted to Christianity, but others prefer to follow the traditions of their ancestors with only a few new elements incorporated in their mostly traditional lives. Some have chosen to reject Christianity and choose to remain isolated in the canyons in order to avoid “los de la razón.”

The Rarámuri tolerated the sporadic visits and establishments of the Jesuits and other foreign adventurers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and late in the nineteenth century, the mining and deforestation efforts began to carve out roads to and from the commercial market. Thus began the introduction of Modernity to the sierra. Many cultural agents such as the church, the state, the rural Mexican mestizos, tourism, and a coordinated education system have followed and continued exploring the concept of co-existence in the sierra. Rail access was begun in 1898, but was interrupted by the Mexican Revolution. With the eventual completion of the first railroad, the Chihuahua-Pacífico (CHEPE), in 1961, one of the most impressive engineering accomplishments in Mexican history offered access to and promotion of the Sierra Tarahumara to outside travelers for the first time and opened a route to the Pacific Ocean from Chihuahua, which has forever changed the landscape in some areas, but not for other more remote places that are still without roads today (Burgess, 2013). It is interesting to note that a little over a decade before CHEPE finished laying tracks to provide access to the magnificent views of the Sierra Madre, some of the first print versions of Tarahumara oral tradition had just been introduced to the world, or at least to Mexico.

Donald Burgess, (whose father Glenn Burgess was the journalist who introduced the CHEPE opening to Texas newspapers) linguist from Arizona who lived for several years in the Tarahumara Sierra of Mexico during the latter half of the twentieth century, proposes that the rugged geography of the sierra region accounts for some of the ability of the Tarahumara to keep from public view so much of their culture and folklore. Due to centuries of intrusion from foreigners such as the Spanish conquerors in the latter part of

the sixteenth century, the arrival of the Jesuits in the early 1600s, seventeenth century mining interests, anthropologic studies, logging, and more recently, the Gran Visión, a highway which began in the 1960s to open up and connect Mexico and its resources, the Tarahumara or Rarámuri have moved farther into the isolated barrancas and canyons to keep tribal unity and to protect their heritage. Many trespassers to the sierra have tried to collect Tarahumara folklore (including the author), but for several reasons, the Tarahumara do not readily reveal their culture, although there is a small library/museum of more than a century of photographs and a few existing printed texts in the XETAR radio station in Guachochi.

Due to the self-imposed isolation, the language barrier and illiteracy have been obstacles for outsiders to learn about their stories as few Tarahumaras speak Spanish well enough to translate the tales, or have the desire or skill to write them. Fewer mestizos, Don Burgess concurred in an interview (Burgess 1977), understand the native language. Among the Rarámuri, there is a belief that if one ‘gives away’ or records language graphically, it can be stripped from them. Stories tend to be shared orally only among close friends or in familial situations such as when the family is just waking up in the morning in order to protect the cultural secrets from outsiders (Burgess 1981).

The Tarahumara is a closed culture whose knowledge and belief systems are well-guarded from outside observers, yet are vigorously perpetuated within their closed circle. Why is it important for the Tarahumara to guard their heritage? Clifford Geertz suggests in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) that the very core of group self-identity is based on a given system of time-honored conceptions. The term *culture* may be described as a

set of attitudes, customs, products, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of from others (89). It is an independent symbolic entity to which a person feels a belonging. Clifford Geertz says that the concept of culture is a semiotic one where humans are animals suspended in webs of significance that they themselves have spun; culture is those webs (5). Each individual carries sentiments and memories from his/her family to groups with whom interests and other connections are shared. A member feels a sense of place and fulfillment within the group, often coming from a similar origin. With centuries of foreign intrusions chiseling away at the mysteries of the Sierra Tarahumara, the indigenous have sensed a threat of culture loss. Such a calamitous loss of identity crisis would be experienced as object-loss of a primary base with which tribal members feel themselves to be firmly tied and collectively dependent. The Tarahumara today are threatened with intrusions from aspects of the Mexican government's Gran Vision: paved roads, land-grabbing efforts, and water confiscation without indigenous consultation. There are conflicts with mestizos in decades old battles still being disputed in courts.ⁱⁱ By examining the stories that they tell about their own culture, one can assess the cultural ideology with which the Tarahumara have felt rooted for centuries and can consider modern day threats to their cohesion.

In order to provide a detailed depiction of everyday life and practice of a culture, Clifford Geertz uses the term "thick description" to go beyond reporting events and details of observations to explaining how these practices have created "webs of meaning" (5). An ethnographic approach to a society generates understandings of cultures that are to be seen as unified wholes that can and must be accounted for in terms of themselves (emic), rather

than in terms of an external frame of reference, an etic perspective, a more distant, analytical orientation (Stein 153). Franz Boas (1858-1942), professor of Anthropology at Columbia, suggests in one of his many writings that “the formulas of myths and folktales... are almost exclusively events that reflect the occurrences of human life, particularly those that stir the emotions of the people (342)”. In order to understand or interpret the Tarahumara web of culture, one must consider the codes and descriptions expressed repeatedly in the myths and folklore of their oral tradition.

The stories told by the Tarahumara can be considered to be a unified whole and certainly open the door “from within” to offer those outside an “insider’s perspective” of the culture. An ethnographic approach to the lore and the cultural environs within which a text is articulated and understood may beg the questions “How does a culture express its shared values in traditional ways among members? What is shared? What is not shared?” A subsequent query may be, “Of what value is this information to academia?”

A contextual approach to texts includes addressing details of the area in which folklore takes place and out of which folklore may be perpetuated (Toelken 5). In the United States, an authentic example of Americana folklore expression comes from the Kentucky Appalachian songs about life in the ‘holler’, a name for the terrain unique to the area and a term used colloquially. In this same vein of thought, it is evident that the sierra region has exerted an influence on the maintenance of traditional expressions in the sierra region of Mexico. Whereas the writings of many minority cultures have had an antagonistic frame of reference of resistance against the dominant culture which marginalizes them, the Tarahumara transcripts of oral tradition hold life in the Sierra

Tarahumara among the tribe as the Subject, with little reference to the Other. The modern works by sierra writers, however, do reference the gradual co-habitation of the sierra by other groups and hint toward a less homogenous existence. The present focus of this study is to consider the people who produces the stories—the folk—and their lore carved from the canyons, forests, and *barrancas* where the artifacts are expressed and shared among members in order to understand the Tarahumara culture.

In order to understand the Tarahumara and the sierra which has helped to shaped their history and their society, one may consider the philosophy of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), a German philosopher, literary critic, and theologian, who focused on the “innerness” of history’s participants and who introduced the vitally important insight that interpreting, or coming to a proper understanding of the history and culture of his or her fellow others, is essential for achieving a proper *self*-understanding (xxviii). Translator Michael N. Forster writes in the Introduction to Herder’s *Philosophical Writings* that there are two main reasons for this, in his view. It is only by considering the Other, and thereby arriving at a knowledge of the nature of their concepts and beliefs, that one can come to see what is universal and what, by contrast, is distinctive in one's own concepts and beliefs. It is only by interpreting (historical) others who are the forerunners in one's own cultural tradition that one can come to see the genealogy of one's own beliefs over time, this insight in itself constituting an important contribution to self-comprehension via his "genetic method" (Forster). Gaining a clear understanding of other cultures both expresses and encourages ethical-political, intercultural, and perhaps even international academic appreciation. By transcribing their own stories from an oral version

in the native Rarámuri speaker's dialect to a sierra form of documented Spanish, the Tarahumara will be able to revisit their own ancestors and their beliefs that have been handed down to modern-day natives in both their native tongue and in their second language of education. Hopefully, learning to read about their own folk and their own lore will give the Tarahumara a sense of pride and will aid those from outside the group to value the Tarahumara culture.

The central focus of the past and present Tarahumara way of life is found in stories of a giant who lives in a cave, a coyote who is tricked into falling into an arroyo, and little people who live inside the trees of the forest. The sense of nature being at the center of life maintains a deliberate, collective approach that perpetuates Tarahumara core values and its traditional systems in all life circumstances from a unique geographical sierra perspective surrounded by a pastoral, organic existence. The Tarahumara tradition addresses the responsibility to protect and conserve nature because that is the message that has been passed down for many generations from *los antepasados*. For Johann G Herder, human thought is dependent on and bounded by language (Forster, Schoenmakers, 18). The native expressions of their own societal realities are reinforced via vernacular formats which serve to propagate their independence from outsiders, to accent their self-imposed isolation in the sierra, and to address the immediate physical rural context in which folk expression is produced: the types of *dramatis personae* who appear and the occupational (pastoral) setting (Toelken 5). However, although language is crucial to convey a particular world view, it is not the isolated elements that make up a tale, but instead is the way that these elements combine which should be considered Propp (1928). Dorothy

Demetraecopoulou and Cora DeBois in “A Study of Wintu Mythology (1932),” with an update in 1989, concluded that “Given the same careful technique, the language in which the story is told does not alter its form and content...a myth told and recorded carefully in English is as accurate as a text, provided the informant has an adequate command of this language (400).”

In the case of the Tarahumara, the geographical region of the sierra certainly provides a unique context for the perpetuance and maintenance of traditional topics and expressions even in the modern native writers. Tarahumara writer Ana Cely Palma Loya, granddaughter of Erasmo Palma Fernandez of Guachochi, stated that “la poesía tiene que ver con lo sagrado...Para nosotros la poesía, la música, y la naturaleza van de la mano”. “Poetry has to do with the sacred...For us, poetry, music and nature go hand in hand”. She opined that art forms are born of everyday life, because the origin of music can spring from “waking up in the morning, a bird’s song, the melody of the wind, walking on the land, the movement of the river, and the movement of some animals (Palma Loya)”. Although the Tarahumaras express many elements of their values via performance acts, the focus of this study is to consider the writings of the native storytellers who perpetuate how and what is shared and to what end, in the context and the inspiration of the sierra where it is created. The modern Tarahumara texts reverberate many elements of the traditional tales and give the reader a glimpse of the mind and the values of the native writers.

The connection between the stories and their tellers is articulated through an intertextual play of cultural themes. Folklore study of a textual/intertextual nature includes

the consideration of new domains of thought in a dynamic process of discovering the past and confirming the present in a given culture, not considering it to be a narrative that serves as a stationary vestige of memories past. The rural life of the dwellers is reflected in the legends, myths, and folklore. Motifs from nature permeate stories that serve to instruct the society to conserve and protect those natural resources as a directive from God. There are stories about hunting deer, a common food source, and others about the function and place of rocks which serve as fences to mark property lines as well as road signs which serve to guide huarache-shod feet on the path of life. Tales transport characters through time warps and personify animals in fable-like works which reinforce a strict moral code while giving explanation to the mysteries of life in the forests of the sierra. Little people lure children underground while fugitives from evildoers become celestial beings after this life. There are stories about rural folk in everyday situations watching herds of goats, constructing houses, being victimized by giants, serpents, and bears in and around the sierra and its customary dwelling and burial caves. Each custom and cultural detail mentioned is seen as a piece of a puzzle which singularly projects meaning like each single letter of the alphabet when combined with other letters to make words. The approach to these works should not be a documentation of an inventory of customs practiced by the Tarahumara society, but is instead a deeper description which reveals a moral code central to the Tarahumara ideology and is preached weekly to the tribe by the governor in a separate meeting after the Catholic mass with the mestizos.

While the Tarahumara texts can be observed to suggest tribal mores and native beliefs, it may be just as interesting to consider what the Tarahumara stories do not

express. There is a huge void in the naming of named cultural heroes in the Tarahumara oral tradition. Obedience to group cultural ways appears to be far more valuable to the members, as evidenced in the mostly collective stories, than to emphasize the actions of a single individual. In addition, another element that is scarce is the feminine voice. Very few accounts place women as the central figure of a narrative, and those few with women as main characters usually describe them as victims or villains. A prime example of the omission of the female voice is emphasized via a collection of interviews of fifteen sierra villages, recorded first in the native language and then later translated to Spanish, which was conducted with “the authorities, *curanderos*, and the wise ones of the Alta Tarahumara; all Rarámuri (3)” and all male. In *Kite amachíala kiya nirúami/Nuestros saberes antiguos*, a two-hundred and twenty-three page text which records beliefs and stories that are documented by Juan Gardea García and Martín Chávez Ramírez, both born in the sierra near Guachochi and both native activists and participants in various debates about native rights, the transcribers have inserted a note to explain to the public school teachers who may use the book that women were not interviewed in the study.

The feminine voice was admittedly excluded in a work that is to represent all Tarahumara way of life because the work was done in “the most traditional communities (4).” In order to include the female voice, the interviews would have to have been done by couples, or the husband would have needed to be present during the interview with his wife. Otherwise, a consultation with a woman alone would have been perceived as aggressive and inappropriate. This text selected the male authority of the community as preserver of the society, the transmitter of the Rarámuri way of life, beliefs, and fiesta

preparation. Although all members of the tribe have a role to play in maintaining group solidarity, usually a male governor, who serves as a moral guide, is elected every three years.

In many of the Tarahumara texts, there are few injunctions regarding eating allowances and sexual conduct, but there are many stories about searching for food and trying to overcome hunger and other life-threatening obstacles. The quests of characters are not particularly noble, but rather stay in the realm of survival skills. God is approachable and easily accessed in animal stories with a moral, much like Aesop's fables. In some of the later tales, the influence of the Catholic Church is evident; however, in the fairy tales, birds fly between heaven and earth to work out everyday situations between the living and the deceased. The mention of the Other is rare; the Subject is the sierra life and surroundings, with little mention of other realities.

The harsh realities of life in the Tarahumara sierra may be one reason that there appears to be a lack of creativity or variation of tales that a raconteur shares. It is more important to pass on life survival skills that promote group security and harmony than the performance-centered art form that comes with the variation of tales when the presentation is live and subject to the teller's whim. Having a number of variants can form a thicker, more cohesive interpretive whole in a body of works. However, in the two hundred or so tales gathered for this study, there are very few variations available in print. There are several versions of common threats to a community: a giant Kanoko/Canoko who is defeated when he is poisoned with beans to save the people, (Cruz 1995, 93; 2008, 55) and the serpent who is tricked into thinking he is being fed a live child. (Mares 1975, 37)

When the snake opens his mouth, he catches hot rocks wrapped in cloth, and is killed to save the children. Several versions of a bear that kidnapped a woman, and several versions of transformations from woman to a woman/serpent and a woman/deer reflect the natural environment of the Tarahumara. However, these represent the few that are presented in more than one version. The limited number of variations may also be due to the fact that stories have been gathered from only a few sections of the sierra, most notably the Guachochi, Samachique, and Recoibo areas, and not equally among the scattered population. There are several dialects of Rarámuri which are not mutually intelligible, and since the Tarahumaras typically live a great distance from the closest neighbor, the dispersed living arrangements, even today, are factors that limit the sharing of tales from one region to another in the sierra.

So, who are the Tarahumara? Although little is known about the origin of these solitary inhabitants of the Alta and Baja Tarahumara before the arrival of the Spanish early in the seventeenth century, their oral tradition, beliefs, and customs have survived for generations by word of mouth. Since the first publications of the small booklets called *Cartillas* in Mexico between 1955-1972 these newly documented transcriptions narrate the stories of this group in their own words. These texts serve as mirrors of the sierra culture, preserve tenets of native heritage for future literate generations, and fill an empty Native American literary category in academia. Considered along with early writings by visitors to the sierra, the macrotext of both writings from within and outside the tribe will weave an intertextual tapestry to reveal the history, culture, and cosmovision of the Rarámuri of the Sierra Tarahumara.

ⁱ 1,910,442 speakers in Mexico, El Salvador, and the United States (<http://www.ethnologue.com/>)

ⁱⁱ Piedra Juri, Florencia. “Caravana por la justicia en Sierra Tarahumara se reunirá con autoridades en DF”, http://diario.mx/Estado/2014-05-31_f4a9b230; “Ganan tarahumaras juicio por territorio en Baquéachi” http://diario.mx/Estado/2014-05-21_e715056a; Mayorga, Patricia. “Alistan tarahumaras protesta vs aeropuerto de Creel y gasoducto” <http://diario.mx/Estado/2014-02-20>.

CHAPTER III

WHAT ARE SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE TARAHUMARA

THROUGH THE EYES OF OUTSIDERS?

The first literary portrayals of the Tarahumara/Rarámuri culture are interwoven throughout Jesuit testimonials that narrate the encounter of the European Christian monotheistic world with the indigenous, polytheistic Mexican sierra dwellers. The chronicles, letters, and reports, mostly intended for Spain, date from the seventeenth century and continued until the society was expelled and banned from 1767 until 1900. The early priests described the ‘pagans’ and their dispersed living arrangements as counterproductive to the assimilation process. Catholic evangelization efforts met little initial acceptance, and the frustration of the padres over non-conformity of the Tarahumara was well-documented in their journals. A publication of a collection of earlier detailed reports and letters, *Izvyješća iz Tarahumare/Reports from Tarahumara* (1998), written in the seventeenth century by Ivan Ratkaj/Juan M. Ratkay (1647–1683), a Croatian missionary, is a testimonial record of the impressions of the first to write about the Tarahumara, along with those of Father Joseph Neumann.

The Bancroft Collection at Berkeley houses letters and texts written originally in Latin by Ratkay and Joseph Nayman/Neyman/Neumann early in the seventeenth century and translated by H. E. Bancroft and others. Later writers such as Peter Dunne, George Prpic, and others depend heavily on these testimonials and analyze the initial Jesuit efforts

from a 20th century perspective (Alegre II, 1939; Odložík, Otakar (1945); Dunne 1948; George J. Prpic (1971); Salmon 1977; Roca 1979, among others).

In addition to the secondary sources by and about early missionary efforts in the intimidating Mexican highlands, subsequent secular chronicles bear witness to the contemplations of explorers, scientists, artists, loggers, miners, and educators who documented their respective adventures in the alluring sierra. The images that emanate from these journals and writings depict the history of settlements, discoveries of undocumented flora and fauna, and observations of the Tarahumara culture and philosophy of life from an etic perspective. The present study is a review of the numerous observations about the Rarámuris, as there is no evidence of Tarahumara tribal history documented from an emic perspective before 1950.

The sources considered in this study will be comprised of those written by non-indigenous writers chronicling their unique observations as sierra visitors, documenting encounters with natives, and recording studies of Tarahumara culture and ideology. It must be noted that the vast sierra has many isolated pockets of local culture that hold variations in beliefs and social practices that may not comply with others. Some writers have focused on a particular corner of the sierra, and others write about large general concepts about the tribe as a whole. William Merrill, for example, emphasizes that his description of the Rarámuri and their knowledge applies primarily to the Rarámuri of a particular area, and he avoids the issue of regional variation and applicability of his writings to the tribe as a whole (15). The degree to which the accounts connect dots with other sierra regions serves to solidify and identify those traditions that are held by all.

One writer who was widely traveled and studied and compared many indigenous groups was Carl Solus Lumholtz, (1851–1922), a Norwegian explorer and ethnographer, who recorded his six expeditions to Mexico between 1890 and 1910. The writings from his expeditions have served as a point of departure for subsequent Mexican anthropological studies. His findings were recorded in two volumes first published in English in New York by Schribner’s Sons in 1902 and then translated to Spanish in 1904. His many famous photographs and writings are still prominently displayed more than a century later in the XETAR radio station, “La voz de la sierra Tarahumara,” in Guachochi, Mexico, a window city to the sierra.

In the 1930s, United States professors Wendell C. Bennett and Robert M. Zingg, penned one of the first extensive ethnographies conducted in Mexico, *The Tarahumara: an Indian Tribe of Northern Mexico*, (1935). A subsequent 1976 edition with hundreds of photos added to the initial version is used in this study. Whereas Carl Lumholtz’s documentations cover a more general, wider geographic area and a variety of native groups in Mexico, the study by the American duo centers on aspects of the Samachique region of the sierra: botany, zoology, gastronomy, agriculture, clothing, family relations, religion, customs, ceremonies, and local government. Also, during the same first third of the 20th century, a unique, personal travel journal and letters were written by French playwright, Antonin Artaud. He narrates his mystical experience learning the peyote (*jikuri*) rite in 1936 with the Tarahumara. In his dramatic search for enlightenment among the people of this “Primeval Race” (7), the artist observes the mountains and surrounding areas as full of geometric signs with mysterious meanings, a “Sierra which exhales a

metaphysical thinking in its rocks, the Tarahumara have covered with signs...that are completely conscious, intelligent, and purposeful” (16). This narrative of the “first men” (Artaud 4) was translated to English by Helen Weaver in 1976.

Pedro de Velasco Rivera, Mexican philosopher and theologian with a degree specialization in anthropology from the Sorbonne in Paris France, wrote not about the seasonal celebrations with dancing, but focused on the spiritual importance of the traditional dancing of the Tarahumara in obedience to their deity, Onorúame. *Danzar o morir: Religión y resistencia a la dominación en la cultura tarahumar*, published first in 1983, describes tribal dancing as essential to Rarámuri life not as an art form, but rather as a form of prayer and ceremony that are obligatory for tribal survival and for the actual perpetuation of the world. Although he is a native of Mexico, his impressions are from an outsider’s perspective.

Other significant cultural studies of the sierra tribe include John D. Kennedy’s *The Tarahumara of the Sierra Madre: Beer, Ecology, and Social Organization* (1978), which examines the patterns of life among those referred to in the colonial period as *gentiles* (*heathens*) or the *cimarrones* (*fugitives*) (127), who have refused to subordinate themselves to the secular or religious authority of the national Mexican society in the Inápuchi region near Samachique. In addition, the United States anthropologist William Merrill’s *Rarámuri Souls: Knowledge and Social Process in Northern Mexico* (1988), presents a notable analysis of illness, death, and souls and how these elements of humanity fit in the reproduction of socially shared knowledge and philosophy among the Tarahumara of Rejogochi, near Samachique, the area of Kennedy’s study a decade earlier.

Dirk Raat, a State University of New York professor, and historian and W. George R. Janacek, a Czech-born photographer, approached the study of the Tarahumara with the seventh art, photography mixed with historical narrative and testimonials in *Mexico's Sierra Tarhumara: A Photohistory of the People of the Edge* (1996), a reference to William Merrill's proposal that the Rarámuri believe the earth to be an island which is surrounded by a dike guarded by "little people," *suwé piréame*, the earth protectors who live at the edge (1988, 72-73).

David Brambila, a Catholic priest and linguist who served in the sierra for many decades, learned a dialect of the native language and first in mimeograph form (1944, 1947), wrote three grammar references, finally publishing *Gramática Rarámuri* (1953) in Mexico. In an article in *Tlalocan*, Luis González Rodríguez lists a significant number of linguistic and religious doctrine studies completed by Father Brambila: "Lecturas evangélicas (en tarahumar)", "Jesukristo biniriara, tara ko (catecismo)", among many others (52). More recently, he published *Bosques del Alma Tarahumara* (1990), a collection of testimonial pieces some published in journals initially. His experience as an ecumenical has included linguistic studies, personal encounters with locals, and has given impressions of Christian elements in a Tarahumara-centered world.

The ethnologist Jacob Fried (1969) wrote on a variety of topics he observed during his six-month experience in the sierra, covering the cosmovision, agriculture, and many other culture practices of the Tarahumaras. His ethnography describes Tarahumara clothing, their dwelling quarters, and the norms of family and partner relationships in the Santa Anita, Choguita, and Norogachi communities.

Jesuit Writings

An initial approach to the writings by religious men from Europe is meaningful not only for the spiritual value of reading about the seeds of evangelism that were planted by fervent, dedicated missionaries who were willing to suffer martyrdom for their cause in a distant land, but perhaps more widely historically valuable is the consideration of these memoirs as the front line view of the Encounter between two worlds. These documents of the initial clashes record divergent ideals that motivated the issues of church and state and how the attempts for solutions and peace played out in the early years of the Americas. In the Sierra Tarahumara, these encounter narratives of holy men initially found many unwilling congregants who clung to their independence and resisted being shuttled into conclaves. The attempts at colonization in Nueva Vizcaya, New Spain, were not passively accepted by the freedom-loving Tarahumaras for political, economic, and psychological reasons.

The primary sources from the Jesuit priests, Joseph Neumann, who served for over fifty years in the sierra, and Ivan Ratkay, the first Croatian missionary to the Americas (Prpic 221), are first-hand testimonies of missionary witnesses who were the very hands of evangelization efforts in real time. Their invaluable place in history, standing at the newly opened threshold to the sierra, are cited by numerous thinkers and writers to the present date. In his article “Father Joseph Neumann, Jesuit Missionary to the Tarahumares”, Allan Christelow states that in various historical writings, the last name Neumann is represented in several ways: Neymann, Naymann, Neymanno, and Neumann. In his Latin *Historia Seditioinum*, the author signs his name as P. Josepho Neymanno

(Christelow 423). He surmises the reasons for the spelling differences: the Latin combination “ey” is impossible, but “eu” is not. Since he is Belgian, it is possible that the original spelling was Neymann, and that he was remembered in Prague by that name, having changed his name himself into Neumann during his stay in Bohemia, and perhaps he decided to revert to the original when he became an author (423). Gyula Tömördy uses the spelling Naymann in his article, “Baron Josef Rátkay in the Land of the Tarahumar-Incas in 1682.”

A fairly consistent impression expressed by the Jesuit writings is their perplexity over the initial Tarahumara resistance to the introduction of Christianity in the sierra. Early priests such as Joseph Neumann talked about the willingness to go to the field to be martyrs (Neumann 19), such as Father Pascual and Father Martínez, who “won the palm of martyrdom (21)”. These first-hand testimonies told of many padres who had been brutally murdered by natives who also burned the churches or rectories where they served. Those priests who came later to the field would solemnly pass church ruins, the efforts of others who had gone before, such as Tardá and Guadalajara when they entered Temechic and saw where Cornelio Beudin had labored a few months and then had been slain (Dunne 107). The fathers were convinced that the only way to save the pagan souls was through Catholic baptism, and in order to serve the sacraments regularly, it was imperative that the natives to live closer to the church rather than on their dispersed *rancherías*. They even sought support from the Spanish governors and soldiers to force them to acquiesce, but even the merchants and soldiers were being attacked and viciously slain on the roads by roving bands of *hechiceros* (native sorcerers) and their heathen holdouts.

An important contribution, written from a twentieth-century perspective regarding historical impressions of the Tarahumara culture, is the third volume in a series about the activities of the Jesuits in Spanish North America, *Early Jesuits Missions in Tarahumara* (1948). The author, Peter Masten Dunne, deals in his first two volumes about the Pioneer Jesuits among the Acaxée and Xixime Indians, two plains tribes in the southern part of the modern day state of Coahuila, and the missions established among the Tepehuán in what is now the state of Durango. It is this third volume about reaching the Tarahumara where the Author's Preface indicates that his sources of study for his writings about the tribe are: 1) notes of Dr. Herbert Eugene Bolton, an eminent historian who served as director of the Bancroft Library and Chairman of the University of California, Berkeley's History Department in the 1920s and 1930s, 2) a personal tour of the northern sierra guided by Jesuits living in the city of Chihuahua, and 3) the archives of sierra Catholic churches in Hidalgo de Parral, Chihuahua, all very authentic sources of sierra knowledge. This volume describes the establishment of Jesuit missions to the Tarahumara northward beyond the Tepehuán area in present day Chihuahua, in a parallel movement to the northward advancement of Spain's colonial interests.

The Christianization of the indigenous in Mexico was set in motion with modern day Mexico City as the organizational base following the conquest of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlán in 1521. This destruction of the Aztec Empire, led by Hernán Cortés, was a crucial event that opened the door to the formation of Spanish overseas colonization of New Spain, which later became Mexico. The first one hundred years of the Catholic presence in Mexico is what Peter Dunne deems to be the invasion of the "Black Robes"

(8), which began with the Franciscans as early as 1524, according to a letter to Charles V in Spain, followed shortly by the Dominicans in 1526 (Dunne 9-10). The Franciscans established many centers of ministry in and around Mexico City, as well as northward among the more primitive areas to the west and northwest (12). In 1572, the first Jesuits entered the northern region and introduced a new era of ministry. By the 1600s, the Franciscans had founded mission centers in the distant north near the Pima ruins of Chihuahua called Casas Grandes, near modern day Juárez, Mexico. This mission site served as a link between the south and other Spanish settlements to the north in modern day New Mexico.

Dunne's third volume records successes and defeats in both the politics of the Church and with native encounters. The first missionary to the Tarahumara was Father Juan Fonte in 1607 (14), although there are discrepancies about the dates. Pérez de Ribas lists the year as 1600 and the *anua* of 1601 gives that same year (Dunne 240). Fonte was the "primary apostle and protomartyr of the Tarahumares" (14), who had been working with the Tepehuán to the south a few years earlier (Dunne 15; Bennett 16). He was compelled to persuade his superiors to allow him to explore the unreached Tarahumara region. Fonte wrote in April of 1608: "I am in a happy and enthusiastic state of mind, seeing the door now opened...for numerous conversions, especially...without the aid of...soldiers. This I have always avoided and shall continue to avoid, for when progress is made without extra expense the ministers of the King more readily concede workers for the new fields, and the natives themselves are happy to see us in their lands unaccompanied, for at the sight of soldiers and other Spaniards they flee" (Mecham 38,

138). His writings shed a bit of light on the political and religious tensions that the Black Robes experienced during the early encounters.

While the Franciscans were working north and northeast, the Jesuits were laboring north and northwest (Dunne 95). Relations between the two orders were generally cooperative, but there were occasional conflicts which were amicably settled when it was ultimately determined that the Jesuits were to be officially in charge of the Tarahumara nation (Dunne 124-127). As the second great Tarahumara Christian advance came in 1673 (103), both the Jesuits and the Franciscans counted it a blessing to suffer torture and death in the “golden form of martyrdom” (73) at the hand of the rebellious natives as they continued with great fervor to baptize thousands of converts (10-12). Based on his extensive study of hand-written manuscripts and other testimonies, Peter Dunne follows the expansion of the Jesuit mission system in North America through the seventeenth century until 1767 when the Jesuits were expelled from both Spain and the New World regions by decree of King Charles III.

From the Jesuit archives of Hidalgo de Parral, Chihuahua, a manuscript by Provincial Padre Andrés Pérez de Ribas, “Historia de la Provincia de Cinaloa,” communicates Father Fonte’s testimonial narrative. Dunne cites book ten and chapter ten from *Historia de los Triumphos de Nuestra Santa Fee entre Gentes los mas Barbaros y Fieras del Nuevo Orbe, Madrid* (1645) that Father Fonte encouraged the Tarahumaras to migrate south and take up their homes in the valley where they would enjoy prosperity and peace (Dunne 18). Following the practice of the missionaries to foreign lands of his time, he encouraged the Tarahumara to move from their *rancherías* and come together to

live in groups. An important impression left by Padre Fonte's writings is that of the genesis of the formation of the mission pueblo (18). Upon the padre's arrival to a village, a throng of natives, often sporting feathers and carrying lances, greeted him holding "their hands over their heads in token of esteem and respect..." Father Fonte assured his new flock that he was "most happy at last to be here with you...for it is only for love of you that I come into your country..." (Ribas X, 11; Dunne 19). This first father to the Tarahumara evokes the committed spirit of the Apostle Paul when he spoke to his disciples at the churches in Corinth in Christian love and said, "I came to you... so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power" (I Corinthians 2:3-5).

The missionaries of the seventeenth century entered Tarahumara country from the south through present-day Zacatecas and then northward almost three hundred kilometers to Durango where the Jesuits had established a learning institution (Dunne 9). In the Nueva Vizcaya region, which is roughly today the Durango and Chihuahua regions, the discovery of silver mines perpetuated a mineral frenzy, or 'gold rush' in Zacatecas in 1546, where the town of the same name sprang up. A type of 'silver rush' continued in an area larger than the California Gold Rush until the city of Santa Bárbara, some seven hundred and twenty kilometers north of Zacatecas, was founded in 1567. Those two decades saw the frontier move northward into the new province called Nueva Vizcaya, which was headed by a governor and staff, subject to the Viceroy of Mexico, the highest colonial authority (Dunne11). According to John P. Schmal's article, "The History of Indigenous Durango", this large section of northwestern Mexico consisted of 610,000 square kilometers



Figure 1. Reino de Nueva Vizcaya. <http://www.paratodomexico.com/historia-de-mexico/lacolonia/expansion-territorial/reino-de-nueva-vizcaya.html>

(372,200 square miles) and corresponds with the territory of four present-day Mexican states (<http://www.houstonculture.org/mexico/durango.html>). (Figure 1)

Father Fonte had his mind on populating the San Pablo Valley (modern day Balleza area on highway 23, la Gran Visión) with Tarahumara converts heading south, where they would mingle with the Tepehuanes who already lived there, thus resolving tribal disputes. Much of the border rivalry and warfare ceased, and the padre had great success in achieving peace, as he was supported by the local *hechicero*, who spoke both tribal languages (Dunne 21-22). “Juan Fonte had been the angel of peace and under his beneficent influence the Tepehuán tiger rested with the lion of the Tarahumar” (24). The peaceful coexistence of the two tribes reigned for two decades, although many religious leaders had reported a murmuring among the Tepehuán tribe. Ultimately, the Tepehuán Revolt of 1616 resulted in the massacre of many priests and followers, which halted the

progress of harmony that had been made in the region of the Valle de San Pablo. The *hechiceros*, led an uprising against the priests, whose very presence had displaced and deprived the native holy men of their prestige and power. The *cimarrones* or mountain rebels looked upon the padres as competing magicians or sorcerers of the Spaniards (Neumann 114). Juan Fonte was killed in the revolt along with many other holy men, resulting in the absence of a Christian presence for some time.

Ivan Ratkay (1647-1683) and Joseph Neumann (1648-1732), born well after the time of Fonte's ministry in the sierra, arrived from Cádiz to Veracruz on September 15, 1680 (Prpic 197) and left Mexico City a few months later on mules bearing a note from the Provincial to the Tarahumara Superior in which he claimed that these two Jesuits could do the work of twelve men. Neumann relates the images along the more than five hundred miles to his new assignment as "a route through uninhabited deserts...exposed to the burning sun, for the land is barren and treeless. In ...three weeks we saw and passed through barely fifteen [native villages]" (Dunne 140-141; Prpic 201-201). Water sources were scarce and the entourage often slept under the cold sky. In a letter dated November 17, 1680, Ratkay reports that the trip had gone well so far and there seemed to be more danger from encountering Spanish soldiers who had deserted and their servants than from the natives (Bolton *Rim* 71). These two dedicated holy men gave up the comforts of less difficult assignments and dedicated their lives to spread Christianity and civilization among the natives of the Americas.

Joseph Neumann narrates in his *Historia Seditioinum*, translated by Dr. Marion Reynolds for the Bolton Collection, that the natives were at first pleased to receive food

and gifts from the newcomers (10) perhaps in exchange for native grain and other food. Resistance to the Spanish Christians began only when they were observed traipsing across open land. The padres noticed seemingly unclaimed and uninhabited areas where they could build houses and farms and began to establish themselves on native lands. Chapter two of his book narrates that the first efforts--a fort, residences, four missionaries, and crops, approximately sixty leagues from Parral--were eventually brutally burned, beaten, and scattered (Neumann 9-24) by the unwelcoming natives. An opposing native *mayordomo*, Cobamea (19), had conspired along with several other indigenous forces to retake the sierra. Cobamea had been the murderer of Father Julio Pascual, and “as Christ had been slain by the hands of gentiles,” the padre would meet the same glorious fate, but not from just a single wound would he shed blood for Christ’s glory” (24). The images of these testimonies portray the Tarahumara resistance to evangelical efforts as decisive and brutal.

Neumann, Ratkay, and Dunne document intervals of decades of native rejection, uprisings, bloody butchering of priests, burning of churches and relics, Spanish executions of barbaric apostates, padres returning to pick up the pieces, reconstruction, new converts (neophytes), new missions, and cleric retreat from the sierra due to cyclic resistance and subsequent violence. The priests worked hand in hand with the governors to root out Tepehuán rebels and punish them with death to secure the hearts and souls of the sierra Tarahumaras. However, the dynamics of the natives-padres-politicians triad remained in a state of societal unrest (Neumann 10-156). The Spanish citizen and military arrivals had little interest in the native’s spiritual and moral welfare, and the miners and ranchers took

advantage of the native and forced him to labor for insufficient pay, or a type of enslavement such as debt labor (Dunne 92). The government officials overlooked criminal behavior by natives, and the lack of deterrents resulted in more frequent recurrence of invasions, thefts, and other violations. Despite repeated difficulties, Father Figueroa, who served in the Tarahumara missions from 1639-1668, convinced his superiors that if for no other reason than for the baptism of infants, the padres must maintain a faithful presence, “in order that through the administration of the holy sacrament the spirits of the very young be prepared for Heaven” (Dunne 94).

By 1673, the fertile fields of lost souls had produced many indigenous converts. The impressions left by Padre Neumann’s letters and Peter Dunne (100-103) agree that the Tarahumara missions, having been supported by dedicated missionaries such as the veteran Father Gerónimo de Figueroa for thirty-six years, had become more consolidated and had contributed to the vitalization and stabilization of the frontier. The city of Parral had become the nerve center of the Tarahumara missions (Dunne 96). The Indian raids had subsided in large part, and a new governor of Nueva Vizcaya, Don José García de Salcedo, was motivated to advance the Spanish frontier in the New World, not only for spiritual causes, but for the benefit of Spain and its material prosperity. It was in the economic interest of the Crown that the region be stable and that the missions continue to prosper. Don Pablo, chief of the Tarahumaras, pledged cooperation with the Spaniards and promised the Governor that he would help the padres travel to the interior of the country to choose sites to help organize Christian pueblos (Dunne 100). This 1673 coordination among the assembly members, including the Tarahumara chief, the new governor of New

Spain, and the padres, inaugurated the strengthening of mission activities among the tribe, where new energetic priests, replacing Fathers Fernando de Barrionuevo and Juan Manuel de Gamboa arrived, due the failing health of the veterans.

In the second chapter of his book dedicated to the Bohemian fathers, Joseph Neumann deemed that the restoration and extension of the missions came about because God “had compassion upon the deplorable condition of the pagans...” and “determined to promote the conversion” after “the Tarahumara nation...[had] continued to live in its heathendom...”(25) for an extended period of time. Demonstrating the intricacies of the Church-State network, newly arrived Father José Tarda, of Valencia and Father Tomás Guadalajara of Puebla reported to the governor of the kingdom and the Viceroy of New Spain in Mexico that they had “found the heathen quite willing to admit missionaries”, and that the fathers hoped to gather permission and support from both the governor and the archbishop, to “resurrect this neglected vineyard” (27). With each new governor, and again with each new Spanish priestly arrival, there were adjustments of personalities and arrangements of hierarchy to be managed. The politicians rendered varying levels of support for Christianizing the natives, as well as uncertain appropriate reaction to native uprisings and subsequent castigations. Indications are that the primary consideration for the Spanish officials was to maintain healthy economic factors to ensure that the trade routes remained open for commerce.

During the years leading up to the 1673 summit in the sierra, efforts had been made to change a policy that had been a hindrance to the type of missionaries allowed on the field by the Spanish government. In order for this northwest Mexican mission system to

take on new life, a lift would need to be made on a ban where formerly, “through an ultra-national policy of the kings of Spain, foreigners were not permitted in the colonies, not even as priests for the advance of the missions” (Dunne 101). “At first, non-Spanish subjects were rejected because all ‘forasteros’—foreigners--were considered a suspect element (Polzer 141-143). In the translation of the Tömördy article, Marion Ortuño explains that the *Catálogo de los pasajeros a Indias*, “took into account every person who succeeded in managing to get by the extremely strict controls to book passage on some kind of cheap, ordinary sort of cargo ship” (Tömördy 40). The first *Catalogus* (1509-1588) listed from among almost fourteen thousand immigrants who fled to Cádiz and Seville for passage through the official Spanish immigration departure centers only seventy-three foreigners that had been allowed, perhaps Church dignitaries and/or the Viceroy’s personal staff (Tömördy 40). In order to avoid denial of passage, some priests changed the spelling of their name such as an Irishman named Michael Wading, who worked in the Sinaloa missions in the 1620’s, and whose name was changed to Miguel Godínez in order for him to be able to serve there (Dunne 101). This prohibition had been part of the reason for the slump in missionary efforts during the 1630s, and with the removal of the ban on foreigners and the agreement to provide funding for these new missionaries by the provinces of the New World, there was a coordinated effort that gave promise for Christianization success in Tarahumara country (Dunne 39).

By the year 1678, a new mission unit, the Alta Tarahumara, or Misión Nueva de San Joaquín y Santa Ana, was added to the initial unit, the Baja Tarahumara or Antigua Tarahumara. Padres Tardá and Guadalajara had been essential in the development of

mission sites during this time and had conducted many baptisms of neophytes near the Satevó, San Joaquín, and Santa Ana areas, and in a letter dated February 2, 1682, the Bohemian Father Joseph Neumann describes the arduous journeys of the first priestly recollections of fertile valleys watered by the streams flowing east from the great Sierra or northwest through a divide. The Tarahumaras lived in low huts constructed from straw, “which seemed more suitable for catching birds than for human habitation” (12). Father Ratkay also describes the habitations of the natives as places like his country’s “huts to catch partridges” (27). The huts extended for ten or fifteen miles along the river banks and were a distance apart because they did not like to live in close proximity to others. Higher in the mountains, the people lived in caves that had been passed down for generations. The early priests reported that the Tarahumara were the least friendly of any of the tribes that were evangelized in the Mexican northwest (Dunne 118).

Joseph Neumann recounts his experiences among the Tarahumara, beginning with memories of his departure from Prague and his two years of training and studying in Spain. After several departure delays to the New World, he was finally able to leave for Mexico on April 11, 1678, arriving two years later “without mishap in this remote quarter of the globe (5).” He dedicates “the history of the missionary... [efforts] by our Society in the country of the Tarahumares, in the Kingdom of Nueva Vizcaya, in North America” (2) to the fathers of the Bohemian province. His book, which he encourages “the very reverend father general...to publish at the “College in Prague” (3) was submitted near his seventy-sixth year of age, and the padre looks forward to his golden anniversary in a few years and signs the letter on April 5, 1724 at the mission of Cárichi. Luis J. Verplancken says that

the work was published in Prague in 1730, but was probably written between 1723 and 1724 (Bennett 17). Throughout his letters, he constantly apologizes for his lack of *latinicity*, citing his lack of use of Latin in everyday life in Mexico. He states that the brothers use Spanish when conversing among themselves, and that he feels that he is losing command of the language of the Church. Father Neumann pens his eye witness testimony of personal experiences traveling to the Tarahumara region and his tenure during the years 1681-1723, but he also weaves in those details as told to him by other brothers to “serve as a spur to later missionaries, urging them to labor among these barbarians without respite and with all their strength, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls” (6).

Before Father Neumann begins Chapter I in his seventeenth century Latin testimony, *A History of the Revolt Against the Missionaries of the Society of Jesus and Their Auxiliaries, Among the Indian Nations, Particularly the Tarahumara Nation, North America, in the Kingdom of Nueva Vizcaya, Which is Almost Completely Won to the Catholic Faith (Historia Seditioum)*, he makes an interesting linguistic note to The Reader. Before he begins to make references to locations in the sierra, he states that the letter *z* frequently occurs in place names, but the pronunciation sounds like *tz*. He points out that the spaces inhabited by the tribe take their names from birds, wild beasts, stones, caves, mountains, fields, and plains; however, his European side “thought it superfluous to translate these names” (8). He notes that they are to be pronounced as if written Caritzique, Papigotzie. Echoing Neumann’s thoughts, and according to Don Burgess’ linguistic study of Uto-Aztecan languages, entitled *Western Tarahumara*, “place names

are formed by adding a place name ending to a noun...or a verb. The word and ending selected give some characteristic of the place...– *çi* means ‘place where something is found’, consequently, *wahó- çi* indicates the mosquito place, and *recó- çi* indicates a storehouse place” (45). Many early missions and present-day sierra locations are spelled with a ‘chi’ affix.

The present-day pueblos of *Cárichi* and *Papigochi*, which are prominent in the earliest Jesuit writings, are today spelled and pronounced in Spanish with this place name ending “chi”. Other towns mentioned in the Jesuit writings that still are thriving pueblos today are called *Samachique*, *Guachochi*, *Guérachi*, and *Otóvachi*, to name a few. Today, *Guachochi* means “place of the *garzas*” and there is a lake and reserve for the *garzas*, or blue herons that return there annually. In a letter with an undesignated recipient, dated September 15, 1693, Padre Neumann mentions that in the Rarámuri language, *Tomochic* refers to the “region or place of cold” (4), which apparently describes the weather in that location as it sits at the altitude of over six thousand feet above sea level.

Although it is not uncommon today to encounter world citizens, even in the Americas, who are not aware of the existence of the Tarahumara tribe of Mexico, Padre Neumann states that “The...Tarahumaras...became known...a century ago...when the...silver mines...had been discovered in the district of Parral, founded in 1631, more than two hundred leagues from Mexico (City), [and] began to be worked by the Spaniards, and when many settlements were established in that region” (7). He adds that a few missions or *reducciones* had been established among the Tarahumaras at this time, a day or two’s journey from Parral. These were small, crude, and centrally located huts that had

been built to facilitate the administration of the sacraments. The central driving goal of the padres seemed to be to compel the natives to be baptized, at least the children, and to accept the offer to live in a civilized manner and not “like beasts” (10), scattered over the land.

Padre Neumann gives a cat and mouse version of the padres building farms and huts near the natives only to find that they had withdrawn from the area and built huts further away from their presence in order to “conceal their vices, polygamy, and drunkenness to which they were enslaved...They spent whole nights in feasting... quarreling,...and brawling, and many murders were the result...they indulged in abominable sexuality...” (Neumann 29). The missionaries objected strongly to the alienation of the natives, and were convinced that “all possible measures must be taken to compel the Indians to live in villages” (29). The missionaries even appointed the most prominent native men in the villages to positions of leadership, hoping that they would influence the others to obey. Superficially, those given positions pretended to work alongside the fathers, but “These Indians are by nature and disposition a sly and crafty folk, from whom sincerity is not to be expected. They are accomplished hypocrites, and as a rule, the ones who seem the most virtuous should be considered the most wicked of all. They say one thing to their people when in the presence of the missionaries, and later, in secret, they say another, directly the contrary” (30).

The Devil and distance was to be blamed for keeping the natives ensnared in their vices. Little was achieved by the baptism of the adults, because many of them were two-faced in their dealings with the padres and after superficially succumbing to the obligatory

sprinkling, they “reverted to their forests” (Neumann 30). “They would slink away to their woods and caves and manage to keep good distances between themselves and the missionary” (Dunne 120).

The missionary program that was instituted to include local natives in leadership positions placed Indian communities into three groups: 1) congregations of natives guided by native leaders who strongly followed the Jesuits and Spanish officials, such as those in Papigochi and Cárichi where finally converts were ultimately faithful, 2) congregations who lived dispersed on *rancherías*, whose leaders may or may not accept Christianity, and 3) isolated mountain congregations whose governors and other leaders were men who had never experienced mission life or were *cimarrones*, renegades (Salmon 386). Neumann’s letter of July 29, 1686 indicates that the impressions of only two of the current fourteen padres seemed favorably secure toward the guidance and trust of behavior of their own congregations. He offers a reality check for future padres, and clearly asserts that among the neophytes, the fruits obtained are disproportionate to the efforts involved.

In the same eighteen-page letter from July 29, 1686, housed in the Bolton Collection, Padre Neumann, the priest who had been on the field a mere five years, admonishes possible new missionary recruits that this mission field is not for the faint-hearted. He speaks directly when he says that among the neophytes, there seems to be no fervor for the faith, no love of spiritual things, no eagerness to learn Christian doctrine, a lack of appreciation of divine truths, no fear of sin, but rather a drive for freedom to do whatever fancy suggests. He adds that the Tarahumaras indulge themselves in excessive vices, especially drunkenness. (It might be added here that in the tribal tradition, the

tesgüinadas (Bennett and Zingg 328-329), or drinking feasts, are done in obedience to their god, Onoruáme. The Christian padres saw drunkenness as a sin, but the Tarahumaras believed/believe that consumption of *tesgüino* along with the dance are obligatory to keep the universe in balance. The clash of ideologies here could not be more different.) Seemingly, to the Tarahumaras, there is no zeal in coming to baptism or confession, but rather constant secrecy regarding their crimes and their pagan ways. They do not accept rebuke or punishment for sin or crimes. Their independence is of primary consideration above all else. Padre Neumann seems to be writing to forewarn future priests of the truth of the situation where the field is white unto harvest in Tarahumara lands, but there is little reward for the labor. However, he gives the assurance that all is possible because he has adjusted himself to their temperament and has managed to enjoy a positive working relationship among his congregants, not knowing at the time of writing the letter than he would spend over five decades in the sierra as a beloved padre among the Tarahumaras.

Joseph Neumann was initially appointed to the remote pueblo of Sisoguichic, in an area where the air was thin, the climate was severe (Christelow 430), and the altitude measures six thousand seven hundred feet above sea level, with limited access by road. Only a man of Neumann's "magnificent physique" (Christelow 429) and sheer determination could have held out for fifty years (Neumann 3, 197). After he served in Sisoguichi for two decades, he was sent to Cárichi, a community thirty miles from the Sisoguichi mission, originally named Guerucárichic (Christelow 430), where he was welcomed by his new community with a "double triumphal arch of boughs... over the trail" (431). Joseph Neumann served in Cárichi for his last thirty-one years where Padre

Ivan Ratkay had served for three winters before his mysterious death. Neumann writes about his arrival to Sisoguichi in a letter dated 20 February, 1682, that he was left alone with the natives “speaking their language but haltingly, having been in their country scarce three months...[their language] was as strange to them as they were to him, for the remote mountain valley had experienced but little contact with Europeans” (431).

A contemporary of Padre Neumann, Ivan Ratkay of Croatia, is highlighted in an article by Gyula Törmördy, written in Polish in Mexico City, and translated to English by Dr. Marian Ortuño of Baylor University. Törmördy narrates the highlights of a young Hungarian aristocrat who gave up his comfortable life as a page of the Austrian court in exchange for the strict, disciplined life in a Jesuit cell. The twenty-two year old Baron József Rátkay heard the Jesuit director’s call to prospective young members to play a role in the New World missionary effort. Törmördy attributes the enthusiastic welcome by the Church to Austro-Hungarian men to Mexico’s timely need for missionary priests who were of other European backgrounds, as the natives had already begun to hate the compatriots of the disreputable Spanish conquerors (1).

Törmördy refers to the Croatian as József Rátkay, but Prpic discusses the various references for the priest as Ivan Ratkay, Ivan Ratkaj, Joannes Ratkai (in Jesuit European sources), Rattkay, and Juan María Ratkay (Prpic 184). The noble priest had traveled on the same boat to the New World with the Belgian priest, Joseph Neumann, and both refer to the other favorably in their writings (Neumann letter of July 29, 1686, 13 and Ratkay, 1683, 76, Bolton).

Both Neumann and Ratkay were dedicated to the Tarahumara of the Sierra Madres, and served in neighboring sierra pueblos. Since all foreign-born priests spent time in Cádiz or Seville learning Spanish before embarking to the New World, Gyula Törmördy states that Rátkay not only had an excellent command of Spanish, but also the Tarahumara language, which he speculates that he had learned during his time in Cádiz (2). Because of travel delays to the New World, Jesuits awaiting their voyage to foreign fields decided to equip themselves for the rugged assignments ahead, so they learned to carve, distill brandy, make compasses, as well as study astronomy, mathematics, and other sciences to make the natives “more willing to accept the Christian faith.” (This echoes a biblical passage in I Corinthians 22 when the apostle Paul says that “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.”)

Törmördy mentions that Ratkay had made good use of the old *Tarakumara* dictionary left by the Franciscans and that he must have observed a connection with his native language and that of the natives (Törmördy 2). Even though it is possible that he perhaps made himself familiar with some Rarámuri vocabulary before he left Spain, even a gifted language learner understands that reading a dictionary is quite different from having an excellent command of the language. Considering that there were no native speakers in Spain, and that linguists from the Summer Institute of Linguistics identify from three to five dialects of Rarámuri today, but few Mexicans have learned any of the dialects after having lived in the same country for a lifetime, it is highly unlikely that he was bilingual upon his arrival to the New World. Although later writings tell that Padre Neumann taught Padre Herman Glandorff, a new arrival to the sierra in 1721, to speak

Rarámuri almost natively (Terrazas 375), Neumann says himself that he spoke “haltingly” at the three month mark in the sierra. Neumann’s letter of February 2, 1682 outlines the routine of the padre’s missionary activities of instruction with the children, and was probably similar to that of Ratkay. “Twice daily I gathered them into the church...after Mass I repeated with them the *Pater Nostre*, the *Ave María*...the rudiments of Christian doctrine. I had brought these with me in a translation into the Tarahumar tongue, and I repeated them from the written text” (Prpic 212). He was apparently adhering to the written form of the Tarahumara doctrine at first and not fluent in the native tongue upon arrival, as Törmördy suggests.

In a report from Cárichi, Joseph Ratkay wrote *An Account of the Tarahumara Missions and a Description of the Tribe of the Tarahumaras and of Their Country (Relatio Tarahumarum Missionum eiusque Tarahumara Nationi Terraeque Descriptio*, folder Mexicana 17, Bancroft), which is a first-hand description dated March 20, 1683 about the region and his observations of his new missionary assignment (Prpic 205). He describes the native Tobosos and Conchos as wicked and wild. These wore war paint on their faces, were a yelling menace to travelers on the roads, fond of eating mule, horse, and even human flesh (Ratkay 12). Padre Ratkay echoes Father Neumann’s lamentations that the natives choose to live according to their natural inclinations such as participating in orgies and incessant lying (Ratkay 26-31). Father Ratkay describes the Tarahumaras as “swift and tireless runners who could run down a deer (205),” are seemingly docile in spirit, but prone to sin and laziness; however, they are loyal to each other—they never reveal a secret about a brother. This bond among the isolated Tarahumara brothers is demonstrated by a

unique custom that other writers would later echo: how to approach an acquaintance's home. The Tarahumara, especially the gentile, goes to his friend's house, sits about fifty yards away, and waits silently until the man of the house chooses to recognize his presence (Ratkay 46; Lumholtz *Unknown I*, 258; Bennett and Zingg 326, 367). Approaching someone's house directly, like an animal, was in the seventeenth century, and still is in the twenty-first century, a violation of the male-to-male conduct code in the sierra. The Tarahumara male respects the desire for isolation and defends a tribal brother's code of silence.

In his book, *Rev. Juan M. Ratkay, S. J., first Crostian Missionary in America, 1647-1683* (1971), George J. Prpic observes that Ratkay's naïve and optimistic estimate of the cunning Tarahumaras resulted in him falling victim to their deceptions. It seemed that the fact that a native was baptized did not necessarily indicate that he had genuinely changed his way of life. The progress of securing souls for baptism was a slow and tedious task in this region. Ratkay died at his Cárichi mission on December 26, 1683, although American historians do not agree on the cause of his death. Peter Dunne and Hebert E. Bolton both imply that he died of an illness; however, there were rumors that he was poisoned by the Tarahumaras because he forbade their orgies and drinking binges (Prpic 217). Neumann, however, would not give the natives the satisfaction of agreeing that he had been poisoned, because he wanted to show his resolve against immorality.

The fathers struggled constantly to suppress the native drunkenness. Neumann once discovered that the neophytes were organizing a drinking party, became enraged, and ran his horse through the area, destroying the urns of tesgüino, "like a wrathful Moses

discovering the golden calf” (Neumann 165). After a brief trip, he returned another time to the mission and sensed yet another party in the air. The Tarahumara natives, in an attempt to distract him so that they could regroup and make more corn nectar, sent a woman to the padre with the pretext of a confession, but the real reason was to give him a subtle warning for the padre to leave them alone. The woman told him that Padre Ratkay had been poisoned at Cárichi (Dunne 165; Christelow 433), because he had spoken against the tribal custom of drinking parties. Although he incorrectly cites the year of Ratkay’s death as 1688 instead of the year 1683, Törmördy says that Joseph Neumann was forced to flee Sisoguichi during an uprising and he stopped by Ratkay’s hut in Cárichi to find him dead lying on his bed “with his hands clasped together on his chest, as though he were asleep. He was dressed in a Tarakumara native costume and covered with a sheepskin... and around his head was tied the typical bandana” (5). An inquiry was conducted by the Jesuit general, but they accepted Neumann’s opinion that the death had been caused by a heart attack (5). Many Croatian historians, including Rev. Miroslav Vanino, S. J., a historian of Jesuits in Croatia, agree with the conclusion that Ratkay was poisoned in Mexico. Whatever caused his death, he was honored as a martyr of his vocation (Prpic 218).

From the longevity of his experience in the sierra, Padre Neumann learned that for the safety of the missions, the priests must constantly be aware of changes in native behavior. He proposed that they exercise caution and monitor signs of unrest such as corn disappearing to the mountains, absence of able-bodied in the village, and/or a lack of horses in the town in order to keep an eye on potential uprisings. In the late 1690s, such

signs indicated that the natives were lurking in the hills gathering supplies and awaiting a signal from their comrades living in the pueblos. These *cimarron* mountain agents blamed the call of the church bells and the baptismal waters for widespread disease among the Indians; they wanted to break the yoke of Christian dominance (Neumann 77).

Due to a northward extension of Spanish mining activities with a large influx of Spaniards of all classes, many Tarahumaras were conscripted for labor in the mines, construction, chopping lumber, and their native grazing lands were appropriated. Although the padres defended against such commercialization and openly opposed the mistreatment of the natives, such oppression led to a great unrest among the natives, cattle raids, burning of missions, slaying of padres, and the resultant flight to the hills. The fairly newly appointed governor tried to ascribe blame to the “misplaced zeal of the missionaries, and it was to counter this danger that Neumann...was sent to seek the wise counsel of the viceroy in Mexico in defense of the padres” (Neumann 58-61). The priests were unfairly implicated and defended themselves, but little benefit resulted for them or the natives in the struggle of padres against the Spanish political and commercial machine.

The fathers sensed that conditions were shaky and witnessed several indications that predicted a coming pestilence (Prpic 209). There was a plague in 1695 where many young died, leaving only the older members of families (Neumann 72). Several supernatural signs, documented as actual testimony, placed the padres on alert. The Papigochi River broke into waves that were twelve feet high and then groaned and resumed its flow (Dunne 80). In April of 1696, the province of Alta Tarahumara was shaken by an earthquake, although it was unusual for them to occur in this area. In May

of the same year, in Cocomorachic, a priest was looking out his door and documented that he saw a giant, whose chest was the same height as the treetops, walking for a time on a nearby hill, and in October, a comet without a head became visible. It was facing east and lasted for three weeks in the sky. On the first night of the comet, fires were seen on the hills and a fiery ball hung in the air fell to the earth with a crash like thunderbolt (Neumann 79).

The Indians were fearful and restless, and by 1697-1699, many Indians in the mountains had died of hunger, and the others remaining were willing to live in submission under church guidance (Dunne 183-184). Although the missions in Sisogichi and Cárichi where Neumann served did not escape destruction during the unrest, they were promptly rebuilt, and the native believers at Neumann's Sisoguichic mission were loyal to him, giving the enduring impression that he was a greatly respected father (Christelow 442). In Chapter V of *Historia*, Neumann said that the successful approach to the natives had been not to employ the zeal of Elias but rather to demonstrate the "gentleness of Our Savior" (188). His belief was that having invincible patience was a far better approach than pushing theology or subtlety of doctrine. He encouraged the fathers to have a spirit of Christian humility, which might enable them to become all things to all men. Neumann was "one of the pillars upon which the missions in Tarahumara rested" (Odlozilík 435). He was "the most valiant and able of them all, lived to see his golden jubilee as a priest, for death did not call him until May 1, 1732, having permitted him to live more than fifty years amid the...Tarahumar missions" (Dunne 197). He served as a solid foundation for the missions that would continue to spread northwest to include much of northern Mexico.

The detailed landscape and descriptions of historic events given by Neumann and Ratkay give homage to many European padres and their native converts who met with grave opposition and often perished during the uprisings against the face of Christian efforts in Tarahumara country. Although a larger volume of documentation of the work done on the mission field, rather than the actual hands who did it have surfaced, there are letters and reports of a unique priest who served in the latter years of the mission efforts and at one time they were referenced to be in the Jesuit archives once housed in Ysleta, Texas (Dunne 253), but are no longer accounted for there. The German Padre Herman Glandorff, born in Osnabruck, Germany in 1687 (Dunne 207) of distinguished parents (Terraza 3), was a scholastic who was precise in Latin, and was an avid letter-writer (Dunne 208). He followed the call of his ardent spirit to go to the New World, and was sent to Cárichi where Ivan Ratkay had served and Joseph Neumann, then an elderly man, was superior (207). By 1730, he was laboring in Tomochic, where he had the reputation as a holy man and was known to have witnessed and to have performed a number of miracles among his people (Dunne 207, 209). Silvestre Terrazas dedicates his article to the long-time priest who demonstrated a life-long inclination to serve others. “No podemos dejar de consignar a la posteridad la memoria de un ilustre jesuita apóstol de la Tarahumara y cuya fama de santidad y Milagros aún se conserva viva en esos lugares por una no interrumpida tradición de padres a hijos” (375). [We cannot stop recording for posterity the memory of such an illustrious Jesuit apostle of the Tarahumara, whose fame of holiness and miracles are still conserved live in those places through an uninterrupted tradition of fathers to sons.] He arrived from Spain to the coastal city of Veracruz, but

always sought out the “bárbaros” who walked the city streets, and after his theological work in Mexico City 1717-1721 (Dundes 207), he labored from 1721-1762, baptizing many souls.

Padre Glandorff studied the Tarahumara/Rarámuri language with the well-established padre, Joseph Neumann beginning around 1721, and was an excellent student, learning to communicate like a near-native, according to Terrazas (375). He was very beloved by *los de abajo*, so that he was revered and thought to have supernatural powers. He lived in the isolated Tomochic region near Papigochic, where he achieved local fame for his teaching ability and his physical endurance. He was an exceptional runner, and made his home in a cave, which is called Cañon de El Banderilla or La Cueva del Padre Glandorff, visible from Cárichic (Dunne 206).

The Tarahumaras were and are endurance runners, having lived for generations connected by a network of narrow footpaths through the steep canyons; Rarámuri means “foot-runner” or “he who walks well,” and they do so while wearing hand-made huarache sandals. The natives admired excellent runners according to ancient habits of their race, and Glandorff gained a reputation among the natives and missionaries alike, and his swiftness of foot developed into a humorous legend (Dunne 207-208). Glandorff gained the reputation for having magical moccasins (Olimón 4). It was said that one of his fatigued Indian companions collapsed, but the man was rejuvenated and ran tirelessly while wearing the padre’s footwear. It was also said that the padre could respond to a needy person by foot faster than others could on horseback. Bartolomé Braun, superior Black Robe to Glandorff, confirms the fantastic abilities and in 1746 narrates a string of

his miracles of travel, crossing rivers and snowy banks, and arriving dry shod and without concern (Dunne 208, 253).

As with many stories of outstanding heroes, there is a human tale about Glandorff, as well. Dunne also says that Glandorff was “harried by the demons of Hell” (209). He claimed in a letter in 1752 to Father Hesselmeier that he was tormented by spirits. He would hear the church bell ringing during the night and day at unplanned times, he heard noises like people jumping, and windows flying open. Only his living room was a sanctuary to escape the horrors (208-210). After consulting a fellow friar who had had the same spiritual misgivings, Constantine Gallerati, he decided to “face the demons with the exorcisms of the Church, immemorial prayers composed for the expulsion of evil spirits, commanding them in the name of the Almighty Master of creation to recede (210).” He asked God to make the demons “return to Hell where they belong” (210) and it seemed to heal Glandorff’s spiritual struggles (210).

Glandorff was a believer in justice, and he lived through struggles of seeing his neophytes forced to work in the mines, although there were laws in place to limit the Spaniards to no more than four percent of the population of a pueblo. He was a passionate advocate for the natives against the cruelty of the presidio captains and other officials (Dunne 214). His letters also reflect political struggles within the Jesuit community and injustices between the creole Jesuits of Spanish blood and the Europeans (Dunne 211; Bennett and Zingg 17). Changes were in the air: the Franciscans Friars took over some of the Tarahumara missions, and the new mission field was moving toward Baja California

and Nayarit. Twenty-two Jesuit establishments were given over to the care of the diocesan clergy around 1850 (Dunne 215-216; Bennett and Zingg 18).

In spite of any personal difficulty or illness, Glandorff advanced the mission of Tomochic from seventeen Christians to one hundred and forty, according to his 1730 report (Dunne 210). During the centuries after the arrival of the Black Robes, the high sierra and the deep *barrancas* became a center of struggle among the Christianized and those not, a constant hideout for the rebels. Some of the “incorrigibles living immoral lives (Dunne 210)” were expelled from Glandorff’s pueblo. Some “renegade Tarahumares (211)” betrayed their own people as they served as guides for Apache entry into their territory. In the 1720’s, this region was finally won for Spain and for the Faith (215), allowing more men to be sent into other parts of Mexico (Olimón 3). In the year of Glandorff’s death, 1763, fifty pueblos in the Alta Tarahumara were served by Jesuits, and in 1767, nineteen fathers were serving nineteen locations. In that same year, 1767, the King of Spain “by a stroke of his pen would bring death to all the Jesuit establishments of his vast empire flung over the surface of two hemispheres” (Dunne 220). Time was out for the Spanish Jesuits in America as it had been for the French and Portuguese brothers (Dunne 228) due to a combination of foreign and domestic situations within the Catholic Church.

Manuel Olimón Nolasco presented a paper in Mexico City on September 13, 2005 with the title, “El Padre Glandorff: Un Proyecto de beatificación que quedó en silencio.” He speaks for the beatification of Padre Glandorff, stating that after two hundred years, there are still vestiges that speak of the Jesuit missionary of the Tarahumara of the

eighteenth century: a street of certain importance, a private school, and until 1980, there had been a bookstore bearing his name. He makes reference to twenty-seven letters and other documents from the Archivo de la Provincia Mexicana de la Compañía de Jesús in Mexico City (Olimón 2) that give credence to the call for his beatification. He also cites Luis Rodriguez, Peter Dunne, and Mexican priests and officials, as well as a letter of support from German bishops (8) all in favor of the effort.

Another significant twentieth-century Mexican Jesuit priest, Father Luis G. Verplancken, who served in Sisoguichi where he studied the Tarahumara language, penned the Foreword to the important collection of William Bennett and Robert Zingg. He explains that after the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, most of the writings by the banned priests were lost or destroyed (18). Only a few manuscripts survive from that period, causing a void in information about the culture, language, native religion encountered by the missionaries, anthropology and scientific notations. There is physical evidence of the work of the Jesuits, such as missions standing and in ruins, as well as converts, but many questions remain about the assimilation of languages between padres and converts and the integration of the native to Christian religious practices. When the Jesuits returned in 1900, the Tarahumaras had fled the lower altitudes and were living in the highlands of the Sierra Madre, because the richer agricultural areas were occupied by white men after the expulsion of the Jesuits, who had defended the Indians as a practice (Bennett 18).

Carl Sofus Lumholtz

The anthropologist Carl Sofus Lumholtz (1851-1922) entered Mexico at the turn of the century and his work documented the Tarahumara culture in detail, as well as the Huichol and other native groups. As recorded in his two-volume work, *Unknown Mexico* (1902), the world traveler and explorer began a quest for knowledge in Australia by seeking zoological specimens in that country (Vol I, vii). He quickly learned that he would need to gain the trust of the natives of that country to be successful, but he soon learned that he was more intrigued by the people and their unique cultures than their artifacts; consequently, his studies turned in the direction of studying less common races and their survival stories. He had heard of the Cave Dwellers in the United States, so while on a lecturing tour there, he found others of like mind, and an expedition plan to Mexico was organized under the auspices of the American Museum of National History of New York and the American Geographical Society of New York to find the descendants of this group who may still be living in caves further south. He readily received the official papers required for his research from Washington and was received courteously by President, General Porfirio Diaz, who served from 1884-1911, in Mexico (viii).

Traveling with the support of institutional monetary funding, and toting an excellent team of renown scientists with supplies, guides, and mounted on horses and mules, the group traveled to the northernmost portion of the Sierra Madre del Norte, where Apache tribes had only been subdued by General Crook and his troops a mere seven years before, in 1883 (Lumholtz ix). After several encouraging tours and diminishing funds, Lumholtz dismissed most of the scientists, but retained a few natives to assist him in the

hopes of creating a more relaxed setting for his subjects of study. In 1892, he came upon the first living arrangements of the “so-called *gentiles* (pagans),... (xii)” that he sought and wrote that “The Tarahumare Indians of the Sierra Madre, one of the least known among the Mexican tribes, live in caves to such an extent that they may properly be termed the American Cave-Dwellers of to-day” (xii). He eventually dismissed all assistants and labored alone, spending a year and a half with the Tarahumaras, gaining a knowledge which was authentic and first-hand. Interestingly, he says that he gained their confidence and friendship, mainly through singing their native songs, and by treating them justly (xiii).

Lumholtz recorded collections of vocabularies of the Tarahumara, Tepehuane, and Tubares languages, anthropological measurements, samples of hair, and bone samples to exhibit in the United States. His research was collected from 1890-1898 with a view to illuminate the relations between the ancient culture of the valley of Mexico and the Pueblo Indians in the Southwest of the United States. Many first-time listings of species of plants, birds, and animals were recorded, as well as first-time archeological studies of area caves and ruins.

The first impressions expressed by Lumholtz give the modern reader pause, because many of his observations could conceivably be pronounced by newcomers to the sierra today. He penned Volume I during and shortly after his travels of 1890-1896 about his time with the Tarahumara, and he prepares the reader by saying that “Most of what I tell here refers to a part of the Republic that is never visited by tourists and is foreign even to most Mexicans. Primitive people are becoming scarce on the globe. On the American continents there are still some left in their original state” (xvi). Although we are living in

a global society, even in the twenty-first century, particularly in the remote sierra towns such as Batopilas and Yerba Buena, among others, these remote areas are unknown to most. Although mestizos who do reside there generally do so because they are appointed to be mayors or other civic leaders, owners of hotels, and government officials who hand out rations to the natives, the Tarahumara in this region still wear native dress, speak their native language, and consume much *tesguino*. They ignore mestizo law and authorities and often live in caves and remote habitations. Due to the modern dangers of the narcotics trafficking in the sierra, massacres, such as the Creel Massacre of 2010 (<https://youtu.be/RnaUs66MLjQ>), caravans of armed SUVs, and hit and run dynamics, there is very little possibility that some of these places will ever be candidates for tourist destinations, even by Mexicans, due to their isolation. Although the focus of the sierra studies of Lumholtz was to shed light upon the early people of Mexico, the Cave Dwellers, in order to understand the “first chapters of the history of mankind” (xvi), in many ways, the Tarahumaras today have “lost their individuality or been crushed under the heels of civilisation” (xvi) by their current circumstances, as Lumholtz predicted.

Lumholtz reports that although the entire state of Chihuahua was inhabited by the Tarahumaras at some time in the past, at the beginning of the twentieth century there were only some twenty-five thousand left, and in Temosachic, most have adopted the language, clothing, religion, and customs of the Anglos (119). However, when he arrived at the pueblo of Cusárare (a Spanish corruption of Usárare, *usáka*=eagle), there were no Mexicans living there or in the surrounding area. He recounts the struggles of missionaries who have not yet been able to accomplish the gathering of the semi-nomadic natives into

pueblos under the shadow of the Church's roof for better administration of the sacraments. Only native authorities obliged to reside during their term form any permanent population in the native villages, and the sierra dwellers gather only on Sundays for mass, but more importantly, for the transaction of regular tribal judicial business (138). The closer the natives live to larger cities or mining communities, the more mestizo population is mixed among the natives in the sierra, causing customs to vary accordingly even today.

The first impressions given by Lumholtz paint the topography changes in slow motion as his group moved by foot and beast across the vast landscape, literally blazing their own trail across territory that still in the twenty-first century has escaped the pony express, home telephones, and regular postal service. He narrates the geographic changes from limestone formations of the plains to oaks and tall pine trees among mountain *magoñas* (211), from high ridges to plunging *barrancas*, and from arable land supported by stone walled terraces, which remind "one of similar ones found farther north as ancient ruins, to such an extent that one might suppose that the Tarahumares have made use of the relic of antiquity" (152-155). Lumholtz and his group of scientists came across inhabited rock-shelters and shallow caves (127), observed scantily-clad men in the field using wooden and stone ploughshares, saw topless women making baskets and hats from straw, and were witness to an after-mass Sunday meeting of the tribes with governors and their symbolic canes who meted out lashes to a man and a woman for domestic infractions.

It was upon entering the Urique canyon area where Carl Lumholtz encountered the "gentile (pagan) Indians" (144) of the Barranca de Cobre, who had managed to evade Spanish Christianization efforts. "Even the intrepid Jesuit missionaries at first gave up the

idea of descending” into the gaping chasm of over four thousand feet deep when the Indians told them that “only the birds knew how deep it was” (144). The team came upon a cave where a woman was making a concoction with fresh herbs. It was in a weary tiredness that Lumholtz first tasted *iskiate*, a soup-like dish made from toasted corn and mixed with water. He claimed that it was like “a friend in need, so strengthening and refreshing” (149) that he almost claimed it “as a discovery, interesting to mountain climbers and others exposed to great physical exertions. The preparation does not, however, agree with a sedentary life, as it is rather indigestible” (149). This is a staple dish of the Tarahumaras even in the twenty-first century, one of many culinary offerings made of their staple diet of corn.

Lumholtz’s first sketches of Tarahumara raiment resemble wear that was described by Merrill (1988) and is still used in the twenty-first century in the most remote areas of the sierra. The anthropologist noted that the women wore full skirts tied at the waist, blouses with puffy sleeves cinched at the waist with a braided or woven belt that may secure a child or other bundle on the back (Bennett and Zing 105-107). The men wore a breechcloth, called a *taparrabo* or an *itabátca* (Bennett and Zingg 100), and often sported the same style tunic with full sleeves worn by women. In cold weather, the men wrapped themselves in a thick, heavy wool blanket, often woven by their women, around their shoulders. Adult feet were and are today shod with homemade sandals, which were once made of fiber, but available materials changed to leather or a sole made of discarded tire, cut to fit, secured with a network of leather straps that are tied underneath the shoe in a knot and laced upward to above the ankle (Dunne 119). Lumholtz also described curative

neckwear made of seeds of *Coix Lacbryma-Jobi* that were and are still widely worn in the sierra. From his experience as a world traveler, Lumholtz compared that men wear one strand and women put on multiple strands, while practicing medicine men, and even children who were teething were seen with the seed strands used as a soothing remedy, just the same as he as seen on peasant women in Italy, Spain, and the Americas (149-151).

The Mexican cave-dwellers that Lumholtz encountered were in a transitory state, living between cave and crudely constructed shack to tend crops and livestock, to escape seasonal cave critters such as scorpions and spiders, and to make land improvements for a season (163). They seemed to take more seriously the security of their small grain storehouse structures than the air-tightness of their living places. He observed that whereas the Tarahumara always locks his storehouse securely when he moves from place to place, he rarely does so for his house upon leaving it (177). Lumholtz remembered that “Padre Juan Fonte, the pioneer missionary to the Tarhumares...speaks of the numerous caves” from San Pablo toward Guachochi, which were divided into several small dwellings (161).

Even though there were Tarahumaras living in caves in the sierra, Lumholtz opines that the sierra cave-dwellers were decisively not related to the ancient cliff dwellers in the southwestern part of the United States, because unlike the high quality of the beautiful pottery and striking architecture of the structures left by the ancient cave-dwellers to the north, the Tarahumaras artifacts “cannot be ranked above” the work of “troglodytes” (171) with their clumsy ochre stick figures. Lumholtz donated such an ochre ceramic figure (Figure 2) that he gathered on one of his first trips to Mexico in the 1890s. It is housed in



Figure 2. Female figure. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of NaturalHistory catalog #30/5799.

the National American Museum of History in New York City and demonstrates how the upper class in western Mexico dressed and decorated themselves over two thousand years ago. The figurine of a woman from a high level of society with a patterned skirt and multiple ring adornments dates from 300 B.C. to 300 A.D.

Carl Lumholtz indicates that there is one structure that is a consistent feature of a Tarahumara habitation, whether it be a cave or hut, is a flat, smooth dancing place on which religious rituals are performed. The Tarahumara ceremonial dancing patio has from one to three crosses that adorn what the world traveler deems to be the Greek cross, indicating the four cardinal corners of the world. The cross that he observed was not the Christian cross, but represented Father Sun/Tata Dios. He noted that when there are two crosses, the smaller stands for the moon, and the third represents the Morning Star (173). William Bennett, discussed below, perceived that the three crosses were usually identified with the Christian Trinity in more recent times (Bennett and Zingg 269). Bennett goes into

great detail to echo Lumholtz's report of the importance of the patio structure and purpose. "The circular patio represents the world. The four directions are the gates of the world, and everything used on the patio must be dedicated to them. The three crosses and the tables are always on the east side, where the sun rises. To the east, behind the crosses, is the gate where the house is located in which Christ was born" (Bennett 269). (Figure 3) Food and drink are always offered on the sacred patio to the fox, whose cry means death to a woman; the owl, whose cry means death to a male; and the *okó*, a bird whose cry means death to a child. These forest creatures are offered respect and nourishment on the ceremonial patio, so that they will advise the people of impending illness and/or death (Bennett 269; Merrill 162).



Figure 3. Tarahumara dance patio. <https://goo.gl/images/ba0Osq>.

Wendell Bennett and Robert Zingg

Wendell Bennett and Robert Zingg collaborated on the first edition of *The Tarahumara, An Indian Tribe of Northern Mexico* in 1935, an important ethnographic account of the Tarahumara way of life in the early twentieth century. At the time of their approach to the Sierra Tarahumara, the region was still largely without marked roadways, cut by the deep canyons and towering mountains, and very difficult to traverse. With the Mexican Revolution just a few years in recent history, conditions were unsafe for non-native travelers in this region. However, Bennett and Zingg's observations, in addition to Lumholtz's *Unknown Mexico* (1902), have relayed some of the first scientific discussions of the mysterious people group and their ways of life to the world. Their descriptions showed how a contemporary tribe had survived in a beautiful, yet inhospitable country.

One of the ecumenical accounts that still bears itself study-worthy today is the relatively modern contribution of Father Luis G. Verplancken, S. J., priest of the Tarahumara Mission at Creel, Chihuahua in the Foreword to the 1976 edition of the Bennett and Zingg text. He was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, the son of a Belgian brew master, and spent decades studying the culture and language of the Tarahumara (Bennett, Foreword 11). He established a clinic to educate in matters of hygiene and proper nutrition, as well as to provide medical needs, several boarding schools in rural areas, and a large church in Creel. He is described as a "veritable institution" in the Sierra Tarahumara (11).

The 1976 photos of "inestimable historic and scholarly value" (Foreword 7) reveal the intimate mundane and sacred aspects in the lives of the self-segregated Tarahumara. The only ground access to the Sierra Tarahumara in that year was via rail to Creel,

Chihuahua (Foreword 10). With the addition of the padre's photos, the world of the Tarahumara began to open up to the academic public eye. Sierra access before the mid-1970s had been limited, and some the first paved roads were not constructed until the 1990s (Raat 131), as the author can testify as she drove over the said roads on her first time to Divisadero in the late 1980s and early 1990s, soon after that paved road opened. Crews began to pave the road to Batopilas, a former important mining center, as recently as 2012, and the effort is still underway today. The images depicted in Verplancken's photos and their captions that describe these cultural trail blazers of the 1950s to the 1970s could be the same cultural description of more current times, according to María Elene Orozco, author of *Tarahumara, Una Antigua sociedad futura*, 1992, in that in many societal aspects have remained relatively unchanged (xvi) in spite of recent transportation developments.

The 1976 version of *The Tarahumara* by Bennett and Zingg is enhanced not only by a generous number of photographs of the sierra dwellers, but also presents Father Luis G. Verplancken's perspective on observable changes and similarities in the Tarahumara way of life between the 1935 and 1976 publication, indicating that the Tarahumaras have remained one of the most well-preserved native ethnic entities still residing in northern Mexico (vii). While many foreign elements, such as communal land systems, public education for children, sawmills and railroad construction have provided employment with government agencies, the introduction into Mexico of clean drinking water, clinics, and electricity, and other amenities are "not now far removed from the Tarahumara communities" (21) and have transformed the native life. Many Tarahumara homes in the

sierra are still without water and electricity in the twenty-first century. Father Verplancken's contribution has acknowledged the role of the padres in some beneficial transformations over history with the introduction of fruit trees, domestic animals, and more sophisticated tools and has noted the effort that is being made to safeguard through education and other techniques a way to protect native elements of the Tarahumara culture (21).

The Tarahumara text by Bennett and Zingg has two basic divisions of study, since the two authors came from different background studies and interests. Part I is by Robert M. Zingg and deals with the problem of material adjustment such as adaptability to the natural environment, use of animals, farming and food, clothing, lumbering, ethnobotany and ethnozoology of the sierra and the *barrancas*, and home economics. Robert Zingg, a Colorado native, was primarily an ethnologist who received his doctorate in 1933, and whose main interest was primitive art. He also studied the Huichol of Mexico, and from his research, wrote *The Huichol, Primitive Artists* (1938), making considerable contributions to the study of the central Uto-Aztecs, the tribes of the Sierra Madre Occidental (Bennett 26). In his vast experience of cultural study and throughout his writings, he is able to compare the Tarahumara cultural aspects to the Pueblo, Huichol, and Cora natives, as well.

Part II of *The Tarahumara* was penned by Wendell C. Bennett and deals with his testimony of social adjustment, addressing the social environment, government, kinship and marriage, birth and death practices, and shaman duties, among other topics (Bennett xv). Shortly after completing his doctorate in anthropology at the University of Chicago

in 1930, Bennett was invited to go with Robert Zingg on an expedition to Chihuahua. Bennett is best known for his work studying the Andean region of South America, where he participated in many archeological expeditions and on which he published extensively. The focal point of their joint study in *The Tarahumara* was the Tarahumara village of Samachique in the high sierra. A regional Jesuit priest, Father Picardo, had suggested this locale because it was a typical nomadic community of most of the mountain-dwelling Tarahumaras, who migrated to the warmer caves of the rivers during the winter, and one of the most isolated pueblos in the entire Tarahumara territory. When they arrived in 1930, few residents had ever had social contact with outsiders, and few spoke Spanish. Residents within a twenty kilometer radius were included for the study (vii).

Robert Zingg begins Part I with a geographic description of the variety of terrains, rivers, climate, and vegetation common to the area. On the path near Río Fuerte, it is noted that it was along this river where the Jesuits entered Tarahumara country from the state of Durango. He relates the geographic characteristics with the historical and memorable activities of Father Juan Fonte, who first made contact with the Tarahumara in 1608. He connects other significant cultural notes to the horizon he is seeing: the 1631 opening of the Parral and Batopilas mines and the importance of Parral as a base for the Jesuit mission of the Tarahumaras in the seventeenth century (7). Since the continuum of demographic ratios of Mexicans and Tarahumaras varies from region to region in the sierra, he draws comparisons as to which towns were populated strictly with “the pagan Tarahumaras” and which ones were “Mexicanized” (7) in 1930, citing that those with a lesser “intrusion of Mexican culture” seem to retain traditional native lifestyles (7-8). “Batopilas (silver mine)

has been worked since the seventeenth century. This mining has not influenced Tarahumara culture to any great extent—probably because the rough and broken terrain was hard to traverse, and today, less than a day’s journey from Batopilas, up the same river, lives a group of pagan Tarahumaras” (8).

Robert Zingg opined that the most valuable ecological adjustment in Tarahumara culture was the contribution of domestic animals introduced by the Spaniards. The manure from these animals, especially the goat, fertilized the poor, rocky soil that supported a corn-pumpkin-bean agriculture. The labor cost to cultivate lands was essentially free, thanks to the cooperative Tarahumara obligation that each member had to help out a neighbor when it comes time to plow, clear land, and plant according to the season. The festive aspect of *tesgüino-for-hire* helped finishing any task in short time with the rest of the day spent celebrating into the night (11).

Part III of *The Tarahumara* is a final summary of the two scientists’ observations of both old and new traits of the Tarahumara culture, considering the overwhelming influence that the Spanish presence had exerted in the entire area, “obliterating aboriginal patterns in some regions while modifying them everywhere else” (Bennett 355). While the most significant contacts came through the Spanish Catholic church, which established the first permanent Tarahumara Jesuit mission in 1639, other influences from Spain, as discussed earlier, were the economic and political interests of mining operations and necessary military protection by Spanish military in New Spain. One surviving trait in the sierra is the wide usage of the Rarámuri language in daily life, rather than the predominant Spanish of the mestizo population. It has remained the first language of native speakers,

and many are monolingual speakers, according to Bennett and Zingg (ix-x) and Merrill (44). Even in the second decade of the twenty-first century, it is not uncommon for the author to conduct occasional English-Spanish-Rarámuri translations for medical consults during *brigadas médicas a la sierra* with a non-profit organization, Gloria al Padre Ministries, based in Chihuahua and Texas.

In comparison to the writings of Padre Neumann, who did not think it significant to document the native language names for Tarahumara place names, Carl Lumholtz thought it informative to describe the flora and fauna, the landscape, the cultural observations, as well as the native *ranchería* names. He reported that there were six names for varieties of pine trees, and Lumholtz described ‘discovering’ a new species in Tutuhuaca (402). He described the medicinal use of its leaves boiled in water for stomach ailments, as well as the native preference for this wood to use in violin making. In Chapters six through twelve of Volume I, Lumholtz describes a list of locales with their identifying descriptions in areas such as Remosachi as “place of the stone heap” (118), Rosanachic as “place where there is white” (120-121), alluding to white rocks or cliffs of solidified volcanic ash in the area, Yepachic “place of snow” (124), and a place called Bocoyna, which he explains to be a corruption of the Tarahumara Ocoina (meaning dripping pine) (136). William Bennett observed later that the Tarahumaras did not have names for places such as mountains, streams, rivers, peaks, and significant landmarks, but indeed had a complete vocabulary for plants, animals, and birds. However, each *ranchería* had its name to distinguish family ownership, and since most families live in the sierra part of the year and the *barranca* the other part, each had its own descriptive designation. He gives

Samatêiki (modern day Samachique) as an example, from samí “to be damp” (Bennett 351), plus the *chi* place affix meaning *damp place*.

Although there is a strong sense of native language survival in the sierra even in the present time, perhaps due partly to isolationism, Robert Zingg stated that some material goods had, by the 1930s, altered the Tarahumara way of life. He opined that next to domestic animals, which provided wool for blankets, leather for sandal soles, manure for fertilization, and cattle for plowing, the most useful material commodity introduced to the Tarahumaras by the Spanish was the “steel ax” (48). This innovation gave the Tarahumara the “resources of the pine forest” (48), and changed the mud house style of construction to wooden structures, giving the nomad the advantage of flexibility in location for building homes, corrals, and storehouses where and when he needed. Another introduction to the conservative Tarahumara culture since Lumholtz’s description of 1902, has been in their clothing. The eventual failure of the mines caused the trading of “cheap muslin for the Indian’s corn” (Bennett and Zingg 109). “As a result, the *manta* has...displaced the ...use of wool except that the men still wear blankets” (109). Purchasing inexpensive *manta* saved the time and energy of weaving recently sheared wool on a hand-made loom. Zingg opined that the shift from wool to cotton fabric is one of the outstanding changes in the Tarahumara culture since Lumholtz visited thirty years before (Bennett and Zingg 110; Lumholtz 149-150).

Bennett and Zingg gave justification for an evolution in the native use of material goods, due to the introduction of Spanish products in the sierra; however, they also note that not all societal reforms of Spanish origin took root in the sierra. Some Tarahumara

practices are of ancient origin, and despite centuries of extensive Spanish presence in the sierra, they have persisted (360-362). Elements that appeared to show little degeneration are the *fiestas* (290) on the ceremonial patios (362-363), the presence of the shaman and his ceremonial role in curings (363), their culturally pervasive silence or “prevarication” (Fried, 1961, 114), and individual property ownership. Bennett says that “...the Tarahumara property notions seem to be ancient” (364).

William Bennett and Robert Zingg’s account observed that feasting and animal sacrifice on the ceremonial patio were important elements of the Tarahumara native ceremony. During an animal sacrifice, portions of the sacrifice were extended toward the crosses and then to the four cardinal directions, and finally the sacrifice was placed in front of the crosses. Containers of tesgüino were placed behind the crosses, and the chanter dedicated the corn nectar by tossing a small amount three times in the direction of the crosses, and then three times to each cardinal point (271). Sacrifices of food and tesgüino were required to induce Tata Dios and Mother Moon to make it rain. Bennett and Zing noted that the Tarahumaras were so dependent on agriculture to survive, that having rain to make their crops grow was a necessity, and their relationship with God must be a reciprocal one. God’s favor was requested by sacrificing food and the obligatory hard work of dancing, accompanied by the work of the shaman, who invoked the aid of all the animals, mentioning each by name, so that their prayers would be answered and that food will be plentiful (Lumholtz 331).

The personal patio is still one of the most preserved aspects as the sacred dancing site for each Tarahumara family. Not only are sacrifices of food and consumption of

tesgüino are offered to Tata Dios there, but the sounds of the creatures of nature chime in to appeal to the gods for rain as well, since the ceremonies always occur in the open air. This gives a mandate to the Tarahumaras today as it did decades ago that "...as the gods grant the prayers of the deer expressed in its antics and dances, and of the turkey in its curious playing, by sending the rain, they easily infer that to please the gods they (the Tarahumaras), too, must dance as the deer and play as the turkey" (Lumholtz 331; Acuña Delgado 29). The Tarahumaras asserted to Lumholtz that the animals taught them to dance. As animists, the Tarahumaras believed that animals were to be revered, heeded, and valued as near equals because they "understand magic and are possessed of much knowledge" (Lumholtz 331).

On each *ranchería* sacred patio site, chanting and dancing are obligatory to protect the world from destruction. Dancing is not done for pleasure, but performed as a religious duty (Bennett 286, Lumholtz 331-332). This dance or "nolávoa" (Lumholtz 332) of worship, means literally "to work" in the Tarahumara language. The Tarahumara male elders may point the finger at the younger ones asking why they do not work (Acuña 29). Lumholtz compared that "Never do man and woman dance together, as in the waltz and polka of civilised people" (332). From Lumholtz's experience, it is apparent that, dancing was enjoyed in couples and not related to a tribal survival purpose such as in Carlo Bonfiglioli's "Danzas circulares, figuras espiroideas and predominancia del patron levógiro entre los rarámuri" (2010). At the Semana Santa Celebration in Norogachic in 2011, the author asked an adult male about who was allowed to participate in the dance during the celebration. He was clear that women did not dance, but lamented that the

younger males just did not make the effort to dance (*work*) any more. According to tradition, if the Tarahumaras do not comply with Tata Dios' mandate to dance, the deity would plunge the world into darkness and everything would be destroyed. Acuña adds that "Hay que danzar para ganarse el gratificante tesgüino...para tener contento a *Onorúame*, el Dios que es Padre y Madre a la vez, para que el mundo no se acabe, para atraer la lluvia, para evitar la enfermedad, las catástrofes naturales, para estar alegres, para estar juntos y compartir" (29). [One must dance to earn the gratifying corn beer...in order for God to be content, the God that is Mother and Father at the same time, so that the world will not end, to attract the rain, to avoid illness and natural disasters, to be happy, to be together and to share.] On each patio, this ancient Tarahumara cultural tradition links the dancers with their identity and destiny.

Another persistent cultural trait in the sierra is the importance of the shaman (Bennett 278, 314, 360, 363), in spite of opposition from the Church. Bennett says that the shaman was always present on the ceremonial patio to celebrate births, deaths, the curing of fields and illnesses at native *fiestas*, which involve the cultural obligation to participate in the social drinking pattern, sacrifices, and dance. "It might be observed that the outstanding characteristic of the native fiestas is their silence. The words are not the centerpiece of the ceremony, because no ceremonial words are uttered" (Bennett 365). "The Tarahumara is not by nature a talkative person" (Bennett 187). During fiesta times, the chanter and/or shaman voice unintelligible syllables. Only until the twenty-first century with the notoriety of Don Erasmo Palma, native governor and musician from the

Norogachia area of the sierra, have words been assigned to the ceremonial celebrations. A later chapter will give specifics about his cultural contributions.

Although Bennett and Zingg observed that many Tarahumaras attended a Catholic mass on Sundays at the mission sites, an older tradition, the native sermon, was generally presented outside the *santuario* after mass. The non-Christian sermon was delivered by the governor and contained messages for living well, rather than an edification or a supplication to a higher being. The message was to encourage members to not fight, to help one another, and to live at peace. The pattern of isolation and its resulting independence were evident even at Sunday gatherings, where the men sat at some distance from each other and enjoyed the solitude, and men and women sat separately. The resistance to Mexican Jesuit and governmental attempts to organize the tribes into *reducciones* that Joseph Neumann wrote about during the seventeenth century is still very much a modern day social reality. Although the natives gather on Sundays for mass and native sermons at the mission sites, even in the twenty-first century, Tarahumaras still cling to the ancient tradition to live scattered a distance from neighbors and to continue to live semi-nomadic lifestyles as they travel from the sierra to *barranca* herds and crops in order to survive.

William Merrill

William Merrill writes in *Rarámuri Souls* (1988) that the weekly sermon is shared in a public venue for the purpose of the transmission of Tarahumara knowledge to the younger generation and as a reminder to the adult generation (62-63). The proper conduct of Tarahumara life is taught to children by the older society members in informal settings

as well. Children who are good thinkers, who learn responsibilities, are kind to others, and share willingly adhere to the standards of their elders and live a life that is derived from the good thoughts of “Our Father” and “Our Mother”—not like “The One Who Lives Below” (70). Interestingly, “non-Indian people do not figure in the speeches (77). (This is an interesting facet of the sermon text because only in two or three occasions do non-Tarahumara characters appear in the narrative of the traditional Tarahumara tales discussed in Chapter four of this study). The reciprocal relationship that the Tarahumaras sermons espouse and appear to have with their heavenly deities require that they have an obligation to “ask forgiveness,” which does not hold the same precepts as Christian repentance, but simply requests their presence and participation in ceremonies such as holding fiestas and dancing with the same steadfastness that their deities reciprocally provide in caring for the Rarámuri (67). Their benefits of rain for good crops and good health are reciprocal with their works such as dancing and observing celebrations, not with their faith in a deity.

William Merrill, curator of North American ethnology in the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., has conducted field and archival research in the northern part of Mexico and has published several works on the Tarahumara culture. His observations in *Rarámuri Souls* (1988) are specific to finding out how a primitive society, without higher educational institutions, transmits knowledge about their world. He posits that “small-scale societies cannot be portrayed as ideologically homogeneous” (191). His study affirms that “the reproduction of all knowledge” in a society involves two basic steps: “the transmission of information

through social practices, and the incorporation, organization, and elaboration of this information by individuals” (192). He believes that the reproduction of different kinds of knowledge requires both nondiscursive social practices and verbal communication in the private and in the public spheres, particularly in the widespread Rarámuri concept of soul. This native ideology is imbedded in the relevance of death and curing rituals.

Since fiestas and the ceremonial partaking of tesgüino are obligatory in the Tarahumara’s daily life in Rejogochi, Merrill noted the central place of drinking in the society and began to pursue interviews with the citizenry about its importance and effects. The responses about happenings while inebriated led to conversations about the departure of souls during drinking (8). However, natives were reluctant to have conversations with him in groups and even individually. He discovered that the Rarámuri seemed to be unanimous in public, but that there was a diversity of thought when in a private discussion. The concept of social harmony was more important than asserting a difference of opinion, in line with the “live in harmony” theme in their native sermons. Some believe that every Tarahumara has one or two large souls and several smaller ones that are the gauges for health and death. When inebriated, the large soul exits the body and the man falls asleep. When the soul awakes, it is because the soul returned. Curings are performed to fortify the soul and keep it from being sad, so that it will stay with the individual. To lose all souls is to be deceased.

Merrill’s study occurred almost exactly a century after Carl Lumholtz and his herd of burros and equipment rode south to study the Cave Dwellers of Mexico. Merrill had the advantage of already knowing about the flora, fauna, and customs in the sierra, since

he had already read about the ethnobotany studies, the cultural domestic practices, and the societal importance of the *fiesta* and *tesgüino* from those who had gone before him to the sierra. His studies have the benefit of knowledge documented by Lumholtz (1902), Bennett and Zingg (1935), and John Kennedy (1963, 1978), among others. Merrill's study took place in the pueblo of Rejogochi from 1977-1979 and again for several months in the early 1980s (Merrill 6) where he set out to study the Rarámuri world view. He was invited to drinking parties (*tesgüinadas*) in the pueblo and began to see how important this activity was in the culture. As he spent time in the field, he became better known in the community and learned more of the Rarámuri language, but still discovered that the philosophical conversations of the society and the extent of their knowledge are difficult to assess when their intellectual activities often do not take place in the public arena, but rather occur in private conversations among family members (4-5).

Merrill recalled Zingg's comments about the Tarahumara having "wooden" personalities with no "evidence of tenderness, affection, or caressing" (1937, 14-15), and that Zingg came to the conclusion that "only through drinking and participation in the...ceremonies introduced by Catholic missionaries were they able...to escape the dreary world provided by their culture" (Merrill 2; Zingg 1937, 14-15). John Kennedy wrote that "the religious beliefs of the Tarahumara are not elaborate...They neither have a written means of preserving a...body of myth nor an emphasis upon an oral tradition..." (1978:127). He came to the conclusion that the theoretical knowledge provided by earlier ethnographers were consistent enough to be regarded as a single perspective having three main points. 1) Rarámuri theoretical knowledge is simple and dispersed. 2) Within the

society there is significant variation in both the extent and the content of knowledge. 3) “This simplicity and diversity of thought are associated with, if not produced by, a general indifference to such knowledge, an attitude in keeping with their practical, materialistic orientation to life” (4).

Don Burgess

In the 1970s, several of the primary texts that reveal Tarahumara thought processes were documented by this prominent and prolific linguist, who spent over a decade in the Rocoibo area collecting native stories of the Tarahumara. He and his wife walked from village to village in a given direction until they encountered a village where they noticed a change in the dialect continuum. There they transcribed many stories while studying the language, and he was engaged with the Summer Institute of Linguistics to produce studies on Uto-Aztecan grammar, Western Tarahumara dialect, and other linguistic and literary endeavors (1970), (1977), (1979), (1984), to name a few. His Barranca Press website (www.barrancapress.com) states that he has written “books by, for and about the Ralámuli of the Sierra Madre in Chihuahua, Mexico.” A complete listing of his individual and collaborative publications is on his website. He is a prolific writer in many areas of Tarahumara culture and language. Additional information is given in an audio interview with Martínez (1977) that is housed at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Some of the publications by Don Burgess, which have spanned over five decades, are linguistic in nature and give tips on pronunciation for Alta, Baja, and Western Tarahumara dialects. Besides the publication of language acquisition and works of native folklore, which are being used as history texts in Mexican primary schools, Burgess has

also published medical how-to books to help the locals understand basic health and dietary information in the local dialects. He has written about Tarahumara traditions and histories, such as *Chistes De La Sierra Tarahumara/Jokes of the Sierra* (1987) and a book intended to educate outsiders on native customs, *Podrías Vivir Como Un Tarahumara?/Could You Live Like A Tarahumara?* (1977). He translated the New Testament into the Baja Tarahumara dialect (2008) and also translated a summary of the Old Testament (2013), as well as selected passages of the book of Psalms (2013). His most recent publications include a collection of newspaper reports written by his father at the historic 1961 opening of the CHEPE rail service, *Sierra Challenge: the Construction of the Chihuahua al Pacífico Railroad* (2013), and a Spanish version in 2014. His newest publication is an effort to preserve kinship terminology in the sierra, featuring Ganó, a mythical giant known in the sierra area (2014).

These and other transcriptions of Tarahumara oral tradition serve to record, perpetuate, and preserve the Tarahumara society, to educate monolingual and bilingual native speakers to learn to read in their own native language, to authenticate and reinforce customs and inherited responsibilities of the tribe, and also to introduce the stories to the outside world by the printing of several in Spanish, the mutually intelligible language of the indigenous and mestizos. There are works of fiction and non-fiction that attempt to explain the creation story (Cruz 2008, 13-16), the origin and importance of local landmarks and historic figures (Burgess 1975, 4), the customs and beliefs of the Tarahumara (Parra 116-119; Burgess 1975, 14-19), as well as those that offer fantastic

renditions of mythological creatures able to complete cruel or whimsical feats (Irigoyen Rascón 108-110) (López Batista 27-35).

Don Burgess, linguist, author, missionary and student of the Tarahumara, reports that although the Mexican anthropologist, Carlos Basauri, and American professors Wendell Bennett and Robert Zingg were not able to collect very many Tarahumara tales during their months of field work in the 1930s, after twelve years of living with the Tarahumara and learning their language, he and a colleague, Ellen Carson were able to gather over one hundred tales (12; Merrill 4). Donald Burgess proposes that the Tarahumara are reluctant to share their stories with outsiders now because of the tales of distrust passed down from the encounter with the first Spaniards.

The Rarámuri have learned to avoid the topics which might evoke an unfavorable response, such as their *tesgüino* consumption ceremonies that seemed pagan and excessive to the Jesuits, and their belief in a polytheistic deity, Onorúame, Father-God-Sun and Mother-God Moon, which may seem blasphemous to the Christians who believe in the One True God (Burgess 1971, 12). However, as evidence of the syncretic type of religion that has resulted over the years, Merrill and others have observed that the Catholic Church's influence has perhaps been more ritualistic borrowing than an actual change in religious beliefs (Merrill 46; Fried 1977, 268; Bennett and Zingg 1935). Although the most persistent concern of the missionaries was to convert the natives to Christianity and to baptize them, it is observed that only the elements from Christian rituals that reinforced their native beliefs were incorporated into the native ceremonies, such as the use of the crucifix and ritual gestures in the form of a cross, which figure prominently in Rarámuri

curing rituals, and the adoption of major Catholic fiesta days, including the Semana Santa rituals and the dances of the *matachines*. The author has also seen a kind of reverse terminology adaptation when in 2016, in a text message to the author, a Protestant missionary who lives in the sierra, as well as a Catholic priest during mass at the Semana Santa celebration in 2011 referred to the Christian God as Onorúame.

In addition to averting direct communication and personal contact with outsiders on a daily basis, Don Burgess indicates that there are numerous examples of avoidance techniques and secrecy woven in the folklore itself. “Many of these examples reflect the heritage of the people and the survival situation in which they live (1971, 15)”. One tale, “Origin del marrano”, demonstrates a moral lesson of correct priorities over the materially powerful when a wealthy store owner and his family are hiding in the house to avoid giving food (or to keep from lying) to a poor man. The poor beggar turned out to be a god and cast a spell on the rich family, turning them into pigs because they were selfish. The heroine Tarahumara cook, who had shared food with the man, became owner of the store and the pigs (1971, 9-10). The reward and punishment for adhering to the Tarahumara obligation to share with others or not, *korima*, is in full display and woven into the characters who do and do not follow the tradition. Don Burgess has also published a variety of texts of an educational interest. One such text was published in 1987 and lists several useful phrases from Spanish to the Tarahumara language, *Ralámuli ra'chárúami: frases Tarahumara-Español*.

In order to sum up the significant impressions of some outsiders who have come face to face with the Rarámuri of the Sierra Tarahumara, beginning in the seventeenth

century through the present day, we look at the testimonials of the Jesuit journals that were originally written in Latin in the seventeenth century by dedicated European holy men, who were literally on the front lines of either a merciful mission to save the souls of the pagans as the Great Commission commands Christians to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV) or were part of a padre-politico-for profit operation in a European invasion to overpower an unsuspecting primitive people to instigate the upheaval and destruction of an agrarian, peaceful, yet primitive culture in a remote mountain that would be forever altered. History will decide. These Spanish priests were the first aliens to have contact with the non-literate native society on indigenous land, and although many writings were destroyed in the rebellions, the surviving documentation of learned priests are valuable historical documents that give the only impressions available of that place and moment in time. The interaction with the Europeans resulted in a number of changes in their indigenous way of life, “but the Rarámuri of the sixteenth century would have little difficulty recognizing their descendants of the twentieth” (Merrill 44), or the twenty-first centuries. The ancient language is still spoken, the patterns of living are still dispersed with agriculture being the main type of subsistence, social interactions are kept in small circles, and knowledge is even now shared in intimate family groups and through the enactment of ritualistic ceremonies on the patios.

Following the initial Spanish encounter with the Tarahumara, anthropologists and other scientists began to approach the lifestyle and customs from a scientific mode rather

than from an evangelical effort to impose societal change and beliefs. The Norwegian anthropologist Carl Lumholtz was able to observe and write about the ancient native patterns he discerned as distinct from the newly acquired mestizo-influenced elements. The world traveler and anthropologist pursued the *gentile* Tarahumara, rather than those whose lives had been altered by mestizo influence, whom he initially linked with the Cave Man from the Rockies, an extension of the Pueblo dwellers. As if he had encountered alien beings from another planet, he took hair samples and body measurements to his scientific seminars to share with other scientists from around the world and in 1893 exhibited his Tarahumara and Tepehuán display at the World's Fair (xiii). He dwelled with the Tarahumara for a year and with the Coras and Huichols for an extension of time during his repeated returns to the region (xiii). The documentation that resulted from his studies were instrumental in new learning about new plant discoveries, religious ceremonies, native fear of camera technology, archeological finds and burial sites, cave dwellers, the Tarahumara physique, native sorcery, and many other novel cultural elements. This new information opened the doors to an *Unknown Mexico*, one that was hidden in the mountains and canyons of Mexico beyond previous academic knowledge.

Carl Lumholtz had a noble sense of urgency in his mission when he stated that “If they are studied before they too, have lost their individuality or been crushed under the heels of civilisation, much light may be thrown not only upon the early people of this country but upon the first chapters of the history of mankind (xvii)”. His observations from scientific experience and a global perspective predicted that the noble race would soon disappear as time passed and the race became assimilated to the mestizo world. He sensed

that even the idyllic spaces where they resided would be lost. “The vast and magnificent virgin forests and the mineral wealth of the mountains will not much longer remain the exclusive property of my dusky friends; but I hope that I shall have rendered them, a service by setting them this modest monument (his study), and that civilised man will be the better for knowing of them (xvii)”.

Wendell Bennett and Robert Zingg built on the earlier five-year study of the tribes of the Western sierra by Carl Lumholtz who employed a corps of scientists, anthropologists, a mineralist, geographers, photographers and cameras, and others who traveled with the best scientific instruments, and almost one hundred animals of burden (x). The Bennett and Zingg study on the natural environment and culture of the Tarahumara expanded the details on geography, ethnology, ethnobotany, and customs and traditions of the Tarahumara in the Samachique area. Their work was, in many ways, an update completed four decades after the Lumholtz study, which was the first scientific documentation of a journey to the sierra and the Other, and described and analyzed the “mysterious race of unchanged primitives (Bennett and Zingg 24)” not only among the Tarahumara, but also compared the Huichol, the Mayo (156), mestizos (159) and other tribes.

The linguistic studies and documentation of folktales, medical writings, and biblical translations in the local native dialects have been the unique contribution of Don Burgess who was introduced to the Tarahumara as a teenager, and like other visitors, has lived for an extended period of time in the sierra. His collaboration with native writers and Mexican writers has given prominence to the Tarahumara language and people. His

Barranca Press offers free printed copies and recordings of some publications in order to expand awareness and knowledge of the Tarahumara and their history and culture. Countless of monolingual native adults have learned to read with the primers and simple stories he has published for just that purpose.

The longevity of William Merrill's research on the reproduction of knowledge among the Tarahumara give the interested reader an update from Bennett and Zingg's descriptions of five decades earlier about their lifestyle, their practices, and their ceremonies that figure mightily in their belief in the concept of the human soul. Merrill describes in detail the importance of the native sermons, which are presented for guidance on the correct way to live, and proposes that the messages postulate the existence of only three kinds of beings in the world: humans (only the Tarahumara; the heavenly deities (Tata Dios and Madre Luna), and the Devil, although these categories are not directly pointed out in the speech (70-71). These characters play important roles in the obligatory behavior of Tarahumara and in their success as "good thinkers". The deities are to be emulated and the Devil is to be avoided. The Devil is the father of all other humans (chabochi), however Onorúame, his brother, is the only giver of breath and the body and souls are seen as a house and its inhabitants (94). The souls keep the body warm inside, move body parts, give the body strength, and are the thinking mechanism for each human. "Thinking well (98)" is demonstrated by those who can initiate work projects on their own and work without coercion as they relate well to others. Although the knowledge about souls and their relevance in matters of life and death is varied among members, the sharing of a social position on these matters is reproduced in small family settings and the beliefs

are enacted through willing and regular participation in the ceremonies and fiestas of the Tarahumara.

CHAPTER IV

THE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RITES THAT CONSERVE TARAHUMARA TRADITION

“Hoy en día compartimos nuestro territorio con otros pueblos (con los blancos); por eso, aunque sea entre nosotros debemos guardar nuestras leyes y no desearle el mal a nadie ni decirle que no es de este suelo, para que de esta manera poniendo el ejemplo podamos ser entendidos y a la vez podamos vivir en paz. (testimonio de un anciano de Norogachi) (Turrent 2008).”

“Today we share our territory with other groups (with the whites); for that reason, even though it is among ourselves that we must conserve our laws, and not desire ill will toward anyone, nor say to another that he is not from this land, so that by showing this example, we may able to be understood and at the same time, we can live in peace. (testimony of an elder from Norogachi) (Turrent 2008).”

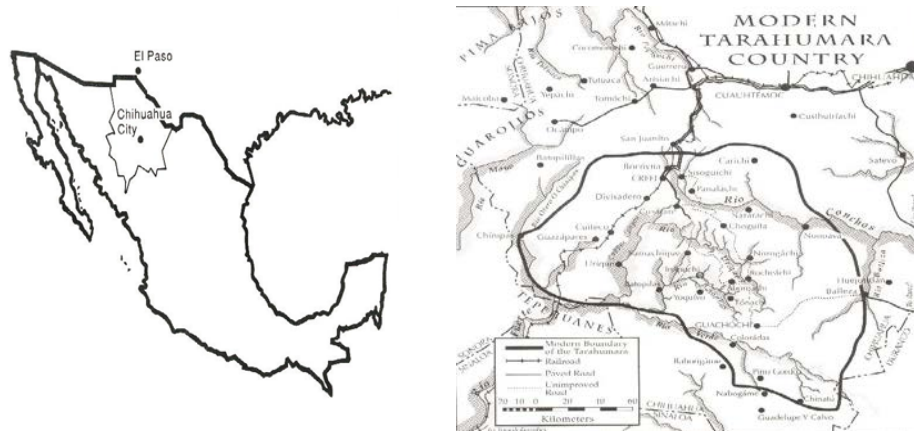


Figure 4. Map of Modern Tarahumara lands. http://www.questconnect.org/tara_maps.htm.

In order to understand the active and passive rites of the Tarahumara, it is helpful to consider both the perceptions documented by earlier observers, as well the geographic locale of the sierra setting. The indigenous Tarahumara reside in the southwestern part of Chihuahua, Mexico in the area known as the Sierra Tarahumara, mainly because the tribe occupies the region. (Figure 4) For hundreds of years, the Rarámuri have had to share their seemingly Eden-like corner of Paradise, their isolated territory, with European visitors to who have intruded on their space and have tried to impose new ways of life. The indigenous Rarámuri, conservative guardians of native tradition, live in a ruggedly beautiful space that lies within the heights of the Sierra Madre Occidental, a large mountain range system that extends from northwest to southeast through Northwestern and Western Mexico, along the Gulf of California, as part of the American Cordillera that runs southward through Central and South America.

The vast open spaces with very few settlements give credence to an outsider's impression of the natives' lifestyle as "primitive," since many live in rustic dwellings or outdoors and/or with their animals in the desolate caves among the mountains and seemingly bottomless canyons without modern amenities like running water and electricity. (Figure 5)



Figure 5. Dwellings. (L) Cave dwelling in Creel. <http://www.trainweb.org/dunn/2005d11a/>. (R) Rural dwelling in Guachochi <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/321514860870415531/>

Some modern day Tarahumaras have moved to urban areas and are considered to be a kind of sell-out to the dyed-in-the-wool highland *ranchería* dwellers who are monolingual speakers of Rarámuri or may only know a few words of Spanish, the prestige language in Mexico. Some indigenous communities, such as those who have relocated to Ladrilleras in the northern suburbs of Chihuahua City, support themselves by making bricks to sell to builders in the area. In conversations with the community members, there are several who lament the loss of their Tarahumara culture since moving to the city. Other Tarahumaras have settled in El Paso or Chihuahua to beg, for *korima*, help for the journey, or to another smaller pueblo only for a short time to work in seasonal agricultural farms such as in Delicias, while others find conclaves of like-minded tribesman and live for longer periods in city government-supported housing, where they still carry on many of the native traditions. However, it is those indigenous who have sustained themselves in their *rancherías* and who have engaged themselves in the conservation of the active and passive rites that today perpetuate Tarahumara tradition and resist mestizo infiltration. Those anchored sierra dwellers are engaged in traditional Tarahumara activities: herding

goats daily from *rancherías* in the sierra or barrancas, practicing *korima* among Rarámuri, wearing some variety of native clothing, participating faithfully in curing ceremonies and ceremonial *fiestas/tesgüinadas*, believing that one must avoid sadness to protect his/her soul from loss, working to be good runners and having faith in sorcery and gambling as integral parts of the highly prized footraces. Those who reject mestizo interference in Tarahumara matters take pride in keeping authentic Rarámuri traditions alive and as a matter of habit, avoid encounters with mestizos (Miller 87).

One of the reasons for Tarahumara longevity in the sierra is their adaption to the ruggedness of the land they inhabit (Sheridan 1). Upon their arrival to the Sierra Tarahumara, many visitors have documented a sense of awe and human frailty at the majesty of the topography and have felt a sense of powerlessness at the sight of the huge canyons, distant mesas, frigid mountain tops, and seemingly bottomless *barrancas* that extend from Sonora to Sinaloa and Durango to the south.

One must be mindful of the isolation of the region and the distance from other civilizations when reading the thoughts of observers and the native stories from this region, which are uniquely expressed in the ceremonies and traditions based on the group's collective cultural knowledge. The archeologist Wendell Bennett wrote that "Isolation is the outstanding characteristic of Tarahumara life...in the mountains...where only the tireless missionaries, and the equally tireless miners of gold, silver, and copper, venture to go" (183). Carl Lumholtz faced "An ocean of mountains spread out before us and below seemed impossible for us to descend...the declivity of the slope is...in some places only about a foot wide, there is no saving it if an animal loses its foothold..." (108-114). While

us...the plateau is...like the edge of a gigantic saw...the mountainside...so steep that it dealing with the politics of the Cora and Huichol tribes who were guiding him over the terrain with concern about eminent rain one day, and still in a quandry about how or if his request for recovering skulls would be granted, Carl Lumholtz exclaimed that Father Ortega was right when he decried the sierra: “It is so wild and frightful to behold that its ruggedness, even more than the arrows of its warlike inhabitants, took away the courage of the conquerors, because not only did the ridges and valleys appear inaccessible, but the extended range of towering mountain peaks confused even the eye” (530).



Figure 6. Newly paved road to Batopilas Canyon-Photo contributed by Cory Fierro.

A more recent observation from Bernard Fontana, a former field historian with the University of Arizona Library, describes the impact on one's senses upon seeing the Sierra Tarahumara for the first time from a small airplane buzzing along at twelve thousand feet, and decides on the exclamation, "Overwhelming" (Fontana 1). (Figure 6) He recalled Father Juan Ysidro Fernández de Abee's letter of July 8, 1744 and repeats that, "I cannot say with certitude what the distance is from this mission of Jesús Carichi to its pueblos de visita and rancherías...to state properly...the distances, routes and directions from one place to another, one would have to have a tame bumblebee or honeybee and watch the paths it followed" (1). The vast sierra and its surrounding landscape serve as background for the enactment of the traditions and ideologies of the Tarahumara as they perpetually care for the land as Tata Dios commanded their ancestors.

To gain a better understanding of Tarahumara ideologies and traditions and how they are seemingly imbedded in the sierra, one must also be familiar with the two distinct ecological zones between which some of the semi-nomadic group lives and travels seasonally. Each of the two well-defined topographic regions, the Alta Tarahumara (highlands) and the Baja (lowlands) has very different climates, wildlife, demographic distribution patterns, and resources, and therefore figure differently in the living experience of the tribe members. In the chilly mountainous region, with an average sixteen degrees Centigrade, July and August require a jacket when the sun goes down, and it begins to snow in the forest areas during the last days of October and continues until the spring. Crops are planted in June among highland fields surrounded by rich pine trees, oaks, poplars, and many bushes (Pennington 32-33). The variability in precipitation differs from

year to year in the highland area of Guachochi, with 2011 being one of the lowest amounts in the last decade. On the other hand, the deep, rugged canyons receive a large percentage of its annual precipitation from June through August, and the average temperature is forty degrees Centigrade with a dry tropical climate where citrus fruit is plentiful and medicinal plants are gathered, preserved, and used by the locals in traditional ceremonies and sold in the larger populations such as Chihuahua City and as far as El Paso, Texas. The semi-nomadic Tarahumaras routinely abandon the canyons during the sweltering summer months and travel with their herds to their highland dwelling until cold weather sets in. Some of the principal lowland areas are: Copper Canyon, Urique Canyon, Batopilas Canyon, Candameña Canyon, and Sinforosa Canyon (<http://www.texascenter.org/publications/forestry.pdf>, 10).

For centuries, the forest areas of the Sierra Tarahumara have been sources of livelihood for the indigenous people, who conservatively use the wood for their dwellings, gather edible plants and medicinal herbs, and employ other natural materials to make items of daily use, such as baskets/containers, drums, and violins. However, the traditional use of such forest resources has been altered because of the commercialization of the forests and some changes in agricultural practices. According to “The Forest Industry in the Sierra Madre of Chihuahua: Social, Economic, and Ecological Impacts”, <http://www.texascenter.org/publications/forestry.pdf>, the establishment of sawmills and the necessary construction of blacktop roads to accommodate the transport of the wood to market in the forest industry in the highlands, together with the changes in agriculture from a tribal ownership to an ejidal form of organization, during the years 1920 to 1992, have had a

significant impact on life in the indigenous communities in the highlands and the lowlands. The cultivation of marijuana and opium poppy began to spread to specific lowland areas of the sierra around 2000, notably around Batopilas. Some farmers began to cultivate these illegal crops in order to supplement their income. They have become lucrative, and this has produced complicated social, economic, and political consequences for the region. Often, the government sprays the forests to destroy the crops, thus destroying plants and insects that are important elements of Tarahumara ceremonies. These crop reforms have realigned communities' traditional forms of organization, and the effects have weakened the strength of the native authorities and the communities' internal cohesion.

In some regions of the sierra, the indigenous communities openly resist the continuous logging of the forest, mining efforts, and ploys for control of natural water supplies, while in other areas, the indigenous people have gradually become accustomed to the economic changes (<http://www.texascenter.org/publications/forestry.pdf>, 16). The loss of forest cover in the Sierra Tarahumara as a result of current logging practices has caused erosion, which reduces the filtration of rainwater into the aquifers, which then affects the quantity and quality of water in natural waterways. An indication of the problems occurring in the region's water system, partially resulting from drought conditions, is that Basaseachi Falls, one of America's highest waterfalls located in one of the state's few protected areas, dried up for the first time in recorded history in 1999 (12).

In the sierra, Rarámuri survival depends on a precarious economy that is based on agriculture and herding. Their sheep and goats are used primarily as a fertilizer source for crops, rather than a regular meat source. These animals are sacrificed and consumed during

religious festivities. The flocks provide wool that is made into blankets and the milk is used to make cheese (Irigoyen-Rascón 70). Keeping the flocks healthy and protected is essential to the Tarahumara herdsman/herdswoman who travels seasonally between the Alta and Baja Sierra Tarahumara.

Along with the subsequent listing of time-tested native traditions, which will be presented here going forward in bold type, **the practice of herding flocks** to seek grazing lands, serves to conserve Tarahumara tradition in the sierra. This practice is a trait common to other semi-nomadic groups, such as those in central Asia and the Sahel region of West Africa. This transhumance way of life with seasonal crops is common in regions of scarce arable land. Bennett and Zingg observed that due to the scarcity of archaeological remains in the highlands, the sierra had not been a profitable area for crops before the seventeenth century introduction of domestic animals, mainly goats and sheep, and their resultant manure (9). In some of the most traditional populations, the archeologists observed in the 1930s, the young Tarahumara women and children followed the flocks over the mountains alone for days at a time. This sierra reality and conditioning of traveling alone during childhood with the herds perhaps plays a part in the stoic solitude and lack of social behavior in the formation of the Tarahumara adult (Bennett and Zingg 15) until *fiesta* time under the influence of the ceremonial *tesgüino* when even the most docile give in to “drunkenness and vice” (Dunne 120). While traveling in the sierra in the years from 2003-2017, it has not been uncommon for this author to see shepherdesses still wandering the *sierra* on a daily basis.

In his autobiography, *Los pájaros chuyacos* (1992), Don Erasmo Palma narrates about his early childhood and finding himself alone, having to care for the animals and to fend for himself while under the care of irresponsible older siblings, while his parents were gone overnight to a *tesgüinada* (108-109). He compares the plight of such victim children who in isolation herded animals alone to be like a little *chivito* who slipped on a loose rock at the mercy of a coyote when a rock hit him in the head (8-9). The goat and coyote made a promise to not tell Mama what happened—just as siblings did to protect themselves from punishment. He blames the dangerous plight of younger children who have lost their lives or been abused by older siblings on the frequent ceremonial intoxication of parents who are less than doting and who indulge in drinking *tesgüino* and abandon their children for days in a row.

Robert Zingg (2001) proposed that the Tarahumara pattern of engaging the children in herding is one of the most “spurious” elements in Tarahumara life (246-247). His Western perspective opines that the practice of herding inhibits the personality development of the youth, and seems to be the most important factor underlying the wooden personalities and manners of the group. The herd leaves the corral for grazing pastures in the morning and then returns in the afternoon with shepherd and dogs keeping the group in tow. Tarahumara children learn early and well the topography of the sierra and where the best pastures are located. Portable corrals house the herd several nights in a row until the manure is an appropriate depth to spread over agricultural fields. Then the portable corral is moved a bit along the way to fertilize the next spot (Fontana 41). The pastoral setting with steep mountains and cascading canyons also serves as the setting for

many Tarahumara folk tales that render a fictitious narrative with a flavor of reality about the adventures of a lone *pastor* who must search for a cave to sleep in, who becomes bewitched on the journey, or who encounters a bear or another animal of prey and must take heroic measures to protect the lives of the flock. The juvenile shepherds of the highlands learn self-sufficiency and responsibility early in life.

In contrast with the cooler highland temperatures, the lowlands are tropical in nature and more isolated due to the inaccessibility of precarious roads. The nomads and their herds show up in the canyons during the Winter months. The goats graze along the canyon ledges and are visible as one descends along the narrow road. One of those towns at the bottom of a canyon about sixty-five kilometers and four hours driving in first gear below Samachique is Batopilas, a historic former mining town that still has *gambusinos* prospecting in the arroyos and an area that often records some of the hottest temperatures in the state of Chihuahua during the summer months. (Figure 7) Due to the moist, hot weather conditions and the river that runs through the middle of Batopilas, the Pan American Health Organization has cited Batopilas as a spot where malaria is on the rise as recently as 2011. (file:///C:/Users/Joan/Downloads/PAHO-Report-2011-Regional.pdf).

In addition to the Batopilas Canyon, there are three other large canyons in the area known as the Copper Canyon, each with a depth of more than five thousand five hundred



Figure 7. Goats that dot the cliffs near the road to Batopilas Canyon.
https://www.google.com/search?q=goats+on+road+to+batopilas&rlz=1C1LENN_enUS513US516&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=662&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj58pywoNfRAhWkg1QKHR9JDCMQsAQIGQ&dpr=1#imgrc=NrR2-B8KRTYbcM%3A

feet (Raaf 7). Bananas, oranges, and lemons grow abundantly in the Batopilas, Sinforosa, and Témoris Canyons, in a very different climate than the uplands. It is common to see marijuana-harvesting trucks in front of houses on the only street through town in Batopilas. The year-round warmth and moisture of the canyons give the Tarahumara rich and varied native plant products which they enjoy and preserve. To a non-native, this country seems like the Wild West, but to the Tarahumara, it is a familiar safe haven. The canyon dwellers have easy access to a fresh plant diet, as well as a commercial benefit of trading the fruit and other native canyon plants for goods or income. Even though there is very little vehicle traffic in and out of the canyon due to difficult roads and a hostile

atmosphere of competitive narco commerce, herders and their animals roam rather freely during the Winter, and most inhabitants of the surrounding area travel by foot for miles during a single day.



Figure 8. Lining up in the "lunchroom" in Yerbabuena. Photo by Joan Barrett in 2005.

The tradition of saving hair clippings, like the practice of herding livestock, is reflected in the traditional tales of the Tarahumara. This conserving practice is perpetuated as a cautionary tale of desired behavior in Ra'ósari (1994) by Dolores Batista, one of the few female native published writers, who documented a tale in Tarahumara (26) and in Spanish (27) that her father passed down to her about a family who trimmed their childrens' hair. The first child was told to gather his hair from the floor so that it would not mix with the subsequent children's clippings. The parents instructed each of their

offspring to gather and bury their locks so that they would not scatter. When the children asked about what would happen if they did not do so, the explanation given was that upon one's death, an accounting of the hairs of each person's head will be requested. If one cannot find his or her hair, there will be gnashing of teeth, weeping, and wailing, and said person will be given dog hair or the hair of another person. This tradition plays out in the Batopilas Canyon, in a village named Yerbabuena, which is accessible by foot or via a one-lane gravel road that is etched into the mountainside and is only attempted by native government agency drivers or other brave souls. Most of the small population is monolingual Rarámuri and hold very conservative beliefs. The ancient tradition of protecting hair clippings is very much alive in this small society. Although the Batopilas Canyon has a history of contact with mestizos due to the bonanza silver mine purchased around 1880 by Alexander Robey Shepard (Fisher 1), governor of the District of Colombia 1873-1874, other *chabochis* have traveled there during the first part of the twenty-first century to offer practical services such as haircuts and medical appointments. Such a group, including this author, offered medical services and haircuts during a 2005 trip (Figure 8), but the male school teacher would only allow the male students to receive them. After each haircut, the student promptly gathered all traces of his locks from the floor and scurried away. There was not a hair left on the floor to sweep into the trash.

The Tarahumara farmers and hunters who live in the canyons, such as Batopilas, care for their crops and tend animals throughout the winter months after being in the cooler mountains during the warm, wet summer months. Various Tarahumara traditional tales take place in a lowland setting near a body of water and tell of huge snakes that lurk under

the rivers in the gorges and crave the blood of children and of half-snake/half-woman reptiles who transform themselves in order to be with a lover (Mares, 1975, 5-13).

The ethnobotany of both the sierra and gorges are described in chapters eight through ten of Bennett and Zingg's work, giving a detailed report on the one hundred and fifty specimens gathered in their study, including those of practical use and those of ceremonial use, including *jikuri* or peyote (134). Tarahumara beliefs indicate that peyote has the power to protect the corn crops and to protect the sierra dwellers from lightning. References are made to Old Deer and Old Rabbit and the memory of when they roamed more abundantly over the area providing an abundance of food. The canyon-based peyote is also considered to be a remedy for snakebites as it blinds the snake, preventing it from seeing people (Irigoyen 154).

The processes of perpetuating the active and passive Tarahumara traditions have many elements in common with other cultures in that the enactment of said customs (the active, visible observation of traditions) serve to educate the individual about the patterns of thoughts and beliefs (the passive, mental tenets maintained). This passive process of beliefs, by which an individual follows the norms and beliefs of group behavior with little deliberate effort or training to keep a past heritage moving toward a present society, is expressed outwardly by the an active enactment of traditions (Zingg 2001, 239-240). An ideal culture is one that offers ample resources for the needs and interests of each individual, but no culture provides every individual with perfection. Cultures that are "genuine" in the sense that they provide ample resources for a full and happy life also offer sufficient adjustment to the natural environment, and are resistant to outside forces.

Zingg labels other cultures to be “spurious” (242), that is, that they defeat the individuals who participate in them and reach eventual extinction. The Tarahumara culture is neither all “genuine” nor completely “spurious,” but according to Zingg, these terms are to be considered to be antithetical poles. All cultures may be evaluated on a scale between the two extremes as to how they satisfy the individual’s needs, equip him for living in their environments, natural, social, and religious, and how they endure successfully against outside forces (241).

Tarahumara culture may be deemed “genuine” in one respect, because it supports the group by its aboriginal methods and provides a close ecological adjustment to the sierra environment. The cold highlands, the scarce rainfall, the stony terraces are difficult, but the people build their own homes and storehouses out of available stone and lumber found in the sierra and the barrancas. However, the challenging living conditions create the need to be a semi-nomadic group that moves seasonally from house to house, according to the crop season, which leaves the household items such as a *metate* and the *petate* vulnerable to theft or damage and disperses family members to live in isolation from the group so that there is enough land to grow crops that will feed a family. This “spurious” value of causing cultural defeat is realized in the Rarámuri community due to the very small effort of methods set up to adjust individuals to each other into well-rounded personalities. The children learn early to be alone with the animals and miss out on essential developmental features of socialization. One of the “spurious” features is the isolation of the children when they tend sheep, and the isolation of the families during the winter months into

scattered caves and rancherías except when cooperative labor or ceremonies bring the people together on *fiesta* days (246).

Many aspects of Tarahumara traditions are addressed in a brief text by Don Burgess, first published in 1975, with a title that asks the reader, *¿Podrías vivir como un tarahumara?/Could you live like a Tarahumara?* In this work, he describes many aspects of traditions that identify the Rarámuri way of life: native dress, cuisine, home style, hunting practices, political organization, social practices, sports, music, environment language, and survival tactics. These descriptions are fairly monocultural in that these elements vary little between the highland and lowland areas, although there are indeed pockets in the sierra with unique traditions, and as a general rule, inhabitants of the highlands have had less exposure to outside influences. Whereas most of the Tarahumara traditions could be grouped in the active class, since the fiestas, running contests, language, and native dress are those that the observer sees and witnesses in outward concrete actions, it is the silent Rarámuri thought process, the passive the memory of the indwelling spiritual forces, the strong beliefs in honoring the legacy of Los Padres, and being “he who walks well” that guide the tribe to hold as sacred and to thus actively conserve the reenactment of the native traditions.

The Tarahumara traditional clothing is customarily worn on a daily basis throughout the state of Chihuahua and is quite identifiable in public, although many men now wear jeans as the continuum of mestizo influence has caused a change in dress in some places. However, many native men from Yerba Buena, Batopilas, Guachochi, and Samachique in particular, and in smaller villages off the roadways, still wear a *zapeta*,

often colloquially called a *taparrabo*, a folded piece of white cloth that is worn in a triangle much like a cloth diaper, even in cold weather. The long ends are tied at the waist, and the third point is brought through the legs and secured by a woven girdle called a *faja*, with the legs being exposed to the elements. A hand-made gathered cotton shirt of a bright color accompanies the *zapeta*, and this combination is seen year round in both the highlands and lowlands regions. Both men and women wear hand-made sandals or *huaraches* made of leather straps attached to a sole that is drawn on cardboard and then cut from a used tire in modern times. The author had her custom-made tire-based sandals made after being approached by a local entrepreneurial craftsman carrying a piece of cardboard and straps of leather while standing outside in Samachique in 1999.

There has been less Westernization in the dress of Tarahumara women, partly because they are less likely to be exposed to or influenced by outside forces. The *rancherías* and homes are their domestic base, and they seldom have reason to travel outside the local area. The women wear the same type of puffy shirt/blouse as the men along with several layers of long, full skirts. The only variation in clothing occurs in the winter when the corner of a heavy wool blanket made from as many as ten sheep is draped over the left shoulder. The male wearer then wraps himself in the blanket, often leaving the right hand exposed. The women wear a colorful cotton headscarf while the men sport a long distinctive head wrap (*kowera*), that is wrapped around the head and has pointed ends which hang with their long, dark hair (Burgess *Podrías* 11-13). (Figure 9)



Figure 9. Traditional native clothing. The above photos (clockwise) depict traditional native dress full shirts worn by females, head dress and zapeta worn by men, native dress worn by an 8-year-old student in Yerbabuelna in 2004, and traditional huaraches with tire tread soles.

Although one might occasionally see a Tarahumara man wear a cowboy hat or jeans, the clothes of the authentic Tarahumara do not deviate much in style, much like their native traditions. It seems that the seamstresses have one single pattern for all shirts and blouses, just like the tribe's unique template for survival.

These portrayals of cultural traditions in Burgess' text serve to open the door to a variety of philosophies on "how-to" hunt, survive, organize, speak, and live like a Tarahumara. Being aware of nature and sierra surroundings is important because one needs to know that some plants need food and music, and if they don't get them, grave consequences can occur. If one walks alone in the forest, one must watch out for little

elves who live below the earth, because they, too, can cause great harm (54). The depictions enhance the reader's understanding not only of what the traditions are, but also how their belief system and customs have shaped the past, present and future of the sierra tribe, how the passive and active traditions, both the sacred and (1965) profane activities and lifestyles, have served as a stabilizing force to validate, conserve, and perpetuate the Tarahumara tradition.

In addition to the many photos of native dress taken during his expeditions of 1890-1895, which have seen little change over a century later, Carl Lumholtz also documented and compared the two areas of the sierra environment and their impact on the health of the highland and lowland dwellers. In the mountains, "Lung diseases are here unknown" (207). An American doctor stated to Lumholtz that "in the mountains they are distressingly healthy. Despite a complete defiance of every sanitary arrangement, with the graveyards, the sewers, and a tannery at the river's edge, no diseases originate here" (208). Lumholtz testifies from personal experience that "Down in the barrancas, however, where the heat often becomes excessive, the climate is far from healthy, and I have seen even Indians ill with fever and ague, contracted generally during the rainy season" (208). "The wonderful health these people enjoy is really their most attractive trait...it could hardly be otherwise in this delightful mountain air, laden with the invigorating odour of the pines...the electrifying effect of being close to nature's heart. In the highlands, where the people live longer than in the barrancas, it is not infrequent to meet persons who are at least a hundred years old. Long life is what they all pray for" (241). The tradition for approaching the

illnesses contracted in the barrancas is to conduct curing ceremonies and apply herbal remedies.

Although few traditions are exclusive to the highlands or the lowlands, Jerome Levi suggests in his article, “The Bow and the Blanket...” (1998) that when some material items are produced or used only for local consumption rather than exclusively for trade, “they may become part of an oppositional discourse expressing local identity and tactical resistance to the homogenizing consequences of commoditization” (300). These material objects, such as native dress, are not simply relics from the past, but serve instead as active strategies of identity and tactical resistance for the present. His study took place in the Cuervo district, an isolated area in the Batopilas Canyon that retained a greater number of ancient ways and material goods of the *gentiles* in comparison with the more Christianized Tarahumaras who lived near larger populations. Levi’s list of material goods that had survived mestizo influence in Cuervo centers on the retention of woolen skirts and blankets, solid colored *fajas*, and bows and arrows among the Gentiles of the Cuervo district (317). In an effort to “selectively deploy their material culture as an idiom expressing independence from, and resistance to, the encroachment of Western capitalism” (301), the *gentiles* of Cuervo employed two complementary strategies: incorporating new ideas into their world *visión* and retaining traditional material goods and ways.

Just as the early Tarahumara converts incorporated new Christian ideas with their traditional beliefs, such as accepting the Christian cross because it had similar features to the native cross that represented the Tarahumara world, many Rarámuris incorporated

mestizo ways into their clothing options. Historically, sandals were made from plant fiber. Later, when animals provided leather products, soles were made from hide. As used tires became available and plentiful, soles began to be made from the durable castaways. Just as the evolution of foot wear materials, a change was made from woolen to cotton manta for construction of the ethnically distinctive garment in many areas of the sierra (Levi 304). However, in the research area of Cuervo, Levi found that woolen skirts and blankets were still employed (305). Many aspects of active and passive traditions that identify the Rarámuri way of life, native by many of the locals Tarahumaras instead of using the newer cotton *manta*. The most common reasons given for why woolen skirts were preferred over those of *manta* were that the wool was more durable, did not have to be purchased from the mestizos, unlike the cotton would be, and the wool could be manufactured by the people themselves. The ideas of self-sufficiency and cultural autonomy were more important than choosing the ease of modern ways, and were actions of resistance to mestizo hegemony dress, indigenous cuisine, style of homes, hunting practices, political organization, social practices, religious practices, and the retention of their native language, are material and performance symbols with encoded religious and social meaning that symbolize a form of Tarahumara resistance to Western ways (317) and perpetuate the indigenous cultural stronghold.

It is this continuum of a conformity-to-nonconformity ratio to mestizo ways that tend to categorize the Tarahumara societies between those who accepted Christian baptism, the *pagótame*, and those *gentiles* who fled the priests' teachings and destroyed missions. Ana Pintado says that the adherence to Christianity was dependent upon how

far or near the native lived from the Jesuit mission in the early encounters. Religious elements were and are not homogeneous in the sierra. Ana Pintado noticed that those who lived closer to the missions tended to be more involved with religious fiestas, and those who chose to live farther away from the settlements are often *gentiles*, who are more traditional in ideology (12) and tend to adhere only to native fiestas and traditions. Western influence, with the domestication of animals, saw the Tarahumara transform from a combination of agriculture-hunting-gathering to one of semi-nomadic agriculture. Roaming long distances was reduced to areas between highlands and lowlands where they tend their flocks and crops. Some active and passive traditions have not changed among the Tarahumara for centuries; however, the natives have incorporated some of the European ideas that were practical for their traditional lives.

William Merrill testifies in *Rarámuri Souls* that in Basíhuare, the Rarámuri had experienced less pressure to assimilate to mestizo culture than have the Rarámuri of other communities (51) until the 1970s. In Basíhuare, there were more Rarámuri than mestizos in the general population, thus natives had been able to hang on to the best farming land, and “they are in a position to manipulate the local economic and political situation to their advantage” (51). However, in the 1970s, several cultural changes occurred. Spanish began to replace Rarámuri as the primary contact language between mestizos and Raramuri, especially among male laborers. While most of the women still wore their native dress, the men started to abandon the *zapeta* and began to wear jeans as a result of being ridiculed by *chabochi* construction crew workers. With more local men more extensively involved in the wage economy and the children attending Mexican schools, the local culture

underwent a transition. Merrill observes, however, that by the 1980, “most of the changes that had taken place were superficial” (52). These culture changes seemed to conform “to the same pattern as that for the Rarámuri as a whole throughout their postcontact history: new elements have been incorporated while the core of the Rarámuri’s distinctive culture has remained intact” (52).

The tendency of evasion and isolation is an organizational principal of the traditional Rarámuri (Burgess *Cuentos* 1975; Levi 1999, 93). The indigenous tribe member does not speak to outsiders unless they have to conduct business for survival. They may greet each other with a brush of palms or a light handshake, and direct eye contact is avoided, if possible. If it becomes necessary to communicate with someone about business, one will go to the house of another, until the owner recognizes his presence. There is no door-knocking or calling out a name, but rather one waits a distance from the house patiently without being anxious. If there is no answer, he leaves without talking, even if he has traveled several miles on foot (Zingg 247). It is said that only ghosts knock at the door (Biggers 31). This tendency to commune only with members of the Tarahumara culture limits the contact circle of the indigenous group and tends to exclude those who do not share the same heritage and values, just as the adherence to traditional dress codes have remained unchanged for over a century and serve to perpetuate group solidarity and unity.

Generally, the indigenous are aware of the differences between their culture and the mestizo culture that surrounds them, but many avoid the temptation to abandon tradition by conforming to modern ideas and ways of life. There is a continuum of

acculturation. The Rarámuri are rarely lured to adopt many of the modern ways of the mestizo. Just like the religious elements that have found their way from native origin to Christian fusion, material goods are selectively incorporated into the Tarahumara's daily life. Even though some natives have embraced the taste of Coca-Cola, they refuse the behavior of the outsider. They believe that the *chabochi* (the whites) are lazy because they do not dance, and they are stingy because they do not share in the *korima* tradition and divide their material possessions with the community. They also pretend to not speak Spanish when the mestizos want to buy something from them. Avoidance is a silent tool of resistance that serves to keep pure the Tarahumara way of life.

A Tarahumara may agree to complete a job of contract labor for a mestizo, but when the mestizo is out of sight, the indigenous continues along his way or hides in the country. The natives do not consider such inaction to be a breach of contract, because one does not have to complete a contract with immoral people, according to the Rarámuri (Levi 1999, 96). Since the intrusion of the Spaniards encroached upon their land and space, there have been mestizos who have deceived the indigenous in the sale and buying of land and animals, because the natives did not understand the monetary system or because the land was simply stolen. The Mexican government's organization of comunal land-distribution contributed to significant land loss for the natives, and for these reasons and the justification for betrayal, the Tarahumaras traditionally prefer to do business with their own ethnic group and avoid contact with mestizos, as a practice. Since very few rural Tarahumaras own or drive vehicles, most live off the grid and walk on paths that are off the main road, it is not hard to evade the *camino real*, where most *chabochis* trod. The

writings of both Humberto Quezada Prado (2007) and Antonin Artaud (1978) make interesting references to the mysteries of the hidden Tarahumara footpaths and byways.

For reasons of aforementioned historical events, and to maintain group cohesion, most Tarahumara prefer to spend more time on the *ranchería* and away from *pueblos*, the highways, and imposing outsiders. In urban areas, Tarahumaras live in segregated communities where *mestizos* do not usually enter. This organizing principal of isolation is evident in a study by Janneli Miller on the birthing practices of the Tarahumara. (Table 1) Her research monitored birthing practice methods and beliefs in correlation to the level of affiliation with mestizo ways of life. The Tarahumara's practice of maintaining distance or by shunning the outside dominant society, is one of the "weapons of the weak" (Levi 1999).

For reasons of aforementioned historical events, and to maintain group cohesion, most Tarahumaras prefer to spend more time on the *Rancheria* and away from *pueblos*, the highways, and imposing outsiders. In urban areas, they live in segregated communities where *mestizos* do not usually enter. This organizing principal of isolation is evident in a study by Janneli Miller on the birthing practices of the Tarahumara. Her research demonstrates that Rarámuri birthing practices fluctuate in relation to the level of patient affiliation with mestizo ways of life. The women who had more contact with mestizos were more likely to be influenced by the health care messages telling them to give birth in clinics and hospitals, and that when women with less contact did use clinics, they suffered- as did all clinic patients- racism and the social stigmatization that goes along with being indigenous and rural in Mexico. Dr. Miller confirmed similar observations made by

medical professionals with whom this author has worked, such as Dr. Hugo Irigoyen of Chihuahua, that some Rarámuri women giving birth in various clinics have had their reproductive and human rights violated when they were subjected to things like having intrauterine devices inserted without their knowledge or consent. Dr. Miller reports that in some cases, upon transfer from a clinic to a hospital, patients were surgically sterilized after a Cesarean birthing procedure without their knowledge or consent. A substitute for an authentic permission “consent” form was often a thumbprint on a form with no explanation provided. Interestingly, in her many interviews Tarahumara Footwear Acculturation Model (Miller 84) with participants in Basigochi (pseudonym) she calculated that the type of footwear worn by the women, as well as the frequency of intentional or unintentional interaction with mestizos, would give an index of acculturation, language, and educational level. As a translator for a medical clinic in the sierra, the author sees this model as very plausible for some locations in the rural sierra, although Miller emphasizes that it “only serves to index the regional variations of social practices and processes in which Rarámuri women participate and in no way should it be seen as representative of all Rarámuri (91-92).”

Footwear	Language	Education	Residence	Job	Religion	Contact with mestizos
Barefoot	Rarámuri only	None	Barranca, remote areas	Home, subsistence	Tarahumara, attends and participates	None or infrequent (avoids)
Tire tread sandals	Rarámuri, a few Spanish words	None to a couple of years	Barranca, highland, ranchos	Home, subsistence	Tarahumara, Catholic	Infrequent, Finds it unpleasant
Plastic jellies	Rarámuri and Spanish	Up to 6 th grade	Ranchería and towns	May work as domestic	Catholic, evangelical fiestas	Common, but by chance
Jellies with socks	Rarámuri and good Spanish	6 th and middle school	Towns and pueblo	Domestic or cook	Catholic or Christian, attend major fiestas only	Regular, sustained, and intentional
Tennis shoes	Spanish and probably does not speak Rarámuri	Middle and High School completed	Towns	Bilingual teacher or shopkeeper	Catholic and Christian, rarely attends fiestas	Daily interaction
Western footwear, wears high heels	Spanish only	Primary and High School Education	Sierra towns and urban areas	Domestic or service industry, wage labor	Catholic or Christian church	More contact w/mestizos than w/other Indians

Table 1. Tarahumara Footwear Acculturation Index.

The Rarámuris are a very cohesive and proud group, and local variation among them is central to their identity, thoughts, and behaviour patterns. Thus, if indeed avoidance is a tool of resistance, one can observe in the chart that the Tarahumaras who have had little contact with outsiders have a lower level of acculturation to the dominant culture. Very few in the rural areas of the sierra wear Western footwear. Most native women wear huaraches or jellies that can be purchased at the local *tienda*, and a few wear

socks; therefore, most speak mostly Rarámuri and follow native tradition. Among the layered skirts, *zapeta*, puffy shirts, and headbands (*kowera*) of native dress, it is especially easy to differentiate a mestizo male who wears reptile cowboy boots with very pointed toes, a white western shirt, cowboy hat, gold chains around the neck and has a mouthful or at least a couple of gold teeth. Wearing native dress is an outward indication of adherence to tribal tradition, demonstrates a low level of acculturation or a passive resistance to the dominant culture, and is evidence of a high level of conservation of native customs, even after centuries of exposure to Western influences. The conservation of memories and resultant cultural enactment is key in the conservation of Tarahumara rites and in the maintenance of a cohesive group identity.

Korima. A basic principal which stands among the Tarahumara is the moral obligation to share when someone is in need with no requirement for gratitude or reciprocation. This spirit of *korima* is not observed by all, however. The Rarámuri feel no obligation to respond immediately to a visit or to engage in neighborly chit-chat, but they are obligated to share salt, beans, animals, and other goods with neighbors who are in need. Sometimes, a neighbor who has food to eat “hace la perra”, intentionally avoiding a neighbor’s request, according to Carl Lumholtz, who tells the story of a man who was returning home at the end of a hunting day. He had managed to kill game for his dinner, but hid it under a blanket to avoid the obligation of inviting a neighbor to eat (263). Characters in Tarahumara folktales who violate this cultural taboo will suffer a consequence of action because they avoid fulfilling the sharing responsibility among neighbors and family.

Jeff Biggers, a journalist who chronicled his year long sojourn in the village of Mawichi and published *In the Sierra Madre* (2006), loosely translates *korima* as “gift-giving or sharing among one more fortunate person to another” (50). According to his informant and landlord, Bernabé, *korima* was not traditionally seen as an act of charity, but was more of a reciprocal sharing arrangement during lean times. The *korima* obligation has traditionally followed in dire instances of crop failure or the death or grave illness of a family member. A truly indigent person might perform labor such as repairing fences or grinding corn in exchange for a consideration of basic food needs such as beans or corn. When Biggers was helping Bernabé mend fences and pull weeds in his garden, he noticed that Bernabé would drop by with greens or tortillas as a supposed exchange of favors. However, Biggers also observed that the tradition of *korima* has undergone an expanded meaning in recent times: Rarámuri women and children beg in Chihuahua City and Ciudad Juárez openly using the term to ask for money. The author has been in a restaurant in Guachochi many times when children enter and walk among patrons with outstretched palms saying, “*korima, korima, korima.*” As soon as the seated customer gives up a serving of food to the child, the child will leave the premises with food in hand.

In order to perpetuate such a moral principal as *korima* among tribe members, the governors constantly emphasize native beliefs through delivery of sermons, or lessons at weekly gatherings after mass and during fiestas. After over four centuries of Christian influence in the effort to evangelize the Rarámuri, a paradox is highlighted in their culture. Now, in the twenty-first century, there are supposed Christian crosses in the hills of pueblos, and many natives walk long distances to the Catholic churches each Sunday to

participate in a religious mass. Afterwards, however, they pay heed to the “how to live like a Rarámuri” sermon that is delivered by their elected governor. William Merrill analyzes that the Tarahumara people have adopted the practice of Christian rites without interiorizing the doctrine that forms the rituales of the church (Merrill 63). As indicated in the Jesuit writings from the seventeenth century, still today the Tarahumaras participate in the church fiestas, but also continue to maintain their own customs of native celebrations that are not necessarily condoned by the *padres*.

There is testimony through interviews made by Dr. Irigoyen-Rascon (2001) and with witnesses of William Merrill that the Tarahumaras conserve the firm belief that each individual possesses three (for men) or four (for women) souls (Merrill 88) that control the emotions and knowledge, and that these souls travel between two worlds during dreams as they sleep because of *tesgüino* inebriation. One must plant corn, harvest corn, make *tesgüino*, and attend fiestas where food sacrifices are made, *tesgüino* is consumed, obligatory dancing is performed, and dreams allow the participants to fulfill their mandates by visiting other worlds where they repeat the above. The Tarahumara must maintain respect for native teachings of behavior so that they will not become victims of a lost soul, so that they will keep Tata Dios content, and so that He will look upon the Tarahumara with favor.

This protection of native tradition has survival implications for the society. The adherence to the tribal rites has conserved their native lifestyle and rejected the ways of the *chabochi*. Until recent decades, most of the transmission of traditions has been expressed orally from generation to generation. In many religious, economic, and

ritualistic aspects, one observes that the Rarámuris have guarded their individuality and have conserved their ways. There have been few literary sources that describe or reflect the Tarahumara philosophy from a first-person view. However, the linguist Kenneth Simon Hilton (1969) related a personal testimony of a man he encountered that expresses the individuality lived via the traditional practices of the life of the everyday native, revealing a great deal about the conservation of native ways: “On one occasion, I went there with my uncle to help him...I was there a long time helping him to care for the goats. One day, I lost all of the goats...I thought that the coyotes were going to eat all of them...” The testimony reveals that he was not punished by his uncle “...because he loved me a lot. He said that we must always take good care of them.” He had grown up with his uncle, and one day they knocked down a tree and the dog was accidentally killed. “We would always go to hunt squirrels with that dog...But since then, we have not returned to hunt squirrels, because...we had killed the hunting dog”.

Through the reading of this personally transmitted story, as with the sermons delivered by elected officials that repeat the mantra of how to live like a Tarahumara and follow the mandates to uphold the traditions sent down by Tata Dios, one can observe the strength of focus of the unilateral message that cheers on the native way of life: a child who accompanies herds daily, the propensity to knock down a tree in pursuit of a coveted squirrel dinner (See Lumholtz 263 for a story of a Tarahumara family at home at sunset when the husband returns with a squirrel or rabbit), and the tendency to treat children with reciprocal respect and not punish them for errors. In modern times, not only the oral transmissions serve to perpetuate Tarahumara teachings, but also the artistic

representations of the culture will serve to supplement the in-tribe teachings about the importance of cultural perpetuance. A movie, *Tarahumara, Cada vez más lejos* by Luis Alcoriza, from the Golden Cinema of the mid-twentieth century in Mexico begins with a native Tarahumara toppling a tree just to catch a squirrel to eat. The squirrel has been considered a divine food by the Tarahumara since it perches closer to heaven. Such texts serve a key purpose in the conservation of Rarámuri ethnicity.

The reproduction of knowledge in a society is an important aspect in the reproduction of a culture (Merrill 58). The processes through which the knowledge, rites, and social traditions pass have interrelated connections. The perpetuation of Rarámuri knowledge, as in all cultures, depends on the continuation of the customs by the participants who transmit their knowledge of the world within the culture itself. Knowledge is expressed in an atmosphere that is in the conscious and unconscious assumptions of the society. The informal transmission of the society's values and world concepts, the way of native dress, the rudimentary skills such as food preparation, weaving, making and playing musical instruments, cosmic ideas, among others, are transmitted at home or in nature from parent or grandparent to children. The Tarahumara consider grandparents to be a rich source of information since they have lived farther back in the past and are closer to the tribe's history and the knowledge that Tata Dios gave to their ancestors. Prevalent is the belief that members of the tribe receive messages from Tata Dios or *Onorúame* during their dreams while under the influence during *tesgüinadas*.

In order to perpetuate moral codes, **Tarahumara sermons** are shared by the governor (*siríame*), "the one who commands" (Irigoyen *Rarajípari* 113). The tribe

officials often deliver these speeches at weekly or seasonal gatherings to reinforce traditional guidelines, such as the expectation to uphold *korima*, to not fight among themselves, and to “follow the path of Our Father and the path of Our Mother (Merrill 65).” Because the actions of the people are reciprocally considered by God, the people are encouraged to act correctly, and those who do are rewarded. The obedient ones are characterized as “good thinkers” (*we ga ra nátame hu*) who act in concordance with standard proper behavior and honor “Our Father” and “Our Mother”; they will receive good health and crops. Conversely, improper conduct indicates the choice to emulate that of the Devil (Merrill 63) and will be met with swift justice of illness and unsuccessful crops. This method of social control reiterates Tarahumara philosophy and encourages perpetuation of the ways of the dual Tarahumara dieties, Tata Dios y Madre Luna.

This *nawésari* (sermon or speech) serves as a cohesive element to animate the tribe to *andar bien*/walk well and to not be sad. The authority of the speakers supports the power of the elected leaders in the social realm, and the leaders encourage the members gathered to not organize *tesgüinadas* without the supervision of elected officials. The weekly speech reminds them to not fight during the drinking parties and of their responsibility to dance (Merrill 60) so that the world will not be destroyed. Very few sermons have been documented (Fierro 2000), and they are not customarily written down by those who deliver them. During this community gathering, announcements are shared by the governor about kinsmen who have received mystical revelations from divine messengers to remind them about obligatory animal sacrifices to be enacted at fiestas in order to

appease Tata Dios and to prevent natural weather phenomena that may destroy crops and cause illness.

The Tarahumaras have developed their own explanations and remedies to approach the occurrence of disease in the sierra. Supernatural and natural forces, the animals in their environs, such as snakes, birds, and bears, are thought to play a role in causing illness. The appearance of rainbows is to be feared, the wind causes spirits to attend, stars falling from the sky, and creatures that lurk beneath the water are thought of as possible causes for a person's disease or condition. In his *Tarahumara Medicine, Ethnobotany and Healing Among the Rarámuri of Mexico*, (2015), Fructuoso Irigoyen-Rascón, psychiatrist from McAllen, Texas and former university researcher and writer about the Tarahumara, situates his readers in the sierra environment to describe native health and nutrition, kick-ball, tesgüino, and dancing traditions, disease management, and curing rites, including native herbal remedies (155-266). In his study, he observed that disease is often viewed by the Tarahumaras to be a castigation for an action or failure to act in a certain daily routine. The contracting of a disease or illness may be God's punishment for neglecting a traditional moral mandate or not demonstrating respect for a sacred plant or other authority (113).

Soul loss (*iwigara*) is central to the Tarahumara concept of illness. The soul may separate from the body, being carried away by a predatory force or by wandering during due to intoxication during a tesgüinada or a peyote ceremony. This temporary absence of the soul while being in a dreaming state causes the person to appear to be "devitalized" (116). The physical body stays alive while the soul may wander away to converse with

others or to perform tasks. Only if the wandering soul does not return to the body will physical death occur.

Among the risk factors for illness is the vulnerability to an intentional or unintentional bewitching that may be caused by casting a spell through the inadvertent ingesting of poisonous plants, the inhalation of dangerous smoke, the consumption of a large quantity or the wrong type of peyote. The Tarahumara are protective of their runners during the *rarajipari carrera de la bola*, to be discussed later, and prevalent is the belief that someone from the other village has jinxed a runner's path by spreading pulverized human bones on the path, which causes illness or decreased vitality to a racer. It is believed that a sorcerer receives message to cause evil to a runner via a dream. "It is thought that a shaman has the power to abduct the soul of the subject while dreaming" (118). Thus in a defensive process, the *owirúame*, or healer, may also through dreams receive the antidote to said bewitching, and dream up the remedy for such an illness.

Soul as a spiritual alter ego of the body. A component of the spiritual world of the Tarahumara is their concept of a heaven with three levels, where a man may live and travel when his soul roams while dreaming (Merrill 111). During a peyote or other traditional fiesta, a participant may fall asleep due to the effects of consumption, and while dreaming, he believes that his larger soul or souls depart his body to roam, returning to the body as he wakes up (Merrill 104-112). People stay healthy as long as their souls are happy and as long as they return intact from traveling outside the body. A danger is that souls can be injured or captured while outside the body, and if they can not be healed or gathered back, the individual will die. Death is defined by Tarahumaras as the "total

absence of souls from a person's body" (112). Merrill records different perspectives about where the souls travel after death, but the natives are in agreement that after the souls have left the body, they undertake a journey of three or four days to allow the dead to retrieve their footprints and hair clippings (Burgess, 1981, 13), which they must present when they arrive in heaven to greet God (Merrill 112-113).

This belief in the existence of the soul after physical death in another world is one that the English anthropologists Sir Edward Tylor and Sir James George Frazer found was a widespread tenet in primitive cultures (*Primitive Culture*, 1871). The Tarahumara concept of a soul is considered to be a spiritual alter ego of the body. The soul is also associated with the shadow or breath, an invisible presence that is present in life, but is absent in death. Therefore, the soul or breath must be that which differentiates life from death. The Tarahumara word for the soul, *iwigala*, comes from the verb *iwi*, to breathe, and supports their belief that the soul passes in and out of the windpipe and goes to the heart, which is related to the lungs strengthening the heart and holding the soul (Irigoyen 234-235).

In his theory of religion, Tylor outlines another generalization of primordial religions, which is consistent with Tarahumara tradition that the soul leaves when the body is sleeping and has experiences which are remembered after the soul's return and the person awakens. The Tarahumaras believe that dreams are the experiences of the soul, and that these dreams occur during and following native fiestas where the obligatory dancing and tesgüino consumption carries the soul to the place where "night, death, and the soul are opposite the living in all ways...The soul...works at night while the body sleeps. Night

is the day of the moon, and it is during this day that spirits of the dead and one's soul move in their mysterious ways. The sierra is where night is the day of the moon, a time for man to sleep and his soul to awaken" (Fontana xv).

Dreams are a "privileged order of experience" (Zingg 235) to the Tarahumara and are a means of communication with spirits or dieties. The priests and shaman are highly esteemed because of their ability to interpret others' dreams, find cures, and to find others' lost souls while dreaming. For this reason, the intoxicating value of peyote and other hallucinogens are an endorsement for power by the shaman and priests, and are highly valued and sacred rites in the Rarámuri world. The souls travel during dreams, but the highest plane of heaven is where God lives and the ultimate destination of obedient Tarahumaras who will ultimately serve as servants to God and his family (Zingg 234).

Fiestas. Tarahumara society holds the *fiesta* as one of the highest social and/or religious events. It is the center of the indigenous life where members dance to live and live to dance. Dance is not a form of recreation, but is instead the Tarahumara way of communicating with and fulfilling obligations to Tata Dios, of helping the Almighty through the participation in the battles between good and evil. The obligation to partake in this action is fundamental in the indigenous law and in the eyes of the community, and dancing is a social test for proving that one is not influenced by the Other. An adult male, during a 2011 Semana Santa celebration in Norogachi, lamented to this author that the younger ones don't dance anymore. He saw their lack of participation as a negation of authority and a degradation of their ways. The ritualistic celebration of the fiesta and dance signals loyalty to ancestors and represents a perpetuation of the indigenous system of

reciprocation for favor. The participation signals a denial of acculturation to *chabochi* lifestyle. Traditionally, the fiestas begin at dusk with a dance that lasts all night until sunrise. When the dance is over or is between sessions, food and tesgüino are offered to Tata Dios.

Octavio Paz, Nobel Prize winner from Mexico, opined in his *El laberinto de la soledad*, first published in 1950, that Mexicans in general look to “las fiestas” to be “nuestro único lujo”/“our only luxury”. He considers and compares public celebrations in París or New York to be small groups or couples that have weekend cocktail parties—not a collective celebration shared by “el pueblo” (52). He asks the rhetorical question, “How could a poor Mexican live without the few fiestas that are his/her only relief from misery?” It is during these national, local, and familiar fiestas that the Mexican is confronted with the outside world (53) by opening himself to others, either within his own family, his local community, or the national community. In this context, the Tarahumara is face to face with those outside his or her *ranchería*. The fiesta is time for communing with Tata Dios, consuming with other Tarahumara, and conforming to a preordained tradition in order to perpetuate a cycle of continual rebirth. The fiesta, held on the preordained patio, gives meaning for a continued existence in a dream-like state of drunkenness where animated souls travel to other levels to plant corn, dance, and drink tesgüino. The bridge between the day and night of the soul is crossed during the enactment of the active rites of Tarahumara native fiestas.

Both native and church or Christian fiestas are celebrated in the Tarahumara culture; some attend only one or the other type, but others attend both types. Christians

observe the liturgical calendar of the Church, but many still participate in native celebrations. Bennett and Zingg explain that there are few traits that both groups of fiestas have in common, and the native fiestas are those which involve the Tarahumara's daily home life (268). Fontana adds that the common denominator of all Tarahumara fiestas is *tesgüino* (106).

The native fiestas of the Tarahumara have an agricultural interest and include ceremonial curings for animals and people, crops, and the births and deaths of people. The elements of these celebrations involve dances where rain, health and prevention of illness, and good crops are requested from Tata Dios. The fiesta patio, a domestic sacred space, is cleared for celebration purposes, which include an animal sacrifice, feasting, and drinking *tesgüino* at the direction of a chanting shaman (Bennett and Zingg 268) in order to please Tata Dios, so that he will keep on bestowing life. The circular *patio* represents the four corners of the world (Lumholtz 172), "the four directions are the gates of the world, and everything used on the patio must be dedicated to them (Lumholtz 269)," and the animal sacrifices and *tesgüino* are offered to the one to three crosses placed toward the east, which represent Father Sun, Mother Moon, and, when there is a third, reverence is made to the Morning Star (Bennett and Zingg 269).

The obligatory ceremonial dancing during native fiestas is not an art form or a kind of amusement, but is instead an act of worship and a religious duty (Bennett and Zingg 289). "The Indian never asks his god to forgive whatever sin he may have committed" (Lumholtz 332). Instead of verbalizing a prayer, the Tarahumaras commune reciprocally with Tata Dios by obediently dancing for rain and a successful harvest, for

good health, and good life, as well as expressing gratitude and requesting protection from disease and other evils. Men and women never dance as a pair, and as Acuña Delgado's diagrams show in *Danzar para que el mundo no se acabe* (2012), the dances are highly stylized to conform to a group formation (31, 32, 37).

The Rarámuri word for dancing is *nolávoa*, which is the verb "to work" in the native language (Lumholtz 331-332). The older Tarahumara men may reproach younger men for neglecting their duty to work/dance, if there is a lack of participation in the dancing during fiestas. As a rite of passage, the youth are encouraged to participate in the perpetuation of the tradition, because a failure to dance would be neglectful of Onorúame's directive for survival. Non-compliance with dancing would result in a catastrophic situation like the third epoch of the formation of the world when God sent an eclipse to punish the people for not dancing, leaving the earth in darkness (Gardea 1998, 20).

The Rarámuri people dramatize their celebrations with dancing oriented toward earthly as well as divine expression. Lumholtz's notes mused that the Tarahumara express everything they want to God with dances and *tesgüino* (Lumholtz 332). Zingg cites Bennett as the source of the claim that the three essential elements of a native "pagan" Tarahumara ceremony are the dancing *patio*, the indigenous *dutuburi-yumari* dance, drinking and feasting (Zingg 2001, 228). The main native dances that are mentioned from Lumholtz's writings in the late nineteenth century forward are the *jukurí*, *bacánowa*, *tutuguri/dutiburi*, *yúmarí*, *matachines*, and *pascola*. The *rutuburi/tutiburi* was taught to the people by the turkey (Lumholtz 335), and the *yumari* was learned from the deer (Lumholtz 339). The *rutuburi/dutiburi* is more somber and serves as the prelude to the

ceremony, calling out for the presence of the sun and the moon, while the *yumari* is performed later as a bridge from the ceremony to the feasting and drinking portion. The *yumari* expresses a prayer for the shaman's strength to cure, the shaman sings and circles the cross with many joining in the drinking and supplication. Toward the end of the ceremony, the *yumari* calls for the sun and moon to return to their celestial stations (Lumholtz 335-343).

Carl Lumholtz documented the text to several stanzas of the *dutuburi/rutuburi* dance about how the dance steps should follow, "All! Many! Arms crossed! All many! Arms crossed!" (336) and the *yumari* dances (339-340), which sing about the cricket, frog, and turtle wanting to dance and the grey fox whistling (340). However, Lumholtz claims that the sound emitted is an "unintelligible jargon, or, rather, of a mere succession of vocables, which the dancers murmur (340)." He was able to record *fiesta* chanters on a graphophone before 1900, and some of his related artifacts are housed in the American Museum of National History in New York City. Lumholtz calculated that the position and movement of the heavenly bodies have a connection with the starts and stops of the dancing movements (343), since there are variations according to the season of the year.

Dancing is a large element in both the native and church fiestas of the Tarahumara. The importance of dancing in the Tarahumara cosmovision is evident in a creation tale, "El Origen del mundo" shared by Candelario López, native from the Potrero community (Pintado 27). In the Rarámuri tradition, the act of dancing is not an artistic endeavor or a form of rhythmic recreation, but is instead a mandate from Tata Dios with tragic loss being the consequence of disobedience. It tells that before the sierra and

Tarahumara people there was only a small parcel of land surrounded by water. There were no mountains, corn, or houses. Two *pascolero* dancers appeared and God told them to step down really hard while dancing. With their traditional shakers in hand, they danced day and night until the water and land was packed solid and began to be pressed larger, forming mountains. This is why the Tarahumara obediently dance: so that the land stays solid and does not return to water. The rhythm of the shakers, the intonation, and the music are a form of supplication to God for His mercy and good favor.

Other dances that are performed during Catholic celebrations were introduced during the colonial period and include the *fariseo y pintos* and the *matachines* (Acuña Delgado 29). The *matachín* dances originate from the European missionaries' attempts to Christianize native dances and are held in and around the church, rather than the domestic patio, to honor God and the saints. Unlike native dances, *the matachín* was introduced by Jesuit missionaries to the Yaqui in Sonora "as a dramatization of the triumph of the Christians over the Aztec ruler Montezuma through Malinche, the first Christian convert in Mexico" (Biggers 168). Irigoyen-Rascón proposes that the missionaries introduced the *matachín* dance to dramatize the 1492 historic Spanish expulsion of the Moors. The dance has been adopted by many indigenous groups such as the Yaqui, and was the first masked dance introduced by the Spaniards. The dancers wear elaborate costumes and are directed by a dance director in steps that are accompanied a violin and rattle, but no indigenous instruments. The director or *chapeyó* is responsible for providing *tesgüino* for all the dancers after the ceremony (Irigoyen 111).

Regardless of the historic source, all of these dances, along with *tesgüino* consumption serve to link the Rarámuri society of the sierra and form a large part of their tradition and identity. Even though the people may not be aware of what is being commemorated at a particular fiesta, these social functions provide a time marker for the beginning of important cycles of agricultural activities such as planting and harvesting, allow opportunities to meet and select mates, and provide a setting for kickball races and other recreational activities between villages (Irigoyen 102).

An animal sacrifice, such as a goat, squirrel, chicken, deer, sheep or cattle for a larger function, is part of a native *fiesta*, be it an individual or community celebration. An animal is not sacrificed at birth ceremonies; however, the killing of an animal is always celebrated by dancing. The blood of the animal is offered to the four cardinal directions and then cooked. Food is served several times during the day, with the cooked blood being served at the first meal. The carcass is hung at the north end of the platform and after it has hung for awhile, it is also cooked for consumption. The food is dedicated before it is served, with fiesta chanters and officials often served first; men and women are served from different bowls (Bennett and Zingg 270-271).

During the native fiestas, and after the food is dedicated and dancing and chanting is celebrated from nightfall until the morning, the drinking of *tesgüino*, which is a prevalent component of the native fiestas, but will be discussed in the *tesgüinada* section, starts in the morning, after it is blessed by tossing a gourd full toward the crosses to the east, the west, the north, the south and then upward to the sky. At intervals, the *sawéame*

(chanter) shakes his rattle and sings or hums a rhythmic tune (Bennett and Zingg 271-272).

An additional important and complex element of the native fiestas is the **curing of fields and animals**. After the fields have been planted, the curing is repeated annually to avoid illness and lightning strikes (Bennett and Zingg 279). After the food and *tesgüino* are served in the morning, after a night of drinking and dancing, the family members kneel and their heads are cured by a shaman who places a pine branch dipped in a mixture of ashes and other ingredients. The people then parade around the property and they and the animals pass through smoke caused by burning cedar boughs. The drinking commences to music provided by a guitar and violin while chanters chant and dancers perform *dutiburi* on the *ranchería* ceremonial patio (280-281).

Bennett and Zingg list several agriculture-centered celebrations of note: a green-corn fiesta held on a small scale with two or three families bundling their corn and other crops to be dedicated, and the rain fiesta, often dictated by ghosts who tell the Tarahumara when to have one or animals who communicate to humans when the dance should be held to call for rain (282). One of Lumholtz's translators, Lorenzo, told them that a friend heard from one of his bulls that rain was needed and that a dance should be given. Lorenzo's friend understood that it was to be a small one—a violin, two guitars, three matachine dancers, and one chanter. Several families joined together and each one furnished a cow for the fiesta. The bull instructed them to place many fish at the cross on the patio to call the rain. Dancing, then a sermon asking for rain and forgiveness are followed by a procession that circles the cross with the rattle to the four winds. **The drinking of *tesgüino***

then ensues (283). A couple of celebrations are listed by Bennett and Zingg as no longer celebrated: an earlier harvest ceremony was remembered by some of the older members of the community as a celebration at the end of harvest where the *pascol* was danced, and a ceremony to cure the moon during its dark phase (284-285).

To summarize the consistent elements of the **native fiesta**, the home patio is the sacred site where the crosses, representing the position of the gods, are placed to the east, and where traditional dancing takes place. The animals are sacrificed on the patio, and all food and drink are sacrificed to the four cardinal corners of the earth, then dancing /working hard follow in order to earn God's favor. Incense is used in both native and church fiestas. The animals are smoked with incense before they are killed. Bennett and Zingg's informants stated, independent of each other, that there was a time when children were sacrificed on the patio instead of animals. The *dutuburi* is danced in the same way as before, the blood is dedicated, and the flesh is cooked and eaten (288).

Tesgüinadas. Bennett and Zingg explain that the larger native fiestas offer *tesgüino* to its participants (271), but the *tesgüinadas* are more a local community gathering. The *tesgüinada* is a more intimate social festivity with economic implications where labor is reciprocated, and it is mainly a *ranchería* gathering (200). After completion of a cooperative work project, the drinking, music and individual dancing follow as native stoicism gives way to relaxed inhibitions, and the night goes forward, as a spirit of silence and isolation evolve to the settling of scores, infidelity, and death.

The comunal consumption of *tesgüino*, the traditional fermented corn beverage, is the nucleus of the Tarahumara culture, and is a central part of the economic, social and

religious aspects of the community (Bennett 110). In his *Tarahumara of the Sierra Madre, Beer, Ecology, and Social Organization* (1978), anthropologist John Kennedy focused his attention on the “tesgüino complex” in order to “understand the social organization of these Tarahumara and to penetrate the necessary adaptations in attitude and sentiments” (Kennedy vi).

Tesgüino is a mild, nourishing beer that is the reward for all productive labor activities, all important social activities, and all ritual performance at fiestas. To make it, the moist corn is allowed to sprout, and then it is boiled and ground with the seed of a native grass for fermentation. According to Felipe Fontes of Ciénega Prieta, everyone in the sierra has his or her own recipe and everyone participates—native, Catholic or evangelical—in the process. The liquor is brewed in large pots (ollas) and stored in large earthen jars made especially for that use, as many Tarahumara women still make these thick-walled *tesgüino* pots and other such pottery for everyday use with local clay that is hand-coiled, smoothed, then fired outdoors. This comunal sharing of *tesgüino* after a ceremony or a cooperative agricultural labor project of a neighbor, family member, or friend, lessens the stress of their isolated world because their fiestas and subsequent intoxication during the comunal mixer permit a free abandon from the usual reserved behavior that guides the otherwise rigidly timid tribe. The shyness and fear of those outside immediate ranchería groups disappear in the midst of the heavy alcoholic consumption, and a spontaneity of free physical contact among fiesta-goers is enjoyed freely without reservation or castigation.

The Tarahumara generally do not drink *tesgüino* unless there is an underlying social reason for a fiesta, such as preparing a field for planting or harvesting, pleading for health of a family member, moving into a new house or cave, marking the occasion of a marriage, requesting rain, or drinking for luck for a hunting or fishing expedition (Fisher 43). At the very core of the Tarahumara celebration or cooperative communal projects is the *tesguinada* where adults consume to the point of inebriation usually for many hours or over night. The parents who attend *tesguinadas* notoriously leave small children home alone all night to fend for themselves or with older siblings. The consumption is not a solitary drunkenness, but rather is an integral part of the group's belief system. It is concocted to celebrate deaths, births, and all other community ceremonies.

The drink is blessed by native chanters and is consumed as a part of the dance and animal sacrifice ceremonies. This practice of obligatory dancing and drinking is performed in obedience to Tata Dios (Gardea 87-89) so that he will reciprocate the favor and cure diseases and give a good crop. It is given with the mother's milk to newborns to guard them from illness and to make them strong. These sacred acts are perpetuated to thank God for communal blessings of health and curing of crops, to abolish the effects of evil spirits, and to plead for blessings such as rain for the upcoming season.

The mestizo officials of the Catholic Church and the school teachers of the towns do not approve of the drinking custom, which is so essential to the natives' tradition. The attitude of the mestizos, the hybrid product of European and Native Indians, is that maybe the mandates of religion or the enlightenment of a formal education will penetrate the Tarahuma heart sufficiently to evangelize or change the opinión to that of "la razón." In

the twenty-first century, students are offered a bilingual education in many of the area schools. The idea is that if the natives learn Spanish and the mestizos learn Rarámuri, the society can grow to a mutual understanding and cause a societal change, but with the conservative factors of the social isolation of the *rancherías*, the switching back and forth from house or cave to the boarding school and the endurance of native celebrations serve to keep the native customs alive and imbedded in the native children. The Tarahumaras, especially those who live in the sierra, live contently with a rather simple life. They generally do not work to get ahead economically, but rather are content with the daily roasted rats and canyon greens and plenty of corn to produce *tesgüino*, and even those who migrate to the city continue to dance obediently to Tata Dios.

In the myths and folk tales of the Tarahumara, this ceremonial corn beverage serves not only as the lubricant of the mechanism of the Tarahumara existence, but also as the spark of life in a version of the creation story, as remuneration for cooperative labor, as a prize for suitors of a young lady, as a product of mundane daily activity, as a bartered item in a running competition, and as a motivator and companion for hunters in the field. These traditional social events are places of intersection for the tribe who live in the isolated sierra, raising a bit of food from the stony land. The secret *tesgüinada* is a time of release from the taboos of society where morality takes second fiddle to the responsibility bestowed upon the Tarahumara to drink, dance, plant then harvest corn, make *tesgüino*, then start all over again in an ages-old cycle of obedience to their ancestors, Tata Dios and Madre Luna (Batista, D. 12-13).

In chapter nineteen of his autobiography, *Donde cantan los pájaros chuyaco* (1992), Don Erasmo Palma, a former governor of the Norogachi area, gives a personal account, including the names and circumstances of the victims, of many unfortunate results of injuries and death caused from the results of *tesgüinda* turmoil. He tells of two incidents when his father fell in the fire when he was drunk. His back was so scarred that it looked like it had been scratched by rats. The second time, his father burned one of his arms (108). Palma testifies that in 1971, a drunk man who returned from a *tesgüinada* laid down to sleep after having placed a lot of firewood in the chimney. He stayed there forever, a crackling pork rind, and his wooden house burned to ashes (108).

Palma writes of his personal experience as a child who was left home with older siblings while his parents were off to a local *tesgüinada*. To paraphrase: The *tesgüino* leaves a family without food sometimes, because the parents leave one day and another day, without notifying their family. Sometimes the children get burned playing in the house or burn their siblings. He tells about an incident in 1938 when his parents “andaban en la uva” (108) and the neighborhood kids, who had all been left home alone, gathered to play unsupervised. They were afraid of their parents when they would come home drunk. The children had built a great bonfire, and two of the neighborhood boys began to fight. One fell in the hot sand and burned a knee. Palma testified that this is how many children die, because the parents are distracted and disabled by the intoxication of the native beer (108). He believes that *tesgüino* is the sickness of the “raza indígena” (110).

As a man of the *third space* in an indigenous region of Mexico, the former governor is well-known and respected not only among his tribe, but he also is a

contributing citizen of a wider Mexican society and his writings promote a vision of the world outside the sierra, thus placing him in a negotiated space between two worlds. As with the content of some of the native texts, Erasmo Palma's more recent writings also serve as a witness to the accounts of many inebriated sojourners who have encountered tragic endings as they stumbled in the darkness seeking to find the way home in a drunken stupor. He shares his testimony that some have frozen to death in the snow on the way home from a *tesgüinada*, some have fallen into cactus only to be aware when they have sobered, and others have choked on their own vomit and expired, after falling on the path after a *tesgüinada*. Also, around the Ciénega Prieta and Choguita areas, the author has observed first-hand numerous middle-aged women with deep facial scars from a knifing or a fall in the fire, which were attributed to an incident at a *tesgüinada*. Palma emphasizes that his account is true and that crimes have been committed because this ignorance has not ended. "And the governors preach and say that *tesgüino* is not bad!" (110). In interviews with two teachers from the Otóvachi area, the author was told that they no longer participate in *tesgüinadas* because of moral reasons and the destruction that has been caused because of drunkenness. Although the native sermons warn of drinking too much, many still enjoy the sensation and traveling during their inebriation. Don Palma may be a voice of reason in the wilderness calling for a tradition change.

Jíkuri/Hikuli/Ciguri (Artaud 54)/Peyote Ceremony. The Tarahumaras have made it a practice to maintain cultural solidarity by wearing traditional dress, by distancing themselves geographically from the Other, by honoring ceremonial occasions, and by following the obligatory tradition to reciprocally support and share among tribesmen. In

this same vein of self-preservation and secrecy, the society members tend to blur lines of clear communication by using euphemisms to refer to plants, animals and people. Doing so has implications for Tarahumara survival, where the concerns of the individual are secondary to group allegiance. According to the animistic Rarámuri, the peyote plant does not like to hear its name spoken aloud. For that reason, the natives do not verbalize its name, just as they do not say aloud other terms for fear of unintended repercussions. They believe that peyote is a plant that has a soul like humans. This magical plant can appear in dreams, sing while being harvested and carried, and also confer good health and wealth. It will protect those who care for the ceremonial “divine root” (Zingg 235) that is prepared for use in curative rites, highly valued and sacred events. However, mistreating the plant by even accidentally stepping on it on a path may result in the loss of a soul or grave illness leading to death (Acuña Delgado 33).

Robert Zingg authored his personal travel journal, *Behind the Mexican Mountains* (2001), about an expedition to Chihuahua that he organized in 1930 with a University of Chicago Expedition team (vii) where in chapter fifteen, he discusses “Pagan ceremonies and Peyote” (220-238). In the Introduction by Howard Campbell, published seven decades later, the reader learns that Zingg’s candid travelogue style tale was initially not accepted for publication, perhaps because of the economic situation of the Second World War, or because it was written in a nonscientific style rather than the standard ethnographic format of the time. Zingg’s account with the Tarahumara and particularly with the peyote cult may have been thought of as “...an adventure tale, not an anthropological monograph” (ix).

William Merrill (1988) says that while Zingg's writings about the Tarahumara are "laudable", he deems Zingg's approach to be "radical" and in sharp contrast to the artistic and self-seeking search for personal enlightenment of Antonin Artaud's surrealist interpretations of the Rarámuri. Both perspectives were documented in the 1930s, and while Artaud portrayed the Rarámuri as philosophers, Zingg characterized them as "Philistines" with "wooden" personalities. Zingg held that only through drinking and participation in their ceremonies were they able to escape their inhospitable natural environs (2). Merrill notes that although Zingg's commentaries may characterize a less civil conversation than some American anthropologists, his more extreme views are not, however "entirely inconsistent with those of other writers" (Merrill 3), namely John Kennedy (1963), Basauri (1929), Bennett and Zingg (1935), and Fried (1969).

In his controversial journal, Robert Zingg narrated his first encounter with peyote (*Lophophora williamsii*), a cactus with hallucinatory properties, which plays an important role in the Tarahumara native ritual. The plants can live for months after being extracted from the soil, and they are considered demi-gods who should be treated with reverence, and to whom sacrifices, a food offering, the *nutea* or *nutékima* and *batari* or *tesgüino* are offered (Irigoyen 142; Lumholtz 357). It is noted that while the ball cactus is not native to the sierra, it is found in the northern deserts near the mouth of the Conchos River (Zingg 2001, 168, 236; Lumholtz 361-362; Irigoyen 237) where a small, secret peyote cult takes pilgrimages to gather the sacred plant with the utmost care for ceremonial use. Irigoyen-Rascón (2001) observed that in modern times, the cactus is still collected by a designated group of tribal elders sent to La Ramada, located in the region between the larger northern

towns of Camargo and Jiménez, Chihuahua. The specifics of the round trip are handled as a passive rite, a tribal secret that takes about a month to complete (Irigoyen 141; Bennett and Zingg 291). It is this kind of commitment to confidentiality among elected tribal elders that ensures the perpetuation and conservation of the peyote rite of the Tarahumaras where the “nuclear codes” of the ceremony are secured.

The mission to collect peyote is carried out with great respect for the roots. They are harvested with wooden sticks so that the men will not touch them with their hands, because *hikuli* would get angry and punish the offender. They are protected and prepared for the return trip home, with different varieties being placed in a separate bag, because, if they were mixed together, they would fight (Lumholtz 362). Lumholtz says that the Tarahumara report that *hikuli* sings in the fields and in the bag on the way home. Upon return home, the elders appear intoxicated from consuming a bit of the plant, and a curing ceremony is held with the welcoming community with a small cross on the patio. A bonfire is lit, an animal is sacrificed, and two full nights of dancing ensues. Fructuoso Irigoyen-Rascón says that the celebration consists of a sequence of events: preamble, preparation, rasping ceremony, Jikuri dance, communion and epilogue (141).

The preamble is made up of a dance, a food offering, a curing ceremony, a document of consent presented from regional authorities, and a head count of those present. The ceremony to honor Onorúame, he “who gave Jikuri to the Tarahumaras” (Irigoyen 142), begins with a dance, which varies in type according to the season and the nature of the event. The *tutuguri* dance serves as an invocation to raise to heaven the soul of the dead when a funeral celebration is at hand, whereas the *matachín* is performed at

the year-end cycle, and the *pariseo/fariseo* dances are performed at Lent (142). The distribution of *nutea* (food) and the consumption of *batari* or *tesgüino* follow, the procuring of a consent request having been addressed to the regional mestizo authorities prior to holding the public healing activity. Tribal authorities, who are expected to maintain order during the ceremony, are formally recognized, especially the *siríame*, the native governor of the Tarahumaras. Those who might be trouble-makers or even evil sorcerers are identified and prevented from taking part since they might have evil intentions to abuse the power of *Jikuri*. The sermon is delivered, followed by a meal of *tónari* (boiled meat), tortillas, and corn and the customary long pauses between events—a common feature in all Tarahumara ceremonies. At sunset, the shaman begins to rasp the stick (Irigoyen 143) while dancers dance inside the ceremonial circle. The rasping *Jikuri* shaman, José Enrique Vidal (1924-1997) may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCWSqgVaJVw>.

Irigoyen narrates that the shaman is the center of focus during the first part of the peyote ceremony. He participates in the camaraderie shared by the first gourds of *tesgüino*, “telling sexually explicit jokes, and reminiscing about earlier times” (Irigoyen 143). *Tesgüino* is consumed, and memories of ancestors and older ways of life and music ensue with a procession led by the *si’páame*, a shaman who plays the violin. A small wooden cross known as *presencia* is constructed on a corner of the rectangular yard, and honor is shown to it, as well as to the larger cross. Another sermon is offered, then the procession continues marching toward the *Jikuri* courtyard where the offerings are placed into the sacred circular space where the mysterious cactus is presented to the cross as an offering

and the *si'páame* asks for forgiveness, placing the peyote in the prepared hole in the ground, which represents "...the Globe of the World" (Artaud 52), while continuing his chanting and rasping. Songs and sermons are addressed to the Rarámuri Father and Mother intermittently (Irigoyen 144-147). At the foot of each participant, there is a hole, where the "Male and Female principles in Nature, represented by the hermaphroditic roots of the Peyote plant (Peyote, of course, has the shape of the male and female sexual organs combined) lie dormant" (Artaud 52). The barefoot peyote dancer is accompanied by the chanting of the shaman while the dancers follow steps in a circular motion "in the direction of the Swastika" (Artaud 52), and in a figure eight pattern, which is illustrated in Angel Acuña Delgado's *Danzar para que el mundo no se acabe* (28-30).

The Tarahumara believe that the *shaman* who uses peyote possesses great power to overcome evil (237) and to cure illness. Zingg tells that while traveling across the edge of a gorge into a barranca one day, Lorenzo, his guide, pointed to a large hole and warned that, "That hole is where the wind lives" (165). Zingg tossed a rock in the hole, which prompted the guide to reprimand him about agitating the dangers that only a *shaman* can cure. Lorenzo proceeded to tell him a story about a child who also threw a rock in a pool when Lorenzo was the adult in charge, and so he was given the responsibility for the incident. However, the child knew that doing so was dangerous because water serpents reside there. The child later became ill. Lorenzo warned Zingg to keep his distance and try to avoid known danger from some areas such as plant stubs that they saw on the path (later identified as Jimsonweed, which causes nausea and intoxication so intense as to cause severe illness or death) as they walked along a path. These plants can only be pulled

from the ground by an experienced *shaman*, who must sing all night to the tapping of the rasping stick and ceremonally consume *jículi*. Only then can he destroy and burn the prohibited weed from which sorcerers draw their source of black magic.

There is archaeological evidence from a burial cave that the peyote ceremony is a pre-Columbian ritual from a find by Carl Lumholtz: “The notched sticks...from a Tarahumare burial-cave, are apparently of considerable age. The Indians to whom I showed them did not know them, but they all affirmed that they were rasping-sticks” (366). The rasping stick is a notched wooden instrument, made of brazilwood from the vicinity of San Ignacio, and the instrument is scraped with a stick in a strumming manner (Zingg 145; Lumholtz 366). The *si'piraka*, the notched rasping stick, is the musical instrument that some say is used only in the peyote ceremonies (Zingg 141; Lumholtz 366), although only Campbell Pennington says that “it is used by native doctors in curing ceremonies and by men who conduct funeral ceremonies, but neither of these...are associated with the peyote cult” (163). Artaud said that “the Peyote dance is contained in the rasping stick, in this wood steeped in time which has absorbed the secret salts of the earth. In this wand...lies the curative power of this rite, which is so remote and which must be hunted down like a beast in the forest” (Artaud 55).

When a Tarahumara believes he is called to entone the peyote rasp and offer the cure, he immerses himself in the forest for a week at Easter time for three consecutive years. There, the “Invisible Master of Peyote speaks to him with his nine advisers, and that he passes the secrets on to him” (Artaud 55). The sorcerers have thus far managed to remain silent on the curing secrets in the midst of those those who are not members of the

patriciate of the rite. Fructuoso Irigoyen-Rascón narrates his observations while visiting in the area of Norogachi between 1975-76, and concurs with Burgess and Zingg that in the western part of Tarahumara country, although the people seemed to be familiar with elements associated with the peyote ceremonies, the rituals themselves are not common there (Irigoyen *Cerocahui* 120-121; Zingg *Behind* 141; Burgess *¿Podrías Vivir?* 12). Perhaps since this rite has been an ancient one and few know its secrets, it has disappeared in many areas of the sierra.

In the areas where the Jíkuri shamans are known to be active, Irigoyen mentions his observations of 1975-1976 in the Norogachi-Pawichiki-Choguita area and in Guachochi, with shamans from Bakéachi (140). The peyote is handled with care and is stored in a special container in a separate store-house. It must not be exposed to anything mundane that might be found in a regular humble dwelling. Only assigned men or women may handle the peyote. “The right to handle the rasp is acquired, and in fact this right determines the nobility of the caste of the Peyote sorcerers among the Tarahumara Indians” (Artaud 53).

When outside the storage container, peyote must be greeted, as if it were a man and must be offered tesgüino and meat. If the root is eaten by a varmint or mistreated in any way, the neglectful owner will go crazy. Restitution could be made only with a feast and killing of an ox. Peyote is personified; however, not at the same level as Tata Dios. He does sit next to him, because he is Tata Dios’ brother. Lumholtz said that “sometimes these plants are dressed up in pieces of blankets, and cigarettes are placed before them” (360). In an early observation of syncretism of worship, Lumholtz noted that the Christian

Tarahumares make the sign of the cross when coming into the presence of peyote, and Lumholtz was instructed to tip his hat to it. The benefits of peyote ingestion include an exhilaration of the body system, an external application for snake bites, burns, or wounds, and a defensive protection against illness. If a runner in the forest has Jukuli in his belt, the revered peyote guards against animal attacks, gives luck in foot races and other games, and safeguards carriers against witchcraft. Hikuli purifies any man who is willing to sacrifice an animal and make tesgüino. There is, however, no remedy for a murderer; not even hikuli can cure him (Lumholtz 359-360).

The peyote ritual is an ancient part of the body of Tarahumara traditions, and it is truly a combination of passive and active rites that are still practiced and conserved today. Zingg believed that the Aztecs used peyote, and it is important among the Cora and Huichols in the Mexican state of Jalisco even today (Zingg 235). It is believed that the use of peyote was adopted from the Huichols because the Tarahumara adopted the name, *jículi*, for the plant, the same term used by the Huichols. Although the peyote ceremony is not commonly practiced in many parts of the Sierra Tarahumara, the residents of the region are well aware of its history and cultural value (Irigoyen-Rascon, *Cerocahui*, 120-121; Burgess *¿Podrías Vivir?*, 12). The secrets that are passed from mind to mind come to life in the privileged enactment of the ceremonies where conserved tribal knowledge is expressed and shared.

Tradition says that when Tata Dios went to heaven at the beginning of the world, he left behind peyote as the “great remedy of the world” (Lumholtz 361). Peyote/Jíkuli/Hiluki has four faces and sees in all directions. Lumholtz narrates about the

Bear in a cave that challenged Hikuli to a fight, but suggested that they smoke together first. They smoked and fought several rounds, and Hikuli won over the Bear. The Bear sat on a stone and cried. He left and never returned (361). Some think that if a bear comes near their village, it could be the reincarnation of a grandparent. Only the *shaman* knows for sure if a particular bear is an ancestor of someone in that community. If the bear were to hear his name spoken aloud, he would be angry, would seek out the speaker, attack him/her and leave him/her for dead. In order to protect the survival of their race, the good Rarámuri obeys the laws of nature, respects peyote, and other special plants (see Merrill 75), and guards the tongue so as to not offend the animals and spirits in their environment.

Zingg observes that the “diabolical root” (236), peyote, was banned by the missionaries and Mexican officials, not because it was poisonous or habit-forming, but because the narcotic power of peyote produced dream experiences that recuperated a sense of culture loss and served to reestablished native values in a “final reintegration of the fragment of aboriginal culture which had been smashed by the White Man” (236). The partaking and sharing of peyote plays heavily in the belief that dreams are the experiences of the soul and serve as the revelation of spirits to man.

Church fiestas. *Noríruachi*, meaning *the turns*, is the name of the Catholic festivities that occur during *Semana Santa* (Easter Holy Week) in the Sierra Tarahumara, which is an important season of the Christian liturgical calendar when the *matachines* dance. The festivities incorporate Christian themes, make references to historical events from Spain, and reflect many indigenous influences (Irigoyen 103). In the village of Norogachi, the author attended the 2011 Semana Santa celebration held in and around the

church called Nuestra Señora del Pilar and observed the truly syncretic worship style observed in the pueblo. The start of Lent is announced in the barrancas by the resounding drums and the sound of the native flute that accompany dancers during the fiesta processions and dances. Jeff Biggers said that the sound of the drums bounced off the canyon walls of his village every night for two months in preparation for Holy Week (96). Bernard Fontana recalled when he was stirred from his slumber by the call of the drums in the early morning hours of March 22, 1978 (105-106). On that day, in his field notes, Fontana noted that he was relieved to learn that the community criers were simply on a mission to announce the upcoming Easter celebrations.

The church fiestas are religious ceremonies held in and around the Catholic church sanctuary and patio, but they are also social occasions that give young men and women opportunities to meet and choose mating partners (Irigoyen 102), and times set aside for holding elections to organize next year's fiestas. During his visit in 1978, Bernard Fontana observed that the ceremonial calendar for christianized Tarahumaras seems to be divided between the traditional and newer kinds of musical instruments played at the major church fiestas (106). During the planting time in the spring when Easter brings hope for a good crop ahead, the drum and flute accompany the procession and dancing. For those present during the Semana Santa celebration, the beat of the drum is the element that gives direction and marks transitions of the different stages of the reenactment of the tradition. The beginning of Lent is announced throughout the sierra by pervasive drumming on handmade deer hide instruments.

Mickey Hart, former Grateful Dead drummer and renowned champion of world music, writing for the *Smithsonian Folkways* online periodical discusses that many cultures use drums for interpersonal and group communication. He perceives that all human bodies function with a rhythm, the world moves in an agricultural daily and seasonal cycle, and points out that humans have historically found “ingenious ways that we use drums and percussion of all kinds to manipulate and experience these rhythms; to communicate, play, work, as well as express cultural connections to death, war, and spirituality.” The author noted that the tempo and meter of the Tarahumara drums in the 2011 celebration communicated a change in the program to the participants. A dozen or so straight beats sent all to the mass in the sanctuary without a word being spoken. A triple beat indicated that the dancers were to be dancing on the church and city plaza.

The pageantry is carried out at church fiestas when men play the role of Pharisees/Fariseos and the Pintos (Painted Ones). When Judas appears, the tempo is fast and the movements of the dancers become animated. The dramatizations tell the historical struggle of both the Christian victory over the Moors in Europe and symbolize Christian success in the New World.



Figure 10. Matachine dancers. [https://www.google.com/search?q=matachine+dancers+Tarahumara &rlz](https://www.google.com/search?q=matachine+dancers+Tarahumara&rlz)

During the church fiestas, the *matachines*, with their circular cylinder headwear or *coronas* laden with small mirrors and wide ribbons, turn and whirl to the directions of the *chapeyó* (Irigoyen 79) or *chapeón* (Bennett and Zingg 301). (Figure 10) The *monarco* dances in front while the *chapeyó* dances behind to guide the dancers. There is a great deal of variation in the roles of these leaders from pueblo to pueblo in regard to the *matachin* dance. In earlier times, the *matachín* referred to a man in absurd clothing from head to foot with a mask and a dress of different colors. The costume is very distinctive and much fancier than the every day vestments worn during native fiestas. “A Tarahumara never wears shoes (though he wears sandals) except as a part of his matachine costume” (302). The *matachín* dance is performed by eight to twelve dancers with two leaders. Bennett and Zingg describe the dance as resembling the Virginia reel as the lively dancers form a double column and follow the leader, playing their rattles as they quickly whirl around in

their places, then cross over and exchange places (299). At the church celebrations of December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Christmas, and the Feast of Epiphany in January, the violin, guitar, and rattles reign as accompanying instrument.

The church celebrations throughout the sierra pueblos have the same theme and structure, although there is a great deal of variation in the implementation of the ceremonies from place to place. Fontana suggests that perhaps the Easter rite of Spring with the native instruments and the enactments of passive and active rites, such as the partaking of *tesgüino*, express the native Tarahumara self and the rites of winter with the imported instruments: the violin, guitar, decorative costumes, and rattles belong to the revised history of their contact with the European Christians and their insistence on baptism, repentance, and Coca-Cola (106-107).

On the Sunday before Easter, several men present and distribute pine branches that they gathered in the barranca, and a blessing is given for them at the Sunday mass (Irigoyen 105). Dance groups called *pintos* and *fariseos* arrive from outside the festival pueblo and perform with their respective flags in front of the church on Palm Sunday. In Norogachi, the *pintos* represent the friends of Jesus, and the *fariseos* or *pariseos* represent the enemies of Jesus (Irigoyen 103-104). The women join in the procession, while the men march and give guidance to the dancers by pounding on the drums.

After the procession around the portion of Norogachi away from the church, a drum calls the participants to the atrium area in front of the church, and a *nawésari* ceremony begins with the *siríame*/governor standing on the steps in front of the church door. Irigoyen says that the regal staff or *bastón* is held by the official in his formal address

to the people (79), as he encourages the celebrants to moderate their *tesgüino* intake and remain sober, to walk well and not fight, so that all may be peaceful. Irigoyen adds that “cryptic messages are inserted during...delivery” (79). It is these natively coded, culturally valuable speeches where the active and passive traditions are hammered into the children and all ages of Rarámuri, who are exposed from early on about their traditions and beliefs. The speech emphasizes solidarity, much like a family gathering, where announcements, as well as political notices, may advise of an eminent distribution of corn or funds among the family. The audience is addressed as the poor ones who are indebted to God, from whom all blessings flow. The reiteration to practice Tarahumara traditions are stressed, as well as the need to perpetuate the ancient traditions to all generations. Then, the officials invite neighbors to drink *tesgüino* in houses away from the church. The drinking continues through Monday of Holy Week, as well.

On Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, Acuña Delgado says that the dance groups, which have been grouped according to their *ranchería* origin, participate in work projects in their respective villages, building fences or gathering firewood to prepare the *tesgüino* (106). The pueblo women cook food to share at the fiesta. Wednesday is for hanging the numerous pine arches for the procession and sweeping the path that will be trod by villagers.

During the Thursday of Holy Week in Norogachi, many different villages are represented by dance groups moving in two columns with their own handmade flag at the celebration. After the branch arches are built, the processions begin. The arches serve to mark the stops for the stations of the cross, while dancers move around the pilgrims on the

way. The activities alternate between dancing in the church courtyard, marching in processions around town with women designated to carry the statue of the Virgin and men bearing the image of her Son, returning to church for masses, and more dancing in the courtyard of the church. The Tarahumara are to fast on both days. Toward the end of the day, fires are started to keep the participants warm and *tesgüino* is shared in various home sites. After the second procession of the day, a mass is held with twelve men seated across the stage. It is significant that in Norogachi in 2011, during the Catholic ritual that takes place during the ceremony of the institution of the sacred Eucharist, native men alternated with mestizo men to have their feet washed. Each man removed one boot or huarache, and the priest assisted with enacting Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet as in the biblical reference of John 13. The dancers dance all night on Thursday and Friday while plenty of *tesgüino* and *fogatas* keep the participants warm.

Early on Good Friday, the *fariseos* present a straw figure of Judas and form an animated winding parade. The straw and wooden effigy of Judas, the disciple who betrayed Christ, is accused of wrong doing in Norogachi while the dancers perform an animated, rapid S formation. Judas is made to resemble a mestizo dressed in cowboy dress with a moustache and an enlarged phallus. The Judas figure represents the son of the Devil, betrayer of Jesus, God of the *chabochi*. At noon, the Crucifixion begins. The lifesize statue/body of Christ will be wrapped up and carried to the cemetery while all in attendance follow the body to be buried.

After the ceremonial burial of Christ, the dance of the *pascol* is held in Nonoava, which is, according to Acuña Delgado, the only area in the Alta Tarahumara where the

pascol is danced. It is more frequently practiced in the Baja Tarahumara. One or two select men dressed with cocoon rattles and painted red and black, shake the rattles to make a rattling sound wrapped around their legs. At the Semana Santa festivities on Friday, the *pascolero* dancers announce the resurrection (Acuña Delgado 46-47), enter the church one time, pounding drums and whirling during mass and then quickly exiting through the front door. The shaking of the rattles seems to mark the joy of salvation of humanity, the victory of good over evil, and instill hope for the future. The two dancers, usually dressed in white (Figure 11), evoke the image of the two divine beings from John 20:12 who revealed that Jesus was not longer in the tomb to Mary Magdalene. The *pascol* is not a native dance (Bennett and Zingg 386), but the Tarahumara hope that their faith in God and their participation in the obligatory dance will triumph over the *chabochis*. They are sure that the day will come when they will overcome the intruders, because they are the true sons of God (Biggers 97).

During the church ceremony, especially that of Semana Santa, there is no verbal communication among participants. Instead, the stomping dance steps are their way of showing obedience to the Father Sun. Their quiet voice is a silent demonstration of humility. Two statues are guarded in the sanctuary between processions: the Virgin Mary is guarded around the clock by the women and the statue of Christ is protected by the *fariseos* and *pintos*. Each group of participants, women and men, carries their statue during



Figure 11. Pascolera dancers. <https://www.google.com/search?q=pascola+dancers+tarahumara&rlz>

each procession. As Acuña Delgado explains, the Tarahumaras dance and consume *tesgüino* in expression of their supplication to and in obedience to Tata Dios so that the world will not be destroyed. Just as the deer moves and the turkey makes circles on the run and receive God's favor, so must the Tarahumara imitate their mode of dance to please God (Lumholtz 325). The lack of the spoken word, except for the sermon and the mass, comes from love, humility, and a hope for Mother Earth and a respect for Nature.

The adherence to a traditional native diet shows respect for the deity of Mother Earth. The sierra offers many native plants and herbs consumed in the form of a tea or concoction for particular maladies (Irigoyen 155-262), along with toasted rats and worms from the *madroño* tree, as well as the staples, corn, beans, and squash grown in small parcels near their homes. Many varieties of *chile* are an important element of the Tarahumara diet (Irigoyen 207), and are served as a side dish with most every meal. Meat

is infrequently consumed except for during fiestas, except for birds, snakes, lizards, fish, and the occasional deer. Although the tribe owns cattle and goats, they are rarely eaten, but instead are more valuable for the manure they provide for growing corn for consumption and for making the obligatory corn beer.

The semi-nomadic way of life, partly due to tribal patrilineal and matrilineal inheritance laws, is required because each spouse has his/her own parcel of land to care for and rotate-farm, often great distances apart, which gives them a unique variety of foods, since some foods grow only in the canyons, such as *ciruelo del campo* (183), and others only in the mountains, such as *hierba de la mula* (240), which is used to sweeten *batari* in addition to the wild plants that grow natively in particular location (Burgess 1975, 17; Irigoyen *Tarahumara* 155-266). The Rarámuri know how to hunt down a deer by making it run until the animal keels over from exhaustion because of their superior running skills (Irigoyen *Tarahumara* 13). The Rarámuri claim that squirrel meat is among the most tasty, because these animals live high in trees near the heavens (Burgess 21).

Rarámuri living arrangements often include caves and/or a hand-hewn log home. Although it is not uncommon for Tarahumara families to live in caves, many have either a combination cave/storage barn and living area and/or simply a log hut built from tree trunks, probably through a community effort, followed by a *tesgüinada*. Very secure storage bins keep the corn dry and keep animals out. Ten to twenty such dwellings form a cooperative *ranchería* in the sierra. Most Tarahumara families avoid living in *pueblos*. Many families have a home in the mountains and another in the barranca, since they follow their crops and animals with the season changes.

The *rarájpara* and the *ariweta* are traditional running games that foster group unity and have implications of communal economic gain or loss, depending on the race outcome. The Tarahumara tribe calls itself Rarámuri, which is etimologically composed of two parts: “ará”, meaning foot, and “muri”, which comes from the word, “júmari” or run. Thus, the term *Rarámuri* could be interpreted and identified as foot runners, so to speak (Burgess, 1975, 7). So prevalent among the tribe is this sport that there are two kinds of running races: the *rarájpara*, or the kicking of a wooden ball (*kumaka*) by men and the race of *ariweta*, the foot race enjoyed by the female members of the group while kicking forward a ring of beargrass or branches, often covered in fabric. Bernard Fontana called the race *dowérami*, and the stick the *dowéra* (86). These long-distance races are marked through remote terrain through canyons, rivers, and barrancas.

The race can be a competition between two or more teams, each team being made up of one or more runners. The wooden ball may be moved along by the feet only, and a preordained course must be followed. The runner may not ride along the path, only the runner’s feet may be used for transportation. The winner is the first to kick the ball over the finish line, not the first to cross said line. Communities support runners from each village, and members tend to wage bets on who the winner will be (Irigoyen *Rarájpari* 124-147). Jesús Manuel Palma, a Tarahumara from Guachochi who contributed to the Irigoyen-Rascón book, *Rarájpari*, says that races can be for singles or for teams, but teams composed of a main runner assisted by a helper are the most common (127).

One of the most popular traditions in the Tarahumara community is a cross-country kickball race run by the men. The race is often many miles long, and the object is to get a

team's wooden ball, about four inches in diameter, over the finish line first. The ball must be kicked or tossed with the foot. Fouls include pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, and even pulling off the loincloth of an opponent (Fontana 87). This athletic event is so impressive in endurance that it has given rise to international fame as evidenced by invitations to the fastest runners to run in marathons in Leadville, Colorado and in Spain where Silvino Cubésare won first place in the senior category and second overall in the Ultra marathon, after running one hundred fifty-four kilometers in the mountains of Alcaraz and Segura, in Albacete, from May 30-June 1, 2015 (eluniversal.com.mx 12/06/2015). These endurance races have also inspired a book by Christopher McDougall, *Born to Run*, in 2009, which features the Tarahumara hero who later debuted in the one hundred and twentieth Boston Marathon in 2016, Arnulfo Quimare, and an American named Caballo Blanco who was impressed to challenge and honor the long-distance runners from Mexico and who also sponsored the same in Leadville, Colorado and in other marathons.

There are many tales of Tarahumara runners being invited to Mexico City in 1926 to run a record race, another from San Antonio to Austin, Texas in just under fifteen minutes, and studies of physicians and anthropologists who have studied the Tarahumaras' extraordinary ability to run. Fontana tells of a race of 28.6 miles where the average speed of the winning team was 5.81 miles per hour. Runners lost five pounds of weight during the race. One twenty-eight-year-old man ran for four days and three nights without sleep, averaging 11.5 miles per hour for several hours at a time (Fontana 90-92). The Tarahumara learn to run almost as soon as they learn to walk. Their super physical condition is

developed as they cross rivers and mountains day to day in high altitude environments. Grant Shepard, son of Alexander Robey Shepherd, Governor of the District of Columbia and the new owner of the Batopilas silver mines in 1880, wrote in *Silver Magnet* (1938) that the former governor had a piano moved with his family to Batopilas, a canyon which was five thousand feet deep. Since there was no way for it to be placed on a wagon due to its weight and fragility, it was carried down the canyon path for a hundred and eighty-five miles in fifteen or twenty days, and was delivered in a box on pine poles on the shoulders of three teams of eight Tarahumara men who walked it in. They were paid a dollar a day and ran back home, covering the same number of miles in just three days (Fisher 36).

Generally, the *rarajipara* or kickball race is initiated when a small group of runners challenges another group, and the highly competitive race is then “game on” at an agreed time and place. The runners and town folk put up sizeable bets of clothes, animals, or food on the outcome of each contest. In order to jinx the other runners, it is not uncommon for one side to retrieve bones from a burial cave, grind them on a metate stone, and mix the powdered bone with a handful of earth then strew it inconspicuously where the runners will cross. The belief is that when the opposing, unsuspecting runner runs over the place where the mixture has been spread, the deceased will grab the runner’s feet, causing him to fall and lose the race (Fontana 71). Scores of remedies are brought to the race, either to give strength to friends or to weaken the other team. Herbs are sprinkled around in the air and on the ground by runners and betters to heckle and hex opponents, and some enterprising souls may bring a supposed antidote to sell to superstitious onlookers or team

members. Runners may wear peyote or the dried head of an eagle or crow as protection from the other team's antics (Fisher 51).

Running has a vital role in the Rarámuri culture, although there is no formal training for the sport. Their races are not short sprints, but are instead long distance endeavors. These foot races are one of the culturally distinguishing events that have made the runners internationally famous. During a typical day, the men always run between *rancherías* whenever they have messages to deliver or when they are searching for a cave to seek refuge in during the winter. These daily running errands prepare the runners for competition. The best runners enjoy a high social status in the community, and conversely, those who are not good runners are judged to be lesser members. However, John Kennedy (1978) says that running is more than a game to the Rarámuri. They have fun, they participate in a collaborative, cohesive community action, they release stress, but they gain economically if they win. The losers are always ready for the next race in order to recuperate their losses.

Big races between two communities may include a full-blown *tesgüinada*. The gathering of large numbers of runners and onlookers that these events bring assists groups from different communities to get to know each other better, and the competition of the race helps to enforce group solidarity of "we" and "they" (Fontana 88). Due to the betting of goods, distribution of wealth is not centered in one person or community, but may be distributed through a wider region. Although there are some great runners and others with less talent, they believe that witchcraft and the supernatural can influence the final outcome, and the elements of chance and hope are very much alive.

The local *curandero* or *shaman* controls all aspects of the organization of a race: the race course, the economic wagers, and the night before, he may conduct special trips to the cave of the dead to dig up bone, preferably the tibia from the right leg, which is believed to induce fatigue. He then sets it on the cave floor where he places *tesgüino* and food as payment to the deceased that he may help to win the race by weakening the adversaries; he requests magical powers to defeat the opponents (Fisher 51). He prepares the runners by helping the manager rub the men with herbs and small pebbles to give them strength to run and to serve as a shield against the witchcraft of the other team. The wise one places the drinking water for the runners under a blanket near a cross which represents the four cardinal points of the world. He sings songs of the grey fox and advises his runners to avoid eating outsider's food. The runners all sleep together near the shaman and close to a designated cross on the eve of the kickball race, because the wise one sees everything and protects them from the negative forces of the other team (Fisher 52). This element of control by and loyalty to the shaman is another collective aspect of the society which maintains cohesive devotion and survival as a race. His knowledge over the powers of health and nature give him power over illness and evil. He is perceived to be an intermediary between the physical and spiritual dimensions of their world and is the team spiritual guide.

The ability to run, in the case of the Tarahumara, has been one of distance and not speed. Grant Shepherd states that one of the shyest of all the Indian tribes in the Sierras "are not rugged as far as manual labor is concerned, but they have a tremendous endurance for traveling incredible distances" (Fisher 16). For centuries, tribal survival depended on

their ability to hunt and kill animals such as deer, turkeys, and rabbits by chasing them on foot. They would chase down animals for days, according to Lumholtz, fueled only by *pinole*, a ground corn powder mixed to make a type of drink. He compared the top physical ability of the Tarahumara to that of the strong Spartans of the Mycenaean-era Greek soldiers (21) many centuries before. Their physical strength and endurance has developed after centuries of running down food and because of the cultural importance to win such competitions. The diet of the Tarahumara contributes to their running fitness and is principally high in carbohydrates and is low in meat. Fontana says that meat, including fish, chicken, squirrels, and domestic animals killed on ceremonial occasions, probably make up less than five percent of their diet (54). This style of eating has been an important aspect of indigenous lifestyle and is high in corn, beans, squash, and other plants native to the sierra, such as quelites, which are a dozen or more green weed types gathered in the canyons (55).

Social media is a source for learning about the modern-day Tarahumara race traditions. In October of 2012, Alejandro Hernández, the governor of Papigichi for sixteen years, was interviewed by a news organization near Guachochi. The title of the piece is “Carrera de bola y ariweta” (<http://lautopia.com.mc>). The governor explains that the races are an annual event and are held to ask God for favor with the harvesting of crops. Dancing and drinking tonari are part of the celebration. The races are held between competing villages and are made up of two teams with three members each. The women’s race, the *ariweta de mujeres*, is held after the men’s foot race.

The initiation ceremony of Rarámuri children, according to Rásimo Palma Fernández of Guachochi, along with other spiritual guides in the sierra, has all but disappeared from current practice. Little is known today about the initiation ceremony, the *ripunáliame o rimukápulíame* (Gardea 114), of Rarámuri children. The community elder who practices this first ceremony is the one who becomes the child's *siríame* or *owirúame* until his death, a spiritual and social guide. This guide is called “el de la vara” or “the one with the stick” and he is charged with presenting the child to God (Onorúame). In the past, it was customary to hold the special day when the boy was three days old and the girl was four days old. Now each community decides on the appropriate time (Gardea 110-111). Tranquilino Cruz Sinaloa of Bocoyna, Chihuahua adds that when we are born, we have invisible horns, and if the rite of presentation is not done, we will not lose our horns, and will be in danger of attracting lightning from the sky. If this untreated child walks into a church, the walls may fall because of the strong pull of the horns. For this reason, everyone in his village conducts the ceremony because the governor tells them to do so (Gardea 112).

At daybreak, the ceremony begins and a fire is lit with juniper branches and corn stalks, and the child is passed three times (boy) or four (girl) through the spiraling smoke. The child is led to touch different work tools or sports equipment that he/she will use during his/her lifetime. The child learns that he/she is the child of the Creator and is to keep following the straight path as guided by this shepherd, who must be a curandero, a healer who knows herbal medicine treatments for all illnesses, and who not only provides spiritual encouragement, but also will cure physical infirmities (Gardea 110-111).

For the Tarahumara who are more traditional, who keep the ways of the ancestors, the practice of **keeping the Other at a distance** is a priority in many of the Tarahumara thoughts, practices, and attitudes and is evidence of the closed society that they desire and cultivate. They elect their own “gobernador” to intervene in dealings with the official mestizo government on all political matters, even forming the *Consejo Supremo de la Tarahumara* to help resolve land disputes and other matters in the sierra (Burgess 1975, 23). The Rarámuri believe that they are superior and healthier because God blew life into them three times, not merely two times as He did for the mestizos (Burgess 7). Their food comes from natural sources, and possessions such as land, crops, and their language come from God and should not be bought or sold like in the mestizo tradition where the money is heavy and does not allow one to ascend to heaven (38).

In an interview by García Gardea with Vidal Fuentes Rodríguez of Choguita, Municipio of Guachochi, the ex-governor and *curandero* views the historical “we” as something lost to the outside influences of the modern “they” mestizo influences. He remembers that in olden times nobody from the tribe understood Spanish, nobody among them knew how to read, and there were no schools. Then, the intrusive mestizo government selected a few Tarahumara students who had studied with the missionaries to go to Mexico and train as teachers who would then return home to teach other Tarahumara. When they finished their education and returned, they were “the worst enemies of the Rarámuri. They had exchanged their Rarámuri soul for a *chabochi* soul” (45). As a result of this unfortunate cultural loss, he laments that “We have learned to hang our head in front of those (educated Tarahumaras) as if they were superior to us...” (45). He continues

saying that those with a changed heart, who now have a *chabochi* soul have learned to bow down in church, as if this were the only way to talk to God. The Rarámuri of earlier days danced to commune with God and would have been offended to bow before anyone unless he were presiding over a curation ceremony. This strong sense of identity and purpose has driven the stubborn mule train of Tarahumara secrecy and isolation for centuries.

With an estimated fifty to sixty thousand members, the Tarahumara tribe is one of the largest and most conservative indigenous societies in North America (Irigoyen *Rarjipari* 14). The viability of this group has been challenged for centuries due to invasions of other tribes such as the Apaches, later from the intrusion of Spanish conquerers, and more recently, the natives have suffered the aggression of mestizo land grabbers, as well as the *Gran Visión* roads projects and Mexican national laws that have many times sided against the natives. During the first Jesuit period in the sierra, the Jesuits had inserted Christian ceremonies into the native rites and practices; however, the absence of the Jesuits for a period of one hundred and thirty-three years left the Raramuri to the influence of the less rigid Franciscans, and the indigenous readapted their rites and agricultural customs (Biggers 41-42). They have formed a syncretic kind of *cosmovisión* that allows them to participate in the very present Catholic churches while at the same time be dedicated and loyal members of the Rarámuri culture.

As in prior years, the twenty-first century finds new threats to tradition preservation in the territory of the Tarahumara. Jerome Levi says that in recent years, the erosion of soil and a general ecological degradation have developed as a result of

comercial deforestation and over grazing in the region (1999, 91). The conservation of the rustic footpaths of the Tarahumara have given way to the *Gran Visión*, a program to develop road pavement throughout the sierra by the mestizo government of Mexico. This has not been a Rarámuri vision, but rather has been formed to guide the *Santa Trinidad/Holy Trinity* of the modern explorers of tourism, narco trafficking, and deforestation (Biggers 3; Fontana xiii).

The *Gran Visión* effort has paved the way for travel and improvements in rural public education, including an extension campus of the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua in Guachochi, the capital of the Tarahumara nation. The *Gran Visión* has also provided a path to the establishment of first-time medical clinics and pharmacies such as *Hospital Misión Tarahumara de Samachique* and *Clínica GAP Ciénega Prieta*, and has opened job opportunities in road construction and maintenance. Young Tarahumaras now have the opportunity to attend public school and to attain a higher education. Since the arrival of the Jesuits and the introduction of their axes, plows and domesticated animals to the invasion of Coca-Cola, the radio, and instant soup, the indigenous culture has seen the opportunity to modernize its way of life. However, as a symbol of subversive resistance, the Tarahumara have held on to their tradition of living in isolated *rancherías*. Some native children attend boarding schools during the week and return home on the weekends so that they do not lose their family's culture. In Otóvachi, near Guachochi, the teachers also live at the rural schools during the week and drive home to the more populated Guachochi on the weekends.

Rather than assimilating to community life among the Mexican *mestizo* population, the Tarahumara families have preserved the reenactment of their active and passive traditional rites and ceremonies and have tried to shield outsiders from involvement or observation. They have held fast to their spiritual tenets in order to perpetuate the survival of their culture for many generations, as Dolores Batista suggests in “El Consejo a los Nietos/Advice for Children”: “Transmit all that I have told you for a long time. If not, it will be lost for others...we are the pillars of the world...we must remember what the ancestors told us; this is how there will be more Tarahumaras [how we will self-perpetuate] (13).” The Tarahumaras have managed to keep intact their group cohesion because they have followed the advice of their oral tradition, have kept a distance from the *chabochi*, and have adapted to their isolated environment and semi-nomadic lives in the sierra. The Tarahumaras have responded to aggression by withdrawing from threats, rather than by enacting violence upon the intruders. The Tarahumara longevity is a result of their faithful observation of Tata Dios’ mandate to care for the earth and to utilize the many plants and other elements of the sierra for nourishment and for treating illness. The fairly recent documentation of these Tarahumara texts will serve to extend the preservation of the heritage of this “first race”.

CHAPTER V

WHAT DO THE TRANSCRIPTIONS OF TARAHUMARA

ORAL NARRATIVES REVEAL?

While the archives of Jesuit letters and journals have served as a valuable historical legacy of first-hand ecclesiastical observations of the European religious evangelization attempts in the rugged sierra, such as the accounts of Father Juan María Ratkay, a Hungarian nobleman who traveled in the company of Father Joseph Neumann of Germany to Mexico in June of 1678 (Dunne 138), a variety of secular publications concerning the Tarahumara give considerable attention to other types of encounters. Important historical narratives range from the discovery experience of first-time explorer Carl Lumholtz (1902, 2005), to social relations and plant use among the tribe (Bennett and Zingg, 1935, 1976), to archival research of the Jesuit records by Pennington (1963), to linguistic studies by Donald Burgess (1970, 1976, etc.) and to anthropologic and ethnographic studies of William Merrill (1995), among others. However, while the subaltern collective voice of the Tarahumara has previously been silent and relegated to the margins by documented observations of outside investigators and by the dominant mestizo narrative in Mexico, their traditions, tribal knowledge, and belief systems are now being shared with the world outside the sierra through somewhat recently published transcriptions of their oral tradition.

This chapter serves to answer the questions, “What stories do the isolated Tarahumara disclose about themselves?” and “What do the transcriptions of Tarahumara

oral narrative communicate and reveal?” The words of the texts, dictated and shared by the members of Tarahumara culture, take center stage in this study. By analyzing these transcriptions of the oral tradition of the Tarahumara of Mexico with an emic approach and considering them intertextually with pieces from outside the group, a narrative of the social formations and ideologies of the isolated ethnic group emerges to underscore the literary contribution of the Tarahumara oral tradition to academia. This intertextual approach considers the body of primary works as a whole and relates the linguistic and structural elements that overflow with symbols that are central to the Tarahumara belief systems. The hard-to-find hard copies of narratives and fewer poems that have been written down in Rarámuri and in Spanish serve as individual microtexts which, when compiled together, function as a corporate cultural macrotext narrative that expresses the individuality and ideology of this isolated ethnic group.

A central idea of contemporary literary and cultural theory, the term intertextuality is useful...because it communicates notions of interconnectedness in modern discussions of culture. It is said that we may no longer consider the originality or uniqueness of an artistic object because each work is a mosaic comprised of bits of prior works. (Allen 5)

This intertextual analysis examines texts for primary process images rooted in Tarahumara culture with symbols and figures of speech that make their incursion into everyday language. In an account of these collective representations that give rise to various forms of reality, Richard A. Koenigsberg suggests in his *Hitler's Ideology, A Study in Psychoanalytic Sociology* (1975) that cultural ideas, beliefs, and values may be viewed as an "institutionalization and social embodiment of primal human phantasies" (86). A cultural idea is perpetuated because it has become rooted in social forms. Koenigsberg's

content analysis of Hitler's ideology as expressed in published works, speeches, and secret writings, proposes that the frequency with which a given element or association appears reflects the centrality of such an element within the framework of that given belief system. This study of an intertextual nature will seek cultural collective representations that appear time and time again in texts to give credence to the centrality of particular elements in Tarahumara ideology.

With four centuries of foreign intrusion chiseling away at the mysteries of the Sierra Tarahumara, the threat of culture loss would result in a calamitous loss of identity, which would be experienced as object-loss of a primary base with which tribal members feel themselves to be firmly tied and collectively dependent. The Tarahumara today are threatened with intrusions from the aspects of the Mexican government's Gran Vision and with land-grabbing efforts by mestizos in decades old battles still being disputed in court. By examining their stories, one can assess the primary cultural ideology with which the Tarahumara have felt anchored for centuries and can consider modern day threats to their cohesion.

The first accounts of Tarahumara oral tradition were documented in the 1950s and were transcriptions of tales passed down orally by generations of Tarahumaras via the older males of the communities. One example is the earliest located by this study, *Kuíra Tarahumara*, a fourteen page booklet that was published by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Mexico City in 1950. The drawing on the front cover is of two Tarahumara men, one older and the other younger sporting native clothing and greeting each other with a traditional hand touch as the sun rises on the horizon of the sierra. There were one

hundred and thirty copies printed. The collections of tales were dictated to rural school teachers in the local dialect of the contributor and written in Spanish to be published by governmental agencies, notably the INI and CONACULTA, among others.

Library sources in the Southwest part of the United States and in Chihuahua, Mexico hold some of the works in order to preserve native traditions, although they are difficult to find outside institutions. The early stories reflect a reverence for ancestors, an organic way of life, and a belief system that is still very much alive today. These traditional stories include a variety of genres of both fiction and non-fiction works, including a version of the Creation story, the origin and importance of local landmarks and historic figures, customs and beliefs of the Tarahumara, as well as fantastic renditions of mythological creatures able to complete heroic or whimsical feats. The artifact, admonitions of generations before, cultural practices, and rituals—all elements of folklore study—are prevalent in these native stories.

In order to consider an appropriate approach to organize and analyze the scarce copies of transcripts of Tarahumara oral tradition, and to consider various key elements of Tarahumara folklore and their centrality to Tarahumara culture, this study offers a brief overview of previous approaches to comparable folklore analysis by anthropologists, sociologists, and folklorists, such as Vladimir Propp, Clifford Geertz, William Bascom, Antii Aarne, Stith Thompson, Alan Dundes, among others. This work will then examine the application of Dundes' theory of a morphological analysis of North American Indian tales and apply it to the Tarahumara texts in order to belie previous notions that label the

construction of such tales as inconsistent, formless random combinations of motifs with little cohesion among components (Dundes 73).

To contemplate how the identity and culture of the Tarahumara of Mexico is communicated via their tales, one must embrace past and present discourse, oral or written, as a form of social practice, identity, and shared knowledge and beliefs. Transcriptions of oral tradition, some that have never been categorized collectively before, have been gathered, organized, and analyzed in order to evaluate the ways that social and political negotiations have been reproduced in discourse and how this interdiscursivity with modern texts connects to the formation and maintenance of internal power structures and cultural determination while simultaneously serving as resistance against external influence. This study of an interrelationship between texts from both an emic (native) and an etic (outsider) perspective holds promise to signal not only the historical situation of the Tarahumara of Mexico in our modern world, but it will also secure for modern academia a neoteric plot on the map of pre-Columbian ideology by demonstrating that Tarahumara folktales and myths are structured and can be successfully submitted to a morphological componential analysis of the narrative, which will aid in the elucidation of cultural norms, values, and penchants.

The oral tradition of the Tarahumara echoed in the caves and canyons of the sierra and whispered through the winds of the *barrancas* long before the first European conqueror set foot on what is presently Mexican soil. The transcriptions of the texts have been introduced to the academic world through the voice of hybrid and bilingual Mexican thinkers and other academics, educators, and clerics in the Spanish language, the language

of prestige in the Latin American world (Burgess 1977, Irigoyen R.1995, Muñoz 1965). Some primary source tales do appear in print in Rarámuri with a Spanish translation (Batista 1980, Bustillos G. and Sotelo H. 2007, Cruz Huahuichi 2008, Mares 1974, Parra 2003).

According to Jesús Vaca, Mexican professor of anthropology at the University of Chihuahua, the study of and the elucidation of the oral tradition of native groups such as the Tarahumara is valuable to Mexican citizens and is a valid field of research in Latin American Studies, because having access to the documented tales values recorded native legacy and authenticates the history of the multicultural presence of the Mexican nation. He proposes in an e-mail to the author that these recently documented tales serve as a window to value and understand indigenous languages in order to “understand ourselves as Mexicans” in the process of historic development.ⁱ

Dr. Hugo Irigoyen of Chihuahua, medical doctor and professor of Anatomy at UACH, echoes the importance of the indigenous heritage to present-day Mexicans. He states that since the Tarahumara appear to be one of the first colonizers of Mexico, studies of an anthropological or literary nature regarding the Tarahumara serve to enrich a Mexican culture that is made up of multiple ethnic groups actively speaking approximately sixty-four different languages in the country today. Dr. Irigoyen articulates in an e-mail to the author that above all, research studies that bring their oral tradition to the world will help the indigenous survivors to discover and understand their own race and their own notable value as an ethnic group with unique richness that contributes to and permeates all aspects of Mexican culture.^{iv} Both professors have lived over a one year stint in the

sierra at different times, in different villages, laboring in their respective fields. They were able to experience the sierra environment first-hand for an extended period and still maintain current contact.

Tarahumara Texts

The more than two hundred primary sources accessed, printed in Spanish and some in Rarámuri, have been dictated by native or bilingual heritage speakers and documented by modern Mexican writers, political officials, rural teachers, and a few North American linguists. The scarce narratives, sermons, and fewer poems that have been written down serve as individual microtexts which when compiled together function as a corporate cultural macrotext narrative that expresses the individuality and ideology of this isolated ethnic group. The body of works is made up of transcripts from both public and private collections of literature and social science studies from universities and agencies in the Southwest United States, the Mexican state of Chihuahua, and Mexico City. Most of the collections were printed in small batches and are rare to find outside an institution; many were provided to the author through university inter-library loans or via friends and colleagues who originate from the Chihuahua, Mexico region.

For reasons of language barriers in Mexico, the geographical isolation of the group, and cultural self-seclusion, only in the last fifty or sixty years have the oral narratives of the Tarahumara been available in print except for a few interspersed in primarily scientific studies. A series of three *Cartillas* was published from April 1955-March 1956 by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and the “Presentation”, which appears in the 1955 copy asserts that the purpose of the texts is to promote reading among indigenous in the

Tarahumara region since “...literacy in the mother language is an important step for the monolingual indigenous to be *Spanishized* or to adapt to the culture of the mother tongue...and so that the great Tarahumara race will become an integral part of the rest of the Mexican nation” (*Cartillas*, 1955). The earliest documented Tarahumara transcription of oral narratives (1950) is *Kuíra*, Tarahumara, and it was published by the Institute of Summer Linguistics. The three stories, traditional complete with illustrations, are informative about Tarahumara customs: a first-person narrative about a deer hunt deer, a third person account about a foot race, and the Tarahumara male’s style of dress. Another early publication is *Primera cartilla tarahumara* which begins with a grammar study and then is followed by local tales (1955, 77-86) and apparent reprints (1961, 74-82; *Cartilla Tarahumara*, 1972, 61-70) with four stories in both Rarámuri and Spanish at the end. These were obtained from the online archives of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, but were originally printed by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista in Mexico. No author or editor is listed.

Prior to these first tales at the end of the grammar study, in a few secondary sources about the Tarahumara, one or two animal stories and creation myths do appear, in part or as a whole, as they were related directly to the author, Carl Sophus Lumholtz in his *Unknown Mexico Vol. I* (1902, 296-311). In addition, traces of oral tradition were evident in Wendell Bennett and Robert Zingg’s *The Tarahumara, An Indian Tribe of Northern Mexico* (1976), a reprint from the 1935 title edition, which express elements of their belief system as transmitted from sermons passed down through generations of Tarahumara

(321-325). However, the four tales from the 1950, 1955, and 1961 publications are the first stand-alone dated primary sources in print.

In later linguistic and anthropological studies, linguist Donald Burgess narrates about animals that lie for gain, a child-eating giant, and the rich lying to the poor to hide economic progress in “Tarahumara Folklore...” (1981, 11-22), and William Merrill mentions Tarahumara teachings found in the native sermons delivered weekly in his ethnography on how to live in harmony with others (61-71), curing practices (121-151), death practices (153-190), and the concept of the soul (85-120) in *Rarámuri Souls* (1988). However, even though these mentioned scholars incorporated interspersed tidbits of Tarahumara oral tradition as told to them during their travels to the sierra, few efforts, before the present work, have been made to categorize and analyze the transcriptions of the oral traditions as a corpus of works and to consider them in cross-reference or relate them to the modern writings of native Tarahumara authors and secondary sources about the culture.

In both the primary and secondary sources about the Tarahumara, the sierra setting is a consistent element in most all of the tales. In his article, “Setting in the Galdós Novel, 1881-1885,” William R. Risley discusses the notion of “setting” in fiction, and chooses to limit the term to refer only to the physical area in which an event or action occurs. In the novel genre, an author can drive the narrative by creating an ambiance that compliments the action or develops the characters’ roles. Richard Curry articulates that elements such as setting in a work do not appear in a vacuum, and thematic and human concerns, which are the core part of a written text, are conditioned by all the structural elements (7).

Setting includes aspects of space, time, and secondary characters all woven together as a backdrop for the ingredients of the foreground plot, main characters, and conflict (Curry 23-24). Thus, considering the “setting” of many Tarahumara narratives, it would seem difficult to reduce the setting of a work to such a narrow description as *the physical area in which an event happens*. One would perhaps want to consider a broader notion of a place where something happens, a geographical location, with the additional elements of social milieu, historical time frame, and/or a description of a broader term of fictional space. It would be difficult to even consider the body of Tarahumara tales outside the setting of sierra spaces. Both the interior and exterior spaces of the Tarahumara writings center on the isolated natural environment of *barrancas*, well-worn foot paths to *tesgüinadas*, forests, and animal antics and humanization as background for the narrative and are crucial to the portrayal of the social setting of the characters that inhabit these works. The everyday situations, as well as the fantastic events, occur under ruggedly beautiful sierra skies, in a cave fortress, on a rocky footpath from one village to the next, in murky waters, or on a deep canyon quest. The vast environs of the isolated mountains and canyons create a consistent backdrop to reveal and evaluate the characters and to reinforce the often didactic text themes.

Unlike novelistic fiction where the author creates settings to achieve a certain mood or state of emotion, the Tarahumara tales, passed down orally, describe versions of perhaps enhanced realistic experiences in the sierra. Caves are a reality of the sierra “setting,” and many stories occur in and around caves and cave homes, such as the tale about the bear that hides his kidnapped female victim in the cave with romantic intentions

or the snake that lives in the cave near the river that runs through the canyons. Bears are also a sierra reality and a threat to humans, and thus tales about them serve often as cautionary tales, because it is forbidden to say their name aloud. In addition to tales that occur in or around cave “settings,” a great number of Tarahumara tales take place while someone is a distance from home herding goats. Many families send young children out alone to take the sheep and goats across familiar fields and canyon paths that are unknown to outsiders to pasture for the day. They stay with them all day until they return to the corral (Burgess 1975, 34). One young character received her spiritual calling to be a shaman while tending the flocks (Batista, D. 11; Cruz Huahuichi, 1995, 97), and another girl was kidnapped by Apaches while keeping watch (this is only one of very few tales that mentions anyone outside the tribe). When the Tarahumaras recovered the little goat-herder, they took revenge against her Apache kidnappers and sealed them in a rock wall inside a cave. In another tale, a family of human-eating giants is trapped inside a cave where they are burned to save the village (Batista, R. L. 1980, 15-27). These Tarahumara tales cannot be told apart from the sierra landscape and topography, because this unique corner of the world with forests, canyons, and vastly expansive isolation is the only reality in their environment.

The traditional cultural elements that are central to Tarahumara life are replicated in the images portrayed in the sierra “settings” of the Tarahumara folktales. The everyday geographic reality of the actual dwellers reflects cave abodes and daily herding experiences, quests for firewood and food, traveling between summer and winter homes tending corn and other crops, nomadic adventures walking from village to village, and

cherished hunting and herding dogs that aid their masters to apprehend game such as deer. In the tales, however, many characters have mundane experiences with a supernatural twist where both children and adult herders or crop caretakers are witnesses to deer that are transformed to and from humans, as well as snakes that eat children and other snakes that transform into old lovers. Many of the tales take place in an exterior space, such as a forest or walking on a road or around a body of water, rather than the interior of a dwelling or a public place, because the reality of sierra life is spent walking across mountains on foot for long distances, and the Tarahumara animistic belief system allows for plants that have souls, birds to guide the way, and spirit winds that blow across the water when the serpent is hungry.

Besides the persistent sierra landscape milieu, another motif that pervades the Tarahumara transcripts is the one that describes the Then and Now conditions of the Tarahumara tribe: Once we did not have fire, but now we do; long ago, there was no light, but now we have light; when our ancestors were on the earth, nobody in the tribe spoke Spanish; now many do. In a version of the creation story, the land was flat and there was no irrigation for the land. Then, the crow made irrigation grooves in the canyons and the land was watered (Burgess 1975, 4). There were once lots of bears in Rocoibo that ate a lot of corn, but the Tarahumara chased them with slingshots and rocks, and now one does not see many bears there (Burgess 1975, 20). The Tarahumara used to eat lions, but now they do not (Parra 2000). Animals used to talk, until the whites came (Gardea 1998, 23). At first, there were no animals and people were cannibals. Then, God gave animals to fill the hunger needs of humans (Gardea 24). We once sacrificed wild animals, but now we

sacrifice domestic ones (Gardea 87, 92, 98). The earlier Tarahumara knew each bird's song and emotion by its song and season, but the later Tarahumara does not understand the bird's song (Gardea 213). We immunized our people against illness with maguey thorns, but when the whites came, the doctors prohibited such. The collective 'We' lamentably fail to transmit native knowledge to the new generation (Gardea 155).

These "Then and Now"/ "equilibrium to disequilibrium", or vice versa, versions of native traditions have been passed down by word of mouth to educate each new generation about the Tarahumara heritage with a didactic approach. Overall, the Tarahumara do not advocate that change is a desired move. Although the tales seem to indicate that modern day members are less in tune with nature's language, the message of reverence for ancestors and staying true to heritage is strong.

Oral Narratives

An important aspect of cultural knowledge and perpetuity among native groups has traditionally been carried out via oral narratives. According to scholars Renée Hulan and Renate Eigenbrod, oral traditions are "the means by which knowledge is reproduced, preserved and conveyed from generation to generation. Oral traditions form the foundation of Aboriginal societies, connecting speaker and listener in communal experience and uniting past and present in memory (7)". Over time, however, Western discourse has come to prioritize the written word as the dominant form of communication, and until recently, societies without a documented past, such as the Tarahumara, have often been described as those with a lost or forgotten history and thus have been deemed to exist with a less valid political standing. However, preliterate societies have recorded and documented

their histories in complex and intricate ways, including performative practices such as drama, dancing, and drumming as, for example, in the cases of African (Hanson 3) and Tarahumara indigenous tribes. Although within the last century anthropologists, linguists and other scientists have introduced the written word as a tool for documentation and expression in oral societies, many of the newly literate still depend on oral and performative traditions to be an important element in the diffusion of cultural knowledge.

Some of the documented oral narratives of the Tarahumara of Mexico reveal that they are a group that values reinforcing lessons about the spiritual and preordained value of caring for the God-given nature. Forest animals give wise counsel to humans, and sage humans heed their words of wisdom. The writings illuminate the conduct that tribe members are to maintain while interacting with nature and with each other either by either narrating a fictitious character who obeys the laws and is then rewarded or by a *mischievous* character who violates the rules and is consequently punished. The disobedient character often underlines unacceptable behavior.

The tales are told in specific situations: personal tête-à-tête from grandfather to grandson when hunting or working; the circumstances of running a foot race; and the specifics of seasonal gatherings of the community. The Springtime *Semana Santa* and December 12th *Guadalupana* celebrations are community ceremonies of great importance not only in all of Mexico and Latin America, but also in the sierra and are dramatized with the performance traditions of dancing and drumming, forms of oral narration, with great fanfare and reverence. The transmission of the stories is varied according to context or season, but they pass from generation to generation with great care to maintain the group's

social order regarding allegiance to “our fathers.” These dictated traditions create a space for interacting with the environment of the Sierra Tarahumara. The wooded backdrop and *barrancas* that hold these stories become a map for learning their own history and heritage, and the sierra and its mysteries are integral components in the discourse of the Tarahumara.

The terms oral tradition and oral history are viewed differently by some scholars. Anthropologist and historian Jan Vansina distinguishes the two as follows: “The sources of oral historians are reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts about events and situations which are contemporary, that is, which occurred during the lifetime of the informants. This differs from oral traditions that are no longer contemporary and have passed from mouth to mouth, for a period beyond the lifetime of the informants” (12-13). Within the collection of Tarahumara narratives gathered for this study, it is possible to distinguish those stories told as eyewitness accounts (oral history) from those myths and legends passed down from generation to generation that are no longer contemporary. Both types of oral narratives are valuable to the overall structuring of the macrotext of works by and about the Tarahumara society.

Similar methods are used in the processes of collection for both oral tradition and oral history, but since oral traditions may be categorized under the general classification of oral history, their very nature leans toward an inherent additional social value. The perpetuation of oral tradition contributes to the social cohesion, dynamic evolution, and the spiritual durability of a given culture. Oral traditions are therefore changed in the very act of recording from dynamic and developing or evolving self-consciousness into fixed

and static "snapshots" of the culture at one point in its development. Oral traditions are not narrations of the direct experiences of the narrators, but rather are those recollections of the past, orally transmitted and recounted, that arise naturally within and from the dynamics of a culture and are often entrusted to certain members of the group for safekeeping, transmission, and narration. They are spontaneous organic expressions and reservoirs of the identity, purpose, functions, customs, and continuity of the culture in which they occur.

These oral transmissions are increasingly recognized in academia as a valuable contribution to history, and have even been used, although often unsuccessfully, as evidence in court to defend indigenous landowners against modern day land-grabbers (Borrows 1-38, Piedra). In recent decrees, for example in the community of Coloradas de la Virgen in the sierra, Mexican legal action of December 2015 mandated a return of control of ancestral lands to the Rarámuri community due to the help of an indigenous Human Rights organization, the Alianza Sierra Madre A.C.^v Thus, in order to understand the grand scheme of Tarahumara discourse as an instrument that records and defines the ideology and cosmovision of the sierra society, it is imperative to analyze how this body of texts reflects the culture and connects and maintains internal power structures while resisting outside forces that would destroy the cohesion of the Tarahumara society. Unfortunately, one of the native activists who stood to defend his environment and his people was murdered in Colorado de las Virgen in January 2017. Isidrio Baldenegro López had been given the Golden Environmental Prize in 2005 by the Mexican officials for his work to protect the native forests. He worked to keep logging companies out of the forests,

to protect pure natural water sources, and to maintain local control of land rights (<http://xhkg.tv/web/2017/01/ejecutan-al-activista-tarahumara-galardonado-con-premio-goldman-al-medio-am>). “His fight to protect his community’s ancestral lands went back decades, and his father, Julio Baldenegro, was assassinated in 1986 for his opposition to logging.” (https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/world/americas/mexico-environmental-activist-shot-sierra-madre.html?_r=0) His death will be a setback in the native efforts to maintain their internal authority and to unite in the struggle to defend and control their own destiny.

One type of Tarahumara text, the performance of oral tradition during festivals such as in Semana Santa celebrations, creates a social persona for the performer and has done so throughout history in many cultures such as the troubadours of the courts, including King Richard I of England (the Lionheart), and during the Crusades of the Middle Ages. In most cases, this type of cultural enactment creates and establishes societal and social norms by linking people, communities, and institutions together. The teller or musician is generally an elected leader of the tribe and embellishes and adapts the story to his situation or location. In addition to the seasonal public dance performances, the Tarahumara often verbally share their tales in intimate, personal exchanges with family members or collectively in the sermons given by elected governors to impart moral guidelines to the younger generations and to remind the adults how to live in solidarity with fellow Rarámuri and in harmony with *chabochi*, as the introduction to this chapter summarizes. This type of dramatic presentation creates community cohesiveness and

reaffirms its self-identity (<http://science.jrank.org/pages/10527/Oral-Traditions-Telling-Sharing-Genres-in-Oral-Literature.html#ixzz2cRMVp9ji>).

During the Holy Week celebrations each Spring, the ritual dances incorporate many symbols that are of vital importance to the Tarahumara. The reciprocity of Tata Dios to the Tarahumara is emphasized during these festivals and permeates the written texts of the Tarahumara oral tradition. The Tarahumara life cycle of dancing and drinking *tesgüino* to honor Onorúame (God) for good crops and to plea for future rain and good corn crops in order to have more *tesgüino*, and on and on, is the core of tribal life.

One of the most used dance patterns is a spiral-like choreography and, within it, the counterclockwise over the clockwise movements impart the importance given to the creation tale and the path of heavenly bodies. The dance movements demonstrate not only the trajectory of form of the stars in the sky, but also echo the story about the time that God made the Sun in a place where there had been a circle of water. After the land was created, the Tarahumara agreed to dance around a cross, and they thought that by doing this, they would pack the earth make it strong (Bonfiglioli, 196). Other folktales warn of the consequences of failing to dance, thus perpetuating this value in the society (Delgado 28-29). The disobedience to dancing during the third destruction of the earth was a transgression of the reciprocity with the giver of life within the agricultural cycle. When they failed to dance, the sun went dark. Therefore, several tales support the concept of reciprocity between dancing and God's mercy for rain and other blessings. The Tarahumara take seriously the obligation to dance in order to keep the sun shining and the world turning. Bonfiglio believes that the alternating circular directions of the dancers

during ceremonies seem to symbolize the alternating duality between light and darkness and forms part of the Tarahumara cosmic equilibrium symbolized as the triumph of light over dark, life over death (199).

The study of folktales offers a way to see another culture from the inside out instead from the outside in (Dundes 2007, 55). The anxieties and ways of Tarahumara thinking are also reflected in their tales, as a mirror of the culture, and its conditions and values are on display. In *The Meaning of Folklore: the Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes* (2007), Alan Dundes distinguishes folklore as an “autobiographical ethnography, a people’s own description of themselves (53)”. The anxiety of hunger and need is a prevalent setting for Tarahumara tales. The Tarahumara maid who gives food to a disguised god receives the land and home of her master because of her charity, and a rich man who does not share food is turned into a pig. To not obey God and share with a brother will result in a severe castigation. By delving into the Tarahumara transcripts, one encounters animals whose main interest is to find his/her next meal. The challenges faced involve negotiating with prey, having to travel long distances to find food, and the reality of the unsuccessful hunt. Such is the daily life of many Tarahumara who must hunt deer and rabbits on a daily basis to survive. Many tales express the fears of threatening surroundings such as snakes beneath the water, unsettling winds, having to remember where hair clippings are stored (Cruz 1995, 67), not saying a bear’s name aloud for fear of having joints chewed, and other cases of nature’s revenge by an unnamed infraction.

Alan Dundes also proposes that while folklore reflects the elements of concern and reinforces the values of a culture, it can at the same time offer a sanctioned form of escape

from the very same values (59). In some tales, the protagonist violates an interdiction and may be punished/receive a consequence for disobeying, but in the end, there is usually a resolution. Although in the Tarahumara culture, authority is to be obeyed, three girls run away from a master and are not castigated, but rather are rewarded by being transformed into stars, and their oppressive master is turned into a coyote who howls at night. A cultural obligation in the Tarahumara world is the sharing concept called *korima* where one is required to share with another in need; however, in several stories, the successful hunter hides his game from others in order to keep it for himself. While one important teaching of the Tarahumara is to live in harmony and peace with all, the indigenous pueblo takes revenge and poisons a giant, whom they hire for labor, when he poses a threat. Although honesty is a valued virtue in the sierra culture, tales of deceit are used to overpower prey, destroy villains, and quench hunger.

Living in harmony with others and conserving tribal ways serve to protect Tarahumara tradition; therefore, tales that subject a character's conduct to the guidance of general rules has as an object achievement of social order. Several of the Tarahumara compilers of the collections of oral tradition list their personal reasons for participating in the publication of transcriptions. Indigenous writer, veteran bilingual educator, and linguistic assessor of literacy programs, Clemente Cruz Huahuichi, says, "Na ra'ichali jaré ralámuli osali li chiriká ineka ra'icha aminabi mi binésima oselí ineka ra'icha li osayá. Alati binesa a yénachoti osibóa mapi'ti nata, mapiti machí li mapiti jarecho. Ipula alá ju machiwáa osayá jiti wiká namuti osiboa, echiriká ke wikawaba kiti ra'ichali," or "Estos relatos fueron recuperados de compañeros tarahumares, y al leer el libro vas a aprender a

leer más y más. Si aprendemos bien, también podremos escribir lo que pensamos, lo que sabemos...Es bueno saber escribir para decir muchas cosas y para que no olvidemos nuestra lengua”. (These tales were recuperated from Tarahumara friends, and upon reading the book, you will learn to read more and more. If we learn well, also we will be able to write what we think and know about...It is good to know how to write in order to say many things and so that we do not forget our language” (7). Conserving the tribal ways is one of the key reasons for publication of these Tarahumara transcripts.

The culturally valuable tales by Guillermo Murray (2006) narrate stories for children from the perspective of a grandfather who passes on stories that came from his grandfathers who heard them from the grandfathers of their grandfathers, and so on, in order to preserve the cohesiveness and moral code for future generations. He speaks from the point of view of Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions, who has one hand reaching back to recall the past and another advancing to the future by retelling didactic tales to educate the younger generation and promote the cultural perpetuity of the Tarahumara. The animal stories communicate a David and Goliath story that dispels the precept that “big and brash is better than tiny and cooperative” in a story about the cricket who defeats the puma. Tarahumara sermons advocate harmony and avoidance of conflict. One legend narrates the “slave/master” dyad present in biblical scriptures where the meek are exalted (become stars) and the arrogant slave master becomes a coyote who is relegated to howl at night. Important Tarahumara tenets are woven into the fabric of their folk narrative.

Tarahumaras are traditionally elusive in the face of outsiders. Avoidance of the Other is a way of life. Noel Bustillos (2007) laments that there is a great cultural richness in the Tarahumara oral tradition that is being lost due to living in close quarters with the mestizos. This indigenous educator, admonishes generations of Tarahumara parents to take seriously their transmission of knowledge and sense of membership in the family. One who is truly Tarahumara, not a sell-out, is one who intentionally conserves Tarahumara traditions in the home. Therefore, his selections are written in Rarámuri as well as in the mestizo language, Spanish, because it is necessary to strengthen the native language as a vehicle of expression, not only for the natives learning to read in their own tongue in school and in the community to be connected and to preserve their culture, but also to foster value and respect from those outside the tribe (7-8).

Since the first publication of the *Cartillas* in Mexico, these newly documented transcriptions narrate the stories of this group in their own words. Although little is known about the origin of the solitary inhabitants of the Alta and Baja Tarahumara before the arrival of the Spanish early in the seventeenth century, their oral tradition, beliefs, and customs have survived for generations by word of mouth. These texts preserve tenets of native heritage for future literate generations and fill an empty Native American literary category in academia. Considered along with early writings by visitors to the sierra, the macrotext of writings from within and outside the tribe weave an intertextual tapestry to reveal the history, culture, and cosmovision of the Rarámuri of the Sierra Tarahumara.

Considering the corpus of works as a whole will offer a more complex network of ideas and images than considering individual works. The signs and symbols of each

transcription offer multiple meanings and codes intersect with other renderings. As in Roland Barthe's theory of textual study, which involves the theory of intertextuality, reading becomes a process of "touring between texts" (1981, 31-47). "Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations" (Allen, 1).

This intertextual approach proposes that each story or myth from an oral tradition is not a unified, isolated object that gives a singular meaning, but rather suggests that each piece is one segment of larger body of work, an "illimitable tissue of connections and associations"^{vi} that will offer a wider view of the cultural practices and beliefs much like that of plotting a map, rather than a chronological narrative of a society. For a discussion of more recent Tarahumara texts (oral and written) to be significant and relevant in the present, they must be studied in relationship to a body of discourse that is already in place. An intertextual study is both dynamic and dialectal. The larger meaning of each work is not inherent in the text itself, but each detail is seen as a piece of a puzzle which individually contributes and projects meaning to the whole. The textual code can begin to reveal its secrets, not by documenting an inventory of customs, but by a deeper interconnectedness woven by elements when considered in the context of and in combination with the complex network of texts considered in the process.

Norman Fairclough reasons that textual analysis has an important role to play, within a framework for discourse analysis, as part of the methodological practice of social science research. He believes that those scientists with 'macro' social interests such as ethnic relations or land disputes (as in many indigenous communities) are in a dialectical

relationship with social action already, and that those issues are often based upon documented texts, but not always acknowledged. Language controls the mechanics of ideas and produces and transforms relationships and identities in a society, but language is not always transparent, especially in a community of oral tradition. A systemic view of texts emphasizes choice at different levels of analysis: what is included and what is excluded. Intertextual analysis draws attention to the discursive processes of text producers and interpreters, and how they interact with the repertoires and genres of discourses available. Texts provide evidence for grounding claims about relations and social structures, and they provide a ground for negotiation and resistance of social control. Lastly, Fairclough states that a historical reason for proposing this type of reading between texts is that texts are barometers of social processes and identity, movement, and change.^{vii}

Although the term “intertextuality”^{viii} was first introduced to literary linguistics by French feminist semiotician Julia Kristeva (1941-), when she broke from traditional notions of the author’s influences and textual sources as primary considerations of a text, the origins of the intertextual approach to works can be traced back to 20th-century linguistic studies. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) emphasized the systematic features of language, and viewed language as a system of signs, rather than a focus on its historical development. One can isolate the underlying set of laws by which these signs are combined into meanings and established the relational nature of meaning and texts.^{ix} Saussure posited that words are collective products of social interaction, signs

or signals that have established acceptable group interpretations, and are tools through which humans organize and articulate their world.^x

Drawing from the original definition proposed by Saussure, a sign has two parts: a signifier and a signified. The signifier will have a form that one can touch, see, smell or see, and the signified represents an idea or mental image of an item rather than the touchable object itself. The value of fifty yard-line football tickets for a Super Bowl might not be understood by societies outside the United States of America, and a community, like the isolated Tarahumara group, holds conventional meanings for things such as *tesgüino*, rock fences, native dress, and dance ceremonies, and these patterns of knowledge are clearly understood by those who know the cultural code, but not necessarily by those who are outsiders. There is no natural link between a sign and what it represents unless one is part of the linguistic process of a culture. Therefore, being exposed to the knowledge of social process, readers/consumers also learn to match the meaning of elements of the code of the oral narrative even to abstract concepts in the context of the discourse about souls, dreams, and the possible meanings in the somber sierra. Each text, from a structural viewpoint, is part of a shared system of meaning that is woven within the framework of the macrotext of narratives. Although the structural analysis process does not center on the content of a message (*parole*), it does seek an underlying set of laws by which these signs are combined into meanings, and concentrate on the internal relations that the signs indicate.

Analyzing discourse involves looking at the “texts” (verbal and non-verbal communication) that make up our realities, questioning their assumptions, identifying

underlying ideologies, and considering how these connect to form and regulate social norms in a society. Jonathan Culler, author of *Structural Poetics* (1975),^{xi} proposed that 'Intertextuality' has a double focus. On the one hand, it calls our attention to the importance of prior texts (such as the oral tradition of the Tarahumara finally recorded in the second half of the twentieth century), but it also suggests that the autonomy of texts is a misleading notion and that a work has the meaning it does only because certain things have previously been written. Thus, intertextuality leads one to consider earlier texts as contributions to a code making possible the various effects of meaning. Intertextuality “marks its participation in the discursive space of a culture: the relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices of a culture and its relation to those texts which articulate for it the possibilities of that culture” (103).^{xii} The reading between texts of a given culture, the intertextuality, and the *dialogical principle* of Mikel Bakhtin^{xiii}—all language and thought are dialogical—also open up undiscovered domains of meaning in oral traditions. The reader is no longer just a consumer, but actively participates in the production of the text. The modern native transcribers/translators participate in an active, rather than a passive, way of interacting with the preservation and perpetuation of their own culture and its stories.

Oral tradition, such as that of the Tarahumara, has historically been eventually documented at some moment in the history of its people. The written form is likely an evolved version that narrates a fictionalized reality, communicates a significant journey or a creation story, and/or gives an account of God’s direction or plan for humans. An early oral tradition best known to Western readers may be the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, which

date in their written form to about the eighth century B.C. These works serve as foundation texts for ancient Greek ideas of civilization and culture and often center on the intervention of gods in the lives of people on earth and the worthy deeds of "great men".^{xiv} The *Odyssey* depicts the story of a roamer and his wife who waits for him, a common structure in many cultures and ages. In Spanish literature, there is also the wandering Alonzo Quijano, who while saving the world during his quests for justice, also pines for his Dulcinea.^{xv} There are also elements of sierra oral tradition in the modern tale about the meandering legendary Tarahumara hunter, Machiwi (Quezada 2008). He chases down deer on foot while his wife waits with a pot of boiling water to cook his catch. This fictional modern-day Tarahumara, who rambles from village to village via isolated *callejones*, is often AWOL from his wife or from his sponsorship obligation in the mid-ultra marathon due to the distraction of a 'teswinada' in the sierra. These various types of episodes or journeys narrate day-to-day activities, reveal generational practices of a people, and serve to predict and preserve the native culture for future generations.

Structural Analysis

The art of jotting down fact and fiction about the folks of many cultures has served to offer valuable insight to subsequent generations in broad interdisciplinary fields of history, language, humanities, and the social sciences in general. How does one approach texts of folklore and myth of another culture? Which is the appropriate method to follow in order to analyze oral tradition? According to Alan Dundes (1934-2005), long-time Berkeley professor and a central figure in establishing folklore as an academic discipline in the United States, North American Indian folktales are highly structured and can be

scientifically analyzed rather than be considered, as some have done before, to be a random combination of incidental motifs strung together in an indefinite way (Dundes 1980, 11). He observed that previous folklore study has been conducted in terms of collecting, classifying, and theorizing or analysis, with more of an emphasis upon collecting and classifying, and too shy on analysis (16).

Alan Dundes credits the evolution process of many dedicated professional linguists, folklorists, and anthropologists for leading him to consider a new approach to folklore (Dundes 1980, 7). His approach to analyzing folk materials is of a social science nature, and his proposal led him to construct a theoretical model to subject folktales to close observation and abstract analysis. His intent was to demonstrate that there are notable structural patterns in North American Indian folktales, although he concedes that it is not possible to present every version of every folktale origin. He claims that previous studies of folklore have fallen short because they can be classified as simply minor by-products of other research endeavors rather than a dynamic field of study.^{xvi} Dundes' contributions as a pioneer himself give acknowledgement to the scholarship of non-folklorist scholars such as Frank Boas (1858-1942), a German-American anthropologist, A. L. Kroeber (1876-1960), an American anthropologist, R. L. Lowie (1883-1957) an American ethnographer who studied the Plains Indians of the United States, and Paul Radin (1883-1959), an American linguist and anthropologist. Dundes places the variety of sporadic studies as valuable work in the field of folklore studies, but he sees them as limited by geography and genre.

Several valuable stepping stones in the developmental process of folklore study include the longevity of the contribution of Stith Thompson (1885-1976), American folklorist, for among other works, his survey, classification, and bibliography of North American Indian folktale scholarship in his six-volume *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (1955-58), which is still a well-known index in the twenty-first century.^{xvii} Dundes notes the importance of the studies of A. L. Kroeber (1908),^{xviii} who saw the potential value of a considering a more inclusive group of general types of mythical concepts such as unsuccessful imitation, trickery, theft or deceit, final escape from a pursuer, transformations, and tests of heroes in folktale analysis (20-21). And finally, another prominent approach to the study of folklore is the Aarnes-Thompson tale-type organization, which has been revised by Hans-Jorg Uther (2004), and relies on a system of units that allowed referral to individual parts and pieces, as well as larger bodies of folklore. However, since these types do not offer equal comparatives in categorizing because they omit the consideration of contextual environment, Alan Dundes is convinced that a better approach would be a morphological study, rather than simply classification (15).

According to Alan Dundes, there is too little emphasis on theoretical approaches and an excessive focus on historical origin and tale types in the few published critical works by folklorists before the 1960s. He proposes that this approach in academia incorrectly regards North American Indian folktales as devoid of structure or form. Given as an example is Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916), a member of the English Folklore Society, who judged that those who have read the “savage tales” will agree that they are “formless

and void, and bear the same relation to good European fairy tales as the invertebrates do to the vertebrate kingdom in the animal world (137)".^{xix} Dundes points also to the famed folklorist Franz Boas who held that the incidents, plots, and arrangements of European tales showed a greater uniformity and more cohesion than American Indian tales (Boas 1916, 340).

An intellectual movement towards literary structural analysis and pattern description was prevalent in the first part of the twentieth century and gave rise to Russian Formalism and New Criticism in the United States, and other methods, that placed priority of the study of form over the historical approach or classification. This structural analysis of the literary prompted several important contributions to folklore theory and methodology. One of these was Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928).^{xx}

Vladimir Propp extended the Russian Formalist approach to the study of narrative structure. His classic study became the basis of research into the structure of folklore texts, and he discovered a uniform structure in Russian fairy tales. The English translation was issued in 1958, some 30 years after the original, and it gave the scope to understand the structural study of literary texts, including the structure of folktales. Allen Dundes' strategy includes many aspects of Propp's study, and he considered the publication vital to his own theory (7).

With the Formalist approach, sentence structures were broken down into smaller elements called *morphemes*, the smallest meaningful component of a word or other linguistic unit, in the grammar of a language. Propp used this method, by analogy, to analyze folk tales. In particular, he considered Aarne's tales 300-749, which were called

“Tales of Magic” (Dundes 66). He noted that the characters and their attributes changed from story to story, but that their *functions* or actions were often the same. Propp defines a function as a situation when “an action cannot be defined apart from its place in the process of narration” (19)...“Functions serve as stable, constant elements in folktales, independent of who performs them, and how they are fulfilled by the *dramatis personae*” (20). By breaking down a large number of Russian folk tales of heroes into their smallest narrative units, he identified structures called *narratemes*. By studying the component parts of a fairy tale and the relationship that the elements had to each other and to the entire tale, he identified *functions*. After analyzing one hundred such tales, Propp was able to arrive at the conclusion that there were thirty-one generic *functions* in the Russian folk tale (“the hero is tested”, “a difficult task is proposed to the hero”, etc.). While not all of the possible functions are present in each work, Propp found that those present do occur in a certain fixed sequence, they display in a set order.

The aforementioned folklorist, Franz Boas, suggested that the formal structure of tales derives from the experiences of everyday life. “The formulas of myths and folk-tales, if we disregard the particular incidents that form the substance with which the framework is filled in, are almost exclusively events that reflect the occurrences of human life, particularly those that stir the emotions of the people” (342). Through a close reading of tales of Tarahumara tradition, the uniformity of motifeme sequences about everyday life is observable and appears to follow a number of identifiable structural patterns that were identified in Dundes’ proposed North American Indian (NAI) structural sequences (1980).

Taking a page from Vladimir Propp's study of Russian fairy tales, the present work will include one hundred tales, a bit less than half of the number procured.

The process to begin the analysis of Tarahumara texts starts with collecting transcriptions of Tarahumara tradition, reading, and analyzing the narrative occurrences for motifemic patterns, then categorizing the tales according to their sequence structures. After carefully studying their component parts, the final product reveals formulas that are not random, but have a consistent form in a limited number of patterns, as Dundes' predicted in his study of NAI tales. Even though Dundes' work did not include Tarahumara tales, the present work is a study of only the Tarahumara tradition in an effort to address Dundes' challenge, which states that "...structural analysis...is not an end in itself, but a better comprehension of the mind of man..." (111) as it is expressed in a unique form of his creativity, the primitive art called *folklore*. In his 1980 work, he proposes that the ultimate test that validates his scientific or structural approach as a solid basis for approaching such works is "when other folklorists attempt to analyze the morphology of North American Indian folktales" (111-112). This study answers his call and will thus analyze the structural formulas of Tarahumara tales while also highlighting the prominence of patterns that reveal through the probing threads of connective tissues of intertextual analysis, the tapestry of a macrotext of the cultural elements and determinants that mark their message, ideology, and identity in the sierra society.

The main focus of the present study is to confirm that Tarahumara narratives, although there are content differences such as setting, time, and characters, and a distinction between individual and social lack, can be submitted to a morphological

analysis. Dundes opined that “form [of folk tales] is transcultural, content monocultural” (38). Propp noted that all the NAI folktales in his experience contained villainy or lack (92), and similarly, many Tarahumara stories often begin with lack: Once the food was natural and now it is not...the forests were lush and green and now they are being cut down...the coyote was hungry and saw a rabbit, etc. From a structural approach, one can see that the variability of the motifs does not alter the constancy of the motifemic structure. The sequence of the motifemes is consistent regardless of the particular content of the situation. “Lack” expressed in the narrative may be a shortage of food or the scarcity of firewood, but the concept is usually introduced at the beginning of a tale, prior to other elements, as will be discussed below according to Dundes’ proposed method.

Although, as Propp has noted, it is not part of the morphologist’s task to interpret his/her findings, the “Interdiction/Violation” pattern of a narration aspect of each culture would be considered individually with each group, because a similarity of form does not translate to be a similarity of function in different cultures. The cultural values exposed in a certain group’s folklore would dictate violation of the given group’s beliefs systems and taboos (110-112). For example, when a Tarahumara goes to visit a friend, rather than walk right up to the door and knock, a Tarahumara man would sit on the ground some fifty to one hundred yards away looking at the house and waiting for the owner to come speak to him. To approach someone’s home directly and knock would seem aggressive to the sierra dwellers. Therefore, to approach someone at his door to have a conversation would violate the understood custom and would appear to be an aggressive move rather than a

neighborly visit in the sierra. In another culture, the prohibition of that particular behavior rule would likely not be considered to be a Violation.

A point of clarification is important regarding the term *Interdiction* in this study. A definition for the term is *to prohibit an action or to forbid someone to do something*. In a narrative, a sequence could begin with a Rabbit telling her young to not travel down a certain path (Interdiction). If the young bunny does not obey his mother's warning, then a Violation event occurs in the following motifeme of the narrative. The pair Interdiction/Violation is a frequent plot pattern, and it is possible for the Interdiction to be implicit rather than overtly stated. Interdictions are monocultural warnings to keep the receptor safe or to teach moral code. The Violation of an Interdiction causes a state of disequilibrium in the narrative until the Consequence has been meted.

In order to prove that the morphological structure of Tarahumara narratives, like other North American Indian tales, can be categorized and are not devoid of systematic configuration, we examine the main formulas of Dundes's theory to evaluate and analyze the narrative sequences revealed in the sierra texts. The following structural patterns for North American Indian Tales guide our basic formula in this study, since it would be impossible to surmise an exhaustive list of all possible patterns. Dundes sites three principal alternative combinations of motifemes. These three main formulas of North American Indian tales, according to Dundes, are: 1) the basic two-motifeme (Lack and Lack Liquidated) with possible intervening motifemes, 2) four-motifeme patterns, and six-motifeme combinations.

Dundian structures:

- I. **Two-motifeme sequences** constitute a minimum structural tale type. The nuclear two-motifeme sequence is: **Lack/LackLiquidated** (61-64). (L/LL also has intervening motifemes, which will be discussed ahead.)

The narrative begins with a sense of disequilibrium and moves toward a state of equilibrium. An animal is hungry (disequilibrium), and he finds a way to quench his hunger (equilibrium). A man needs firewood to stay warm, so he searches and finally is able to build a fire to warm himself. Lack may or may not be stated, and there may be intermediate motifemes which intervene between L and LL, thus making the sequences more complex. Three principle alternative combinations of **medial motifemes** (between L and LL) are as follows:

- 1) Task (T), Task/Test Accomplished (TA), or **L T TA LL** (Lack and Lack Liquidated serving as bookends); (same as Propp function 25, difficult task proposed to the hero and 26, task is resolved);
- 2) Interdiction (Int) and Violation (Viol), or **L Int Viol LL**
(same as Propp 2, interdiction and 3, violation of interdiction)
- 3) Deceit (Dct) and Deception (Dcpn), or **L Dct Dcpn LL**
(similar to Propp's 6, trickery, attempt to deceive victim (often for game) and 7, complicity, unwitting helping of the enemy)

The second and third combinations of the basic two-motifeme structure L and LL with medial motifemes (**L Int Viol LL** and **L Dct Dcpn LL**) are more frequent in North American Tales, according to Dundes, and the **L T TA LL** occurs less frequently

(63). The same is true for the Tarahumara tales; however, a notable sample of **(L T TA LL)** in a version of the Tarahumara creation story demonstrates that infrequent sequence:

1. **LACK TASK TASK ACCOMPLISHED LACK LIQUIDATED**
(L T TA LL)

Creation story:			
L	T	TA	LL
Sun and Moon were children alone in the darkness.	They put <i>tesgüino</i> -soaked wooden crosses on them while others danced to cure them.	Sun and Moon began to give light as they were cured.	Darkness abated; the Sun and Moon lit the earth.
(Cruz, H., 2008, 13)			

There is also an example of L T TA LL in a Samson and Goliath type animal story.

"La viuda negra y la cascabel" (The Black Widow and the Rattlesnake) Cruz Huahuichi, (35-36).			
(L T TA LL)			
L	T	TA	LL
Lack of safety; Large villain rattlesnake lurking under rock.	Defeat enemy	"Underdog" tiny spider repeatedly bites clueless snake's head unnoticed	Threat eliminated; snake died.

The second combination of the basic pattern Lack/Liquidated with intervening medial patterns of Interdiction and Violence sequences in the narration is the **L Int Viol LL**.

2. **LACK INTERDICTION VIOLATION LACK LIQUIDATED**
(L INT VIOL LL)

An example of this form is a version of a Zuni tale, “The Rabbit-huntress and the Giant” (Wycoco 1006). The girl is hungry (L). She is warned to not hunt rabbits (Int). She hunts rabbits (Viol). She satisfies her hunger (LL). Another version is more elaborate, the girl subsequently is punished for disobeying, but is ultimately redeemed. As there are several varieties of combination patterns, Int/Viol may appear also as an independent motifeme pattern without L and LL.

The third combination of the basic nuclear pattern **Lack/Liquidated** with intervening motifemes, Deceit and Deception, follows this narrative sequence: **L Dct Dcpn LL**.

3. **LACK DECEIT DECEPTION LACK LIQUIDATED**
(L DCT DCPN LL)

Dundes claims that in his experience with a wide sampling of North American Indian tales that this third pattern is the most common form of tale structure: the nuclear two motifeme patterns L LL with intervening Dct and Dcpn (64).

It is important to note that although most of the narratives in this study follow one of the aforementioned motifemic sequences, in some tales of all three L/LL variant structures the initial Lack may not be expressed directly, but may be caused by an act of abduction or villainy in a narrative. In a few examples of Tarahumara tales, however, the Lack is not Liquidated, and a hungry hunter goes hungry after his quest.

The basic nuclear L/LL pattern has three basic variations with mediating motifemes, while a more complicated tale format with a greater phonemic depth is also prevalent in North American Indian tales, according to Dundian theory (64), the four-motifeme sequence. The Interdiction/Violation motifeme sequence will be considered in this more complex pattern because it appears as an independent motifeme pattern. Also, the Deceit/Deception sequence, according to Dundes, is the most common form of tales of the nuclear two motifeme pattern in North American tales. (64, 72).

II. **Four Motifeme Sequences:**

1. **Interdiction/Violation/Consequence/Attempted Escape from Consequence** **(64) (Int Viol Conseq AE)**

Interdictions communicate culturally particular regulations in the indigenous world that are designed to keep balance and/or to maintain cultural tenets, to protect nature, to care for the plants, and to follow the wisdom of ancestral tradition. Obeying regulations is essential to keep order among members, and a disobedience of an instruction results in a consequential punishment. Plots that are based on this structure include at a minimum the Violation and Consequence motifemes, since it is possible for the Interdiction to be implied rather than directly stated, and it is also possible for a tale to conclude with the Consequence. The Attempted Escape, whether successful or unsuccessful, is seen as an optional component. The core of this pattern is disobedience, a very common element in folktales universally (66).

These didactic tales of forbidden behavior, followed by a type of castigation, present broken societal norms as ethical dilemmas that could endanger a culture's moral

code and be a threat to group cohesion. Each cultural group has unique taboos that are expressed in its folk tales and reflect the reality of everyday life. Dundes cites a brief survey of many North American Indian tribes, including the Eskimos, Winnebagos, Yokuts, and Western Mono,^{xxi} that also display the Int Viol Conseq AE pattern using an occasional explanatory motif (Explan Mot), like a musical *coda*, as an additional general characteristic. This coda ending serves as a non-structural, often a terminal marker in many American Indian folktales (67), including examples from Tarahumara folklore as follows:

EXAMPLE 1: “Legend of the stars/Women become stars” (Int Viol Conseq AE Expl Motif)

Int – (implied) Girls were to not leave until work is finished.

Violation -They did not complete work, but instead ran away.

Conseq-The girls were pursued by the man who tries recapture them by shooting arrows at them.

AE – Girls escape earth to fly to heaven (one version: with help from talking *jicuri* plant/another with help from a forest bird.) They become stars in the sky.

Expl Mot-That is why the Coyote howls in the evening (man turned into coyote) and the stars are beautiful in the night sky. (Tarahumaras believe that their eternal destiny is to become stars after death.) (Lumholtz 1925, 1).

EXAMPLE 2: “Bat Needs Feathers” (Int) Viol Conseq (AE) Expl Motif

Int-Implication that one should not boast about beauty

VIOL Bat complained to God that he had ugly feathers, so God told him to retrieve one feather from each of the other birds. He did so and became beautiful, but he bragged about his beauty.

CONSEQ –Since he violated the moral code, God told him to remove all the beautiful feathers.

EXPL Motif- That’s why bats fly late in the afternoon—they are ashamed to be seen so ugly (Murray 2006, 31-34).

Another tale type that follows the four-motifeme pattern includes a particular kind of violation—offending an animal or object of nature that is of great cultural value--and pursuit by or retribution applied by the offended entity. This type of narrative is consistent with the Indian philosophy to cherish and care for nature, a very consistent philosophy of the Tarahumara. The fear is if they offend or mistreat an element of nature, that element will pursue them and take vengeance (Dundes 70-71). If the Tarahumara hunt prohibited animals or plants and make use of the same skins or products, those products may be resurrected to life and will seek revenge on the perpetrator. A Tarahumara child is told that if he/she does not place his/her hair clippings in a safe place, then when he/she dies, God will ask for an accounting of the God-given hair, and if it is lost, he/she may be burdened with searching for said hair or may get someone else’s hair or a dog’s hair in the next life (Batista, D. 1994, 39; Cruz 1995, 67; *Raichali* 20). Also, in a collection by one of the few published female authors, Dolores Batista writes about an old Tarahumara man who warns that if the sun goes dark again (as a result of not obeying God by dancing and holding fiestas), the Tarahumara tribe will be afraid. If the darkness lasts for three days,

as it did in the last age, the deceased natives will rise from their burial caves and will come down from the hills screaming. Also, animal skins that furnish the native homes and serve as blankets will come back to their original form of life and take over the world as they did in olden days (Batista 7). The leather skins will return to be a bovine creature, and the woolen blankets, a very popular garment for men in the winter months, will return to sheep and the animals will kill the Tarahumaras.

2. **Lack/Deceit/Deception/Lack Liquidated (Dundes 72). (L Dct Dcpn LL)**

A second type of sequence using a basic four-motifeme pattern, is the nuclear motifeme L/LL pattern with intervening sequences Dct/Dcpn, which narrates an attempt to intervene by theft or deceit. In his study, Dundes names this formula both a nuclear two-motifeme pattern with intervening Dct and Dcpn, as well as a four-motifeme pattern, because it is one of the most prevalent patterns. One of the most common means to fulfill a **Lack** is through a kind of **Deceit** that results in **Deception**. The **Deceit** motifeme (Propp's sixth function) refers to the villain's attempts to take a victim's goods or to trick another, while the **Deception** motifeme is equivalent to the victim's submission to or defeat by deception (Propp's seventh function). A theft may be followed by the consequence of a chase by the offended party. Dundes states that the attempt to escape after theft or deceit in North American Indian tales is usually one of two allomotifs: the hero-thief outsmarts his chasers, or the stolen object is passed from one animal to another. Tarahumara tales fall largely in the first allomotif category. There is generally only one character who tries to deceive another for game, inject venom into a snake's head, find out secrets to be able to kill the oxen, or figure out how to survive in the face of danger

with little collaboration with others in the Tarahumara tales. Again, the content of the tales vary, but the form is constant.

Although villains use deceit in a variety of tales to gain food, clever heroes also use disguise to trick a victim by convincing them of a falsehood or by transforming themselves into a different type being in order to garner sympathy and/or to gain the upper hand over a victim. Some Tarahumara tales narrate transformations from human to animal (deer, snake, or fox) form to deceive a lover or to punish someone for thinking about an old lover. Other stories expose hero-hunters who deceive or distract unsuccessful fellow hunters in order to keep their spoils for themselves by lying or hiding it from friends who want a portion—a violation of the Tarahumara philosophy of *korima*—the tribal obligation to share basic needs.

In many Tarahumara tales, the deceit structure starts with Animal A scrounging for food, looking for firewood, or searching for protection (**Lack**), and he is approached or enticed by Animal B. One asks the other to either share the food or to agree to be eaten. The **Lack** of game or safety prompts a struggle between characters to possess without having to share, a clear violation of the Tarahumara taboo. Some make promises to share, but then trick or push the other off a cliff. Other tales postpone or redirect the Other until he can escape or eat the food all alone. Most of the tales end with the successful hunter consuming his game without the pesky intruder (**LL**), but there are a number of tales that use failure as a theme when the hunter does not **Liquidate** the narrative **Lack**. He does not satisfy his desire. His search for food, firewood, or refuge is unsuccessful, an everyday reality in the desolate sierra.

EXAMPLE 1: “The Fox and the Coyote” (L Dect Decpn LL)

L-Hunger: Coyote trapped a chicken and was carrying it to the forest to eat; fox pursued him.

Dct-Clever coyote promised to share the chicken, but first told fox to go to the water. When they arrived to the water, coyote told him instead to eat the huge cheese below (the moon’s reflection on the water).

Dcpn-The fox jumped in to consume the beautiful yellow cheese beneath the water and drowned.

LL-Coyote satisfies his individual hunger by eating the chicken alone. (Cruz Huahuichi, 2000, 33-34).

EXAMPLE 2: “Helping Ourselves, Together We Are Very Strong”

Lack-Lion wanted to kill the oxen to quench his hunger, but had not been successful because the oxen banded together in defense.

Dect-Lion began to gain the confidence of each ox individually by asking prying questions.

Dcpn-the oxen confided group secrets and began to trust Lion individually.

LL-Lion was able to break the band of defense by luring an ox from the herd and killing it when they were alone with him to satisfy his hunger (Parra 2003, 132).

Note that as in the earlier structures, the variability in the content of the stories-- whether it is centered on a coyote distracting a fox and persuading him to go after the cheese instead of his chicken or a lion that deviously manipulates oxen to give up

protective secrets--does not alter the uniformity and stability of the motifemic structure L Dct Dcpn LL in such examples.

Dundes contends that the dualism between good and evil, hero and villain is not as prevalent or clear cut in American Indian tales as it is in European tales, in particular Propp's Russian fairy tales (72). The devious lion above deceives the oxen to their demise, but all in the name of putting food on the table for the lion. There are, however, also some Tarahumara stories that recount mythological threats against the Tarahumara people, and a form of collective deceit is employed to rid the pueblo of a clearly destructive, evil villain or giant, strangely echoing an early Spanish drama, *Fuenteovejuna* (1619), by Lope de Vega where the village as a whole takes the responsibility for ridding the pueblo of a corrupt overzealous villainous official. An example of this collective defense is found in the tale about Kanoko, Ganó or Canó in various versions (Burgess 1981, 16; Cruz 1995, 93; Cruz 2008, 55; Irigoyen 1995, 110), who is a giant so strong that he could clear trees with just his arms, but he was also eating Tarahumara children, so he had to be deceived and destroyed by collective action.

EXAMPLE 3: "Kanoko"

Lack: Kanoko was a valued laborer, but he was killing tribe members.

Dct: He ate large quantities of food, so a plan was hatched to lure him to eat poisonous beans.

Dcpn: Kanoko ate the poisoned beans.

LL: Kanoko became ill and died (LL), removing the threat for the Tarahumara. (Cruz 2008, 55)

There seems to be a curious mixture of both kinds of characters in NAI tales, much like those who appear in Rolando Hinojosa's *Klail City Death Series*: "un poco de todo", a little bit of everything (Hinojosa 85). Basic survival success through trickery seems to be of overriding importance in the narratives involving deceit and deception.

III. **Six-Motifeme Combo: L LL INT VIOL CONSEQ AE (Dundes 85-96)**

Keeping in mind that Dundes' definition of folk tale structure is "one or more motifemic sequences (75)", and having delineated that North American Indian tales may be organized structurally as minimum folktales with a single motifemic pattern such as L/LL or Viol/Conseq, or as having a four motifeme sequence of L/Dct/Dcpn/LL or Int/Viol/Conseq/AE, research also shows that there are a few more complex tales with extended combinations of motifemic patterns (75, 82). A given tale may be told in a limited number of structural patterns (82), so that a simple L LL pattern could be preceded by an Int/Viol sequence, which could cause the initial lack, or Lack could be followed by Int/Viol to aid materially in Liquidating the Lack. An Int might be understood by a reader or implied in the text though not explicitly given, and a tale may end with a Conseq and omit the AE. This difference is not a matter of subtypes of a particular tale, but a question of general structural motifemic pattern alternatives. Many tales told by many NAI cultures share several versions of a popular tale in either a simple or a more complex structure with a combination of motifemic patterns, according to the raconteur and the situation (85-96). However, interestingly, with the scarce number of Tarahumara printed tales available, only a few have appeared in more than one version or pattern. Notably, those few with more than one version include a tale about Canó, Ganó, or Kanokó, a villain giant, a tale

about “Oso”, a bear who kidnaps a woman, and a god, disguised as a poor man, who begs for food at a rich man’s home.

Dundes states that most North American Indian folktales are less complex in structure and have fewer intervening motifs between the basic L and LL format than tales of European origin (93). He cites linguistic theorist Victor Yngve’s concept of the “grammatical depth” of a language (Yngve 130-138) to apply this depth discussion and how it relates to the human memory span and how many successive random numbers or words individuals can remember and recite. Yngve suggests that there is a limit to the number of items which can intervene between a pair of discontinuous constituents. Likewise, in the course of a tale, the reader or narrator may lose the thread of the story so that the Lack Liquidated does not correspond to the initial Lack, if there is too much intervening material to consider. The lesser motifemic depth of North American Indian tales may be the reason why there are few American Indian tales borrowed from Indo-European cumulative tales, where one sees a long series of interdependent liquidations of lacks. Dundes states that “it is...significant that there are no Native American Indian cumulative tales” (94). The limited motifemic depth of North American Indian tales, is in general manifested in a smaller number of complex tales, where the motifemic sequences are basically separate units, not included within the frame of one sequence as often happens in European models where there is a stronger influence of a literary tradition. (Dundes 94). An example of a complex Tarahumara tale is “History of Cho’ma, the Deer” (Cruz Huahuichi 2008, 49). Cho’ma, the protagonist, is a male deer who lives in the forest. The pattern in this complex tale is as follows: **L T TA LL / L Dct Dcpn LL.**

L-Cho'ma (deer) lost his mate.

T-Cho'ma searches for his mate.

TA-Cho'ma finds his mate

LL-United again, safe all.

L-Danger present: Villain hunters pursue family of three (Cho'ma, mate, and baby)

Dct-All hide from hunters

Dcpn-Hunters unable to find deer family.

LL-Danger gone; villain hunters had to go home empty-handed.

Tales relating *how abundance is lost* often have a more complex structure than tales where a Lack is Liquidated, although the loss of abundance is coordinate with the resolution of a Lack (76). Abundance may be lost through violating an interdiction, stated or implied. These tales often outline a narrative sequence of disequilibrium to equilibrium. In Wycoco's category 1051, the pursuit of a dead wife (179-182) discusses the American Indian Orpheus tale where a man loses his wife (L) but can regain her (LL) if he does not violate a cultural code (Int). The man violates the taboo or is unable to meet the condition imposed (Viol) and loses his spouse forever (Conseq). It appears that the L/LL/Int/Viol is one of the most popular motifemic pattern combinations as evidenced in listings about the Orpheus tale by NAI in the Southwest United States, California, Plains, Northwest interior, Eskimos of Greenland, Western Mono, Modioc, Maidu, Shasta, Yokuts, Cherokee, Choctaw, among others (Wycoco 181-182).

There is a widespread tale among NAI groups called "Star Husband", which has Eskimo (Wycoco 561), Chehalis, and Ojibwa (Dundes 88-90) versions, where Int/Viol are

common nuclear motifemes. However, the forbidden desire for a star husband (L) can also constitute a (Viol) of an (Int). The joining in matrimony would be the (LL). Some versions show an (AE) where the girls escape from the marriage and return to earth. However, the constant pattern of motifemes among versions of “Star Husband” from many tribes is Int/Viol. Interestingly, and unique among tales from other cultures also about heavenly bodies and a love struggle is found the Tarahumara “Star Legend” (Lumholtz 298), which tells about three girls who do not desire to marry, but instead struggle to escape their earthly domestic situation to go to heaven. The three women disobey (*implied* Int), escape their earthly master (Viol), ascend to heaven, and become stars, while the man becomes a Coyote (Conseq). Again, content is different between “Star Husband” and “Star Legend”, but the structural motifemic Int Viol Conseq sequence follows a parallel structural pattern.

Just as NAI tales were erroneously thought for a long time to be random conglomerates of motifs (85), Dundes notes that the prevailing attitude among some folklorists about the separate tales being linked together in an arbitrary fashion is equally invalid. A complete story may have an L/LL pattern alone, or the motifemes of T and TA can intervene to make an L/T/TA/LL pattern. Any number of Tasks and TAs may be completed between the L and the LL without changing the integrity of the motifemic pattern.

A means of expanding tales structurally may present as the incorporation of sequences within the framework of a longer tale because in many NAI groups, there is a symbolic number of repetitions attempted to complete a Task, (four and five are magic numbers in NAI folktales), but again, structurally speaking, the number of attempts is not

important. Lévi-Straus's dictum is that the repetition of some sequences in folktales tends to make the motifemic pattern more obvious (86). There are very few Task-oriented tales among the Tarahumara, and two were given on page thirty-two of the present study (Cruz H., 2008, a creation story, "El Sol y la luna", 13 and "La viuda negra y la cascabel," 35-36). However, there is a legend of the Basaseachi Falls where a maiden wants to marry (L). Four suitors (future potential sons-in-law) from the four corners of the known world attempt to win the hand of Candameña's daughter (LL) in subsequent sequences. None of them is able to complete the challenge because the father makes each step increasingly difficult (*Implied Int*) (Viol). The distraught daughter throws herself off the cliff (Conseq) and is transformed into a waterfall (AE). The repetition of each suitor's experience does extend the tale, but this does not change the motifemic pattern of the tale.

In the present study, it is important to distinguish between the two motifemic sequences: Interdiction/Violation and Task/Task Accomplished. Both are forms of injunctions to the *dramatis personae*, but with an Interdiction sequence, the plot includes a command to not do something. However, with a Task, the main character is told to complete a directive. There is a difference in their distribution in a narrative plot, and a Task Accomplished usually intervenes between L and LL, while the Interdiction and Violation motifemes can occur either before or after Lack: Int/Viol/L/LL or L/Int/Viol/LL. If the violation of the command happens before Lack, the Int/Viol usually triggers the Lack: Int/Viol/L/LL. If Int/Viol occur after L, they usually Liquidate the Lack. Moreover, the Interdiction/Violation sequence can also occur after the LL in the six motifeme sequence L/LL/Int/Viol/Conseq/AE (87).

The fairly recent process of documenting the oral tradition of the Tarahumara will serve as the revelation of secrets that have been protected for hundreds of years by a very isolated indigenous group. Each consumer of the text will be able to evaluate the present work as an analysis of works of art, as a connection to previously read works of historical-literary nature, and as a contrast between historical situations and modern-day reality. The intended audience for documenting the transcriptions has a double focus: 1) for the Tarahumara, to document and preserve their culture and to serve as readers to aid recently literate members practice reading skills, and 2) for the *chabochi* (anyone who is not a Tarahumara)—present and future—who can learn about the Tarahumara perspective of the universe. Each reader will evaluate his/her own response to the works, according to his/her cultural background and experience. The contribution of this present analytical work will fill a void in academic folklore studies in general, and in Mexican history, culture, and literary texts, in particular.

I. Nuclear two-motifeme sequence Lack / Lack Liquidated: L/LL

In tales based upon the nuclear two motifeme pattern, the initial motifeme Lack (L) is often manifested at the start of the tale to introduce a situation in search of a resolution, such as a coyote searching for food, a character looking for a companion, or the absence of fire on earth. The motifeme Lack Liquidated (LL) will conclude or resolve the tale at the end of the narrative.

The importance of the two motifemes, Lack (L) and Lack Liquidated (LL), is fundamental even in the analysis of tale narratives in which there may be intervening motifemes. Besides the simple two motifeme pattern, there are three principal alternative

combinations between L/LA: 1) Task (T) and Task Accomplished (TA) or L/T/TA/LL; 2) Interdiction (Int) and Violation (Viol) or L/Int/Viol/LL; and 3) Deceit (Dct) and Deception (Dcpn) or L/Dct/Dcpn/LL.

“The Bear” (Burgess 1970). Bears used to live in Rocoroibo and walked around freely eating corn and scaring people (L). When the Rarámuris got slingshots to scare them, they left town (LL).

“The Crow” (Burgess 1970). The earth was flat and the water had no place to run (L). The crow stomped on the land and made crevices so that the water could run (LL).

“Origin of the Earth” (Cruz 1995, 15). In the beginning, there was no Earth (L). In seven days, God made the heavens and the earth, and God and his brother came to earth and organized the first races to be sure that the earth was sufficiently solid (LL). God said that it was good.

“The Creation of Man” (Cruz 1995, 19). God and his brother, Atanasio, were alone on the Earth (L), so they decided to create more men and other animals to populate the Earth (LL). Atanasio used white clay (made *chabochis*) and God used dark clay (made Tarahumaras). Only God was able to give them the breath of life.

“The Origin of Fire” (Cruz H. 1995, 21). There was no fire on earth (L). One day a Tarahumara observed that a strike of lightening started a spark in a pine tree, so he saved the flame, and shared it with neighbors (LL). (We have kept the flame alive since antiquity.)

“Origin of Life” (Cruz 1995, 27). There was nothing over the earth (L) and with one exhale, God made that which is on the Earth (LL).

“The Origin of Air” (Cruz 1995, 31). Before, nobody had the ability to know or think (L). Then later, God created air and gave breath to man (LL); since then, the air comes out of gopher holes, out of caves and even from the water brooks where snakes live and suck the air.

“The Origin of the Rain” (Cruz 1995, 37). Long ago, there was no rain and all the animals died because of the drought (L). Two Tarahumaras started a fire, while another Tarahumara danced the “yumare”, and the smoke became a cloud that hovered for three days, until there was a heavy rain (LL).

“The Dirty Child” (Cruz 1995, 51). The boy never bathed, was smelly and became ill (L). Since he began to take baths, he is very clean (LL). It is good to be clean and wash our clothes.

“This is What the Old Ones Say” (Cruz 1995, 75). One night a tiger came up on a Tarahumara and was going to eat him (L), but a lion soon arrived and saw that the tiger was after the man, so the two felines fought all night, and at dawn, the lion defeated the tiger and saved the man (LL). (The lion is still a friend of the Tarahumara.)

“The Little Bird and the Golden Eagle” (Cruz 1995, 77). The little bird was building his nest in a tree when he was threatened by a hungry eagle (L). The little bird convinced the insistent eagle that such a tiny meal would not satisfy him and persuaded the eagle to find a rabbit that would be more filling (LL-saved himself).

“The Black Widow and the Snake” (Cruz 2008, 35). Two men were observing a spider moving up and down on the branches of a pine tree and realized that a dangerous snake was under the rock beneath (L). The spider was imperceptibly injecting venom into the

unsuspecting snake's head each time she came down; so many times that the snake was debilitated and died (LL). This is how the tiny spider defeated the deadly serpent.

“The Rabbit and the Dog” (Cruz 1995, 85; 2008, 47). A strange animal knocked me to the ground, and I was afraid (L). My dog came carrying a small rabbit in his mouth (the strange animal); I was relieved, took it home, and shared it with my dog (LL).

“Origin of Death” (Cruz 1995, 87). Once there was no death (L), then God, after consulting with all living things, ordered that all the animals over the earth must die (LL).

“Sun and Moon” (Cruz 2008, 13; Lumholtz 1902, 297). Sun and Moon (Sol y Luna) were sick children in the darkness (L). They put tesgüino (batari) on wooden crosses, touched their chests, then they began to glow, then shine, and were fully cured by dancing and drinking tesgüino (LL).

“The Origin of the Tarahumara” (Cruz 2008, 15). The earth was soft and unformed (L). The Tarahumaras came down from the sky and danced to make firm the newly created soil (LL).

“During the Third Epoch, There Was an Eclipse” (Gardea 1998, 22). When the sun died (L), the wise ones went to the mountain, offered hot water to the four cardinal points, sacrificed a bull, then danced and sang the Yúmari; their actions saved the world, and there was light again (LL).

“In the Beginning...” (Gardea 24). At first, there were no animals and people were cannibals (L). Then, God gave animals to fill the hunger needs of humans (L/LL).

“White Rocks” (Gardea 49). The white rocks that are near the church were once white pilgrims who came to beg for food (L). In that moment, the Creator turned them into the rocks that we see today, so that they would not suffer hunger (LL).

“The Man and the Lion” (Gardea 61). The tiger crept up on the man to attack him (L), the lion intervened, and helped the man defeat the tiger (LL), and the man gave the lion a turkey as a reward.

“The Bear and the Blowfly” (López 1980, 5). One day Sofio the bear and the blowfly, Moscarda, had an encounter on the road, and after a heated challenge, the bear proposed that they settle the dispute by gathering teams of their respective friends and having a war (L). The four-footed animals roared to scare the insects, but the bugs buzzed and attached themselves to the larger creatures, making the animals surrender, pleading for mercy, so the triumphant blowflies retreated and left them in peace (LL), a cautionary/Samson and Goliath tale.

“Domingo Morillo and the Fox” (Mares 1975, 91; 2003, 87). After journeying a long way one day, Domingo went to sleep by the fire, but woke up soon and realized that a fox had crawled under his blanket (L). He killed the fox with a pole (LL). After his courageous encounter with the fox, he became ill and died.

“How Animals Stole Fire” (Murray 47). Years ago, the Tarahumara did not have fire; they were cold and lived in caves (L). A bolt of lightning started a fire in several trees, the neighbors captured and hoarded the fire, but an opossum snuck in, stole and carried the fire in his pouch. The Tarahumaras now have fire (LL).

“How Music Came to the Rarámuris” (Palma, Francisco 64). When God made the world and the Rarámuris walked around almost nude, Music said to God: “I want to be with the Rarámuris,” (L) however, God made Music wait until the people learned to hunt, grow crops, find places to live, grow crops, make churches, and celebrate their fiestas; so Music hid in the house of an artisan, until one day, a boy passed by and strummed his hand-made instrument. Since then, Music will always be found among the Rarámuris (LL).

“The Child Who Saved a Village” (Palma, Francisco 67). A child saw that water was leaking from the dam (L), so he placed his hand in the hole to stop the leak, but the water kept spewing out, so he decided to use his whole body to stop the water. The next day, the people saw that he had deliberately given his life to save the community from disaster (LL).

This story echoes the tale about a Dutch boy in a novel by the American writer Mary Mapes Dodge, *Hans Brinker; or, the Silver Skates: A Story of Life in Holland* (1865) who placed his finger into a hole in the village dyke and was able to alert adults, who then were able to repair the leak and save his village. The boy in the Tarahumara version sacrificed his life to save his community and is lifted to a hero status, because he is held as an example of “thinking well”, as Tarahumara sermons exhort; the good of the community is more important than the individual.

“The Lizards’ Tails” (Palma, Francisco 73). The indigenous began to hunt lizards and cut off their tails, so the reptiles began to hide under rocks, to ask other animals how to avoid the Rarámuri, and then the lizards beseeched “he who lives above” to help them (L). He

promised that if the Rarámuris cut their tails off again, another longer and more beautiful tail would grow back in its place (LL).

“The Giant’s Tongue” (Palma, Francisco 86). Near a river lived a dangerous giant who scared people with his roars and by sticking out his tongue (L). The good giant killed him and the animals ate him except for the tongue, because it was very hard (LL). They say that his tongue turned into the black rock that is still at the river’s edge.

“The Wolf and the Fox” (Palma S., 37). Wolf and Fox lived near each other, but one day the fox got lost in the forest and found himself in a town where they wanted to kill him (L). He managed to escape, found the wolf, and they returned home (LL).

“The Apaches” (Palma, S. 38). The Apaches wanted to take Tarahumara land in Tekorichi, so there was a battle with rocks, sticks, and arrows that lasted three days and nights (L). Many died, but the indigenous of Pichique won and can plant crops and live there freely (LL).

“The Recent Rain” (Parra 2003, 115; Cruz 61). In the beginning, there was no rain, and plants and animals died (L). A Tarahumara man burned the dried leaves, smoke rose, a cloud stayed in the sky dancing three days, another Tarahumara danced, and since that time, it rains very nicely in the sierra (LL).

“Hare that Dances the Tecolote Dance” (Parra 2003, 121). It was dry over the land in July (L). I saw a hare and two rabbits dancing short steps that seemed to be the traditional *tecolote* rain dance. It rained all summer after that (LL).

“Where the Land Meets the Sky” (Parra 2003, 128). There is a place in the mountains where the Devil comes out and grabs people and takes them to Hell (L). Since the Devil

is old and cannot travel over difficult terrain, go to the place where the land meets the sky where our father lives, and he will accompany you to Heaven (LL).

“The Bull from Tarumá” (Parra 2003, 182). One clear night, the lion was hungry and wanted to kill a cow (L). After a long night of defending the cows against a vigilant lion, the bull was able to pierce the heart of the prowling lion and finally get some rest (LL).

Nuclear two-motifeme sequence with *intervening motif T/TA*

Lack / Task / Task Accomplished / Lack Liquidated (L/T/TA/LL)

The Task/Task Accomplished pattern as intervening between Lack and Lack Liquidated

occurs less often than the Interdiction/Violation and Deceit/Deception sequences as medial motifemes (Dundes 63).

“How We Celebrate” (Gardea 85). In order to live in peace with God, we are obligated to hold community celebrations (L). According to our ancestors, God ordered us to dance the Tutuburi, sacrifice animals, and offer him tesgüino (T), so we make sure that all generations participate in fulfilling this mandate (TA). Living correctly *el buen camino* and fulfilling our obligations bring God’s favor on our people and we can enjoy the days here that God gives us (LL).

“Corn” (Palma, Francisco 61). The God of the Rarámuri saw an ant carrying a grain of corn, so he converted himself into a red ant and followed him to find out the source of the grain (L). God talked with the governor and told him to care for and grow this corn (T), so that the Rarámuri would have food, so he did (TA), and now we know the source of the corn and love our God, who gave us both the corn and the rain (LL).

“The Origin of the World” (Pintado 27). There was only one small piece of dirt surrounded by water before the sierra and the Rarámuri people exited (L). On this tiny piece of land, God told two *pascolero* dancers to dance pressing the earth firmly (T). They danced for days and nights (TA) until the water began to fill in and the piece of land grew to form mountains (LL). For this reason, we dance so that the land will stay packed and it will not return to water.

Nuclear two-motifeme sequence with *intervening motif* LL/Viol/Conseq /LL

“Bear Threatens Hikuli” (Lumholtz 361). When Tata Dios went to heaven in the beginning of the world, he decided to leave the sacred Hikuli behind as the great remedy of the people, but Bear challenged him to a fight (L). They fought (Viol) and the Bear was defeated by the more powerful Hikuli (Conseq). The Bear sat on a stone and cried, and left, never to return (LL).

“Tata God and the Devil” (Murray 55) Tata God and Devil, his brother, went to Tata God’s house where they drank, ate, and fell asleep (L). The Devil got up and stole God’s money and hid in his house (Viol). They fought and the Devil killed Tata God, but he revived himself and told the Devil to go to the deepest place on the earth (Conseq). Devil has stayed under the earth forever, while God stayed in his own house (LL).

Four motifeme sequences:

1. **Interdiction/Violation/Consequence/Attempted Escape/Explanative Motif**
 (implied or direct) (successful or not) (optional)

(Int / Viol / Conseq / AE / (Expl Mot)

Plots based on this sequence may simply have a Violence/ Consequence structure as a minimum motifemic pattern. It is possible for the Interdiction to be implicit rather

than directly stated, and a tale may end with a Consequence motifeme with no effort to escape the consequence (AE). If present, the Explanative Motif is often the tale *finale* and is optional in the structural pattern.

“The Origin of the Pig” (Burgess 1975, 14). When a seemingly poor and dirty man arrived at their house, the residents hid, so that they didn’t have to share their food (Viol of *korima*). The Tarahumara cook gave the disguised god food to eat, so he made her owner of all and turned the stingy family into pigs (Conseq).

“Before” (Gardea García 23). When the whites arrived, animals could talk, so the chameleon (speaking for the chabochi), and a bird called Tochape (advocating for the rarámuri) were able to communicate. The chameleon told the Tochape that there were too many Rarámuri walking around (disequilibrium because of abundance), so they must not procreate any more (Int). So, the Rarámuri obeyed the voice of the Other (Viol), and thus the Rarámuri will one day be extinguished (Conseq). The whites have grown in number and this is how they have taken our lands (abundance loss). **Int/Viol/Conseq**

“What happened when the mestizos arrived?” (Gardea 63) In the old days when there were no mestizos, we held our ceremonies very well, making Our Father’s heart glad by first offering him the traditional beverage *batari*; then afterwards, we would drink. The mestizos arrived to the Tarahumara territory and changed the Rarámuri way of thinking by bringing tequila with him (Viol), which makes one drunk quickly, causing us to not celebrate well, resulting in drunkenness, making us bad actors who do not behave well with our friends and community (Conseq). We need to return to our fore fathers’ way of thinking. **Viol/Conseq**

“The Apaches” (Gardea 72). The Apaches, formerly accepted into the Tarahumara tribe because of intermarrying, had learned to rob and kill from the whites with whom they fought, and had killed various Rarámuris (Viol). So, in response, the Rarámuris corralled the Apaches who were unable to flee and burned them alive in their cave (Conseq).

“The Fighting Trees” (González 8-9). Long ago, the trees were giants who lived in villages on the same land where we live today, and two villages that were fighting (Viol) were approached by other villages to stop their fighting, but as soon as they met together, they all converted to trees of different kinds (Conseq), according to the damages inflicted during the battle. God did that so that they would learn to not fight among themselves.

“Lost Soul” (González 38). Three siblings who went out to guard their flocks had to chase and round them up after the animals had been frightened and ran away (L). The little sister went missing, but the two brothers did not tell their grandparents she was missing until the next morning (Viol). The next morning, the boys had to confess their negligence and told their grandparents that their sister was missing (Conseq). The grandparents decided to contact the curandero, who was able to guard María’s soul home (LL).

The Buzzard and the Heron” (López 1980, 27). The buzzard lied when he promised to teach the heron to swim, if she would teach him to fly (Viol). The buzzard, who could not swim, sank; therefore, the heron discovered the buzzard’s lie, rejected him, and the buzzard lost his head feathers (Conseq).

“Tiburcio Merina and the Bear” (Mares 1975, 97). Tiburcio went to Baquépachi to drink tesgüino. He returned home and began to hit the bear (Viol) so hard that the stick broke. The bear bit Tiburció many times and the man is still sad and has pain (Conseq). My father told me that one should not talk about bears (taboo) because they hear well and they will get mad and consequently bite your joints.

“Toña Fria and the Bear” (Mares 103). Near a cave where she had a corral, Toña went to milk her cow and saw that a bear was a threat to her calf, so she told the bear to not harm the calf (Int). The bear came after Toña (Viol), but she pushed him in the arroyo (Conseq). The bear was afterwards afraid of and avoided Toña (AE).

“Basaseachi Waterfall” (Murray 15). Candameñena, lord of the High Tarahumara, had a beautiful daughter, and because she had many suitors, he imposed a cruel series of tests (Viol) which caused the death of the last four competitors (Conseq) and caused his daughter, Basaseachi, to throw herself off a cliff and become a waterfall.

“Legend of the Coyote/Star Legend” (Murray 25) Three maidens did not complete their work, so they fled their master (Viol) with help from a disguised Jicurí, god of peyote, who helped them flee while the wicked master was turned into a coyote (Conseq). The three ascended and converted into stars in the Orion Constellation (AE).

“Mexico” (Palma, Francisco 57). In the beginning, there were many kinds of houses, but when the Spaniards came to our land, they began to cut down trees and took the money that God had for us (Viol). These lands are like an ox—at first fat with plenty of blood and healthy flesh, but now it is skinny and weak because it has little blood and few hairs (Conseq).

“The Vain Deer” (Palma, Francisco 71). The deer saw his reflection in the water and vainly boasted about his beautiful horns (Viol), thinking that it would be better to break a leg rather than have something happen to his gorgeous horns. One day when he was being chased by dogs, his horns got caught in some branches, causing him to realize that his trusty legs were more important and would have saved him, had his horns not deceived him (Conseq).

“The Sirena” (Palma, H.) A little girl wanted to play in the river all the time, but her parents forbade her because of the danger (Int). The girl would sneak out at night and play in the river all night and then return before dawn (Viol). One morning, the mother could not find her daughter, but she headed to the sound of singing near the river and saw that her daughter had turned into a beautiful mermaid playing on the rock (Conseq). When her parents called to her, the mermaid swam away, happy to live on her own terms in the water (AE).

“The Cócono That Flew without a Head” (Parra 2001, 85; 2003, 173) A man and his wife left their two sons to care for the house and animals when they left to graze the goats. The sons got hungry and decided to kill a turkey, but they wanted to have some cruel fun first by cutting off its head to see if it would fly headless (Viol). When it flew away, they followed it and chased the coyote that stole it. Not only did they lose their turkey, they were punished/severely spanked when their parents heard how they made the animal suffer (Conseq).

“The Condor and the Fox” (Parra 2001, 103). The condor and the fox were arguing about who was stronger and could endure bad weather conditions better. The condor had

feathers that could withstand the rain, but the fox, thinking that his bushy tail was protection enough, was stubborn and would not concede the inevitable (Viol). Fox died because his tail could not keep out the rain and because he was so stubbornly macho (Conseq). What a sad ending to those who are braggarts!

“The Boy and the Parakeet” (Parra 2001, 119) A child named Sebastian stole a man’s talking parakeet (Viol). When the man returned and walked past the boy with the bird in a sack, he called to the bird and the bird responded from inside the sack; the boy was terribly ashamed (Conseq).

“The Intelligence of God” (Parra 2001, 187) When on an unsuccessful fishing trip with friends, Juan started criticizing God’s creation choices--the size of the fruits on various trees and bushes (Viol). Suddenly, an acorn fell and hit him on the forehead. They believed that God made the acorn fall and that God did not allow them to catch fish because of Juan’s criticism of God’s creation (Conseq).

“The Playful Lion” (Parra 2003, 116) When the lion accidentally mashed one of the cricket’s feet, and the cricket accused the lion of aggression towards him just because he was small (Interdiction-don’t pick on the small guy), the lion threatened that he could kill him with one swipe. They agreed to have a showdown with each calling their friends to fight (Viol). When they clashed, the swarm of insects relentlessly bit them, and the larger four-footed creatures lost (Consequence) and fled (AE) the scene. The lion learned that the united swarm of insects won because of their team work to defeat the larger ones (cautionary tale—fighting is prohibited among Tarahumaras; unity will defeat the enemy; big is not always better; don’t pick on the little guy). (Int /Viol/Conseq/AE)

“A Chain” (Parra 2003, 125). The young Tranquilino picked up a chain he came across outside a blacksmith’s house (Viol), but he burned his fingers (Conseq) and dropped it. Don’t touch things that don’t belong to you.

A second four motifeme combination is:

Lack /Deceit/Deception/Lack Liquidated (L/Dct/ Dcpn/LL)

One of the ways to liquidate a lack is through deception. Many Tarahumara plots begin with a situation of hunger or other need, and one character deceives the other for his goods or next meal (Dct). The victim appears to be unaware of the deception, but plays a role that makes it possible for deception to occur (Dcpn).

“The Man and the Fox” (Batista, D., 23) A man was hungry because there was no corn where he lived (L). A woman on the road offered him corn-based esquite, but he quickly discovered that it was not corn, but rather was of another plant (Dct). Although deceived (Dcpn), his hunger was quenched (LL). Quickly the woman threw off her disguise and transformed into a fox and ran away howling. Since that time, foxes howl. (Animals practice korima with humans.)

“Cruz Kills a Deer” (Burgess 1975, 6). While searching for deer (L) along with neighbors, I startled one with a rock, then we wrestled it and although we killed it, we had to hide it from the interested neighbors (Dct) and we convinced them that it had run past us down the hill (Decpn). We then cooked and ate it all alone and returned home very full (LL).

“The Fox and the Crow” (Cruz 1995, 83). The fox woke up hungry (L) and happened to see a crow in the top of a pine tree with a piece of cheese in his beak. He convincingly

complimented the crow's beauty and his very lovely song (Dct), so the flattered crow began to sing louder (Decpn), causing his cheese to fall to the ground. The fox ate the cheese and thus remedied his hunger (LL).

“Kanoko” (Cruz 1995, 93; 2008, 55). A hungry giant, Kanoko, kidnapped a child, killed him, and ate him (L-villany). The Tarahumara lured the giant with food (secretly poisoned) in exchange for labor (Dct). He agreed to trade work for food (Decpn). The menacing giant died from eating poisoned food (LL). (**L/Dct /Decpn /LL** (villainy conquered))

“The Coyote and the Rabbit” (Gardea 68). The coyote and the rabbit met by chance one day, and both were hungry (L). Being sworn enemies, the rabbit tried to escape by distracting the coyote and said that he was going to bring chickens for the two of them to eat (Dct). However, instead, the rabbit brought a sack full of not chickens, but rather dogs (Decpn). When he untied the sack, the dogs started chasing the coyote (LL), and the rabbit outsmarted the wily coyote.

“The Buzzard and the Crow” (Gardea 70). The buzzard expressed his love for and asked the crow how she made her hair so pretty. She explained (lying) that she washed her plumage with mezcal to get the shiny look (Dct). So, the buzzard went and washed his hair with mezcal, but it started itching and he scratched his head until it bled and the remaining feathers fell out (Decpn). That's why the buzzard has no feathers on his head.

“Mr. Salt” (González 12-13) A long time ago, a filthy man, who wore black clothing that stuck to his skin over nasty scabs, lived in a village, and the people would give him food and tried to stay as far away as possible, because he smelled so awful (L). One day, the

man neared the village and asked various people for help peeling the filthy scabs off his skin, and if they would help him, he promised to give them the scabs to season their food (*implied* Int). Nobody paid attention and asked how this filthy man could help them (Viol). The man was sad because of trying to convince others to help him. This is how we are without salt now, and since then, we have to go to buy it at other villages with the money that they give us for our work (Conseq).

“The Snake Near the River Near the Ranch” (Mares 1975, 33) There was a villainous snake that was eating animals and children in the town (L). The townspeople had a party to entice the snake to come out by placing a baby near the river in a hammock (Dct). When the snake attempted to bite the baby, his open mouth was filled with hot rocks dropped by the villagers (Decpn). The snake was so heavy and in pain that he could not climb the hill, went back to the water to cool off, and left a white stain on a rock that is still evident today. Villainy defeated (LL).

“The Snake in the Tepochique Arroyo Peyote Fiesta” (Mares 1975, 37) There was once a villainous snake that lived in a narrow passage of the river near Tepochique (L). In order to get rid of the common threat, the villagers heated some rocks at a fake party and hung a baby in a basket from a tree over the river to attract the snake (Dct). The snake took the bait (Decpn), and when he came out, they threw the hot rocks in his open mouth; he died from his burns before falling in the water (LL).

“The Coyote and the Sheep” (Mares 1975, 73; 2003 p 69) A coyote encountered a sheep and threatened to eat him (L). The sheep agreed to be eaten, but asked him to first sit near, then afterwards he could do as he wanted (Dct). So, Coyote sat down as instructed

(Decpn), the sheep pushed him off a hill, and the coyote was no longer a threat (LL).
(villainy conquered)

“The Skunk and the Coyote” (Mares 1975, p 77; 2003 p 69) While searching for food, the skunk greeted the coyote, but the coyote answered angrily because he wanted to eat the skunk (L). Skunk said that she was single with no husband; she flirtingly asked Coyote to pull the thorns out of her tail (Dect). Coyote neared and complied, but while doing so, the skunk sprayed the coyote and blinded him (Decpn). Coyote fell in a puddle and drowned (LL). (villainy conquered)

“The Cricket and the Coyote” (Mares 1975, 81; 2003 p 73) Coyote threatened to eat cricket (L). Cricket tricked Coyote by saying that he was holding up a tall rock to keep it from falling (Dct). Coyote is fooled into believing that the rock is on edge, so when Cricket asks him to hold it for a brief while, Coyote does so (Decpn), and Cricket flees. Coyote becomes exhausted and falls to his demise in the arroyo (LL). (villainy conquered)

“The Legend of the Valley of the Weepers” (Murray 19). The violent Apaches came to our country long ago and stole from the Tarahumara (L). The wise leaders decided to invite them to a tesguinada (Dct) in order to make them docile. The Apaches became intoxicated (Dcpn), so they put them in a cave and enclosed them with rock and mud and left them there; they cried for three days until they agreed to live peacefully (LL).
(L/Dct/Dcpn/LL)

“The Giant Kanóko” (Palma, Francisco 78) There was a dangerous giant who lived among the Rarámuri who could topple trees and who devoured children, making all suffer (L). The people decided to kill him, so one invited him to eat and served beans with

chilicote, a poison ingredient (Dct). After eating a lot of the tainted food (Dcpn), he felt sick and left running and they watched as he turned to stone (LL). Today, the Rarámuris see him near Wawaybo, on the road to Resobaina, and are even able to make out the hat he was wearing. (L/Dect/Decpn/LL)

“A Mouse and a Cat” (Parra 2001, 82) Mouse woke up hungry, and Cat tempted him by promising him delicious food (Dct). The naïve mouse was pulled in by Cat’s kind words and walked right into Cat’s claws (Dcpn). After he ate the mouse, he had regrets. God does not like Tarahumaras who lie like the cat.

“Helping Ourselves, Together We Are Very Strong” (Parra 2003, 132) The hungry lion wanted to kill an ox (L), but had not been successful because the oxen banded together in defense. The fox advised the lion to lie to gain the confidence of the oxen individually, so that they would reveal a group vulnerability (Dct). He did so, and the oxen confided group secrets (Dcpn). The lion was then able to kill the oxen individually and satisfy his hunger (LL). (L/Dect/Decpn/LL)

III. Six-motifeme Sequence combinations:

Lack / Lack Liquidated / Interdiction / Violation / Consequence / Attempted Escape

Although Dundes states that his NAI studies reveal that a popular motifemic pattern combination includes an initial nuclear sequence L/LL, followed by an Interdiction/Violation sequence (76), many longer Tarahumara tales do have six motifemic sequences, but do not rigidly follow that specific pattern.

“The Bull and I” (Cruz 1995, 53; 2008, 43). My friend and I needed to cross the arroyo (L). He told me to cross the arroyo holding on tightly to the tail of a burro (Int). The water

was so strong that I lost my grip (Viol). I was lost for a while (Conseq), but when I saw a native bull, I found the path (AE) and was relieved that I was not alone (LL).

(L/Int /Viol /Conseq/ AE/LL)

“A Man” (Cruz 1995, 89) A man returning from the canyon found himself at nightfall with no way to make a fire to stay warm (L). Then, nearby, he saw a flame, went toward it seeking warmth, and saw a woman with a large fire cooking *yorique*. She invited him to eat and sleep there because she lived alone. He did dine and stay the night (Viol), but woke up cold and called out to the woman, but there was no answer. At dawn, he got up and saw the skeleton of the woman who had given him to eat, and thinking he was trapped by this dead woman (Conseq), he made the sign of the cross many times and tried to run home (AE), but he could not walk (L), so he looked for an herb called *rosábili* and started chewing it. Afterwards, he regained his strength and was able to return home to his wife (LL). **(L/Viol/Conseq/AE/L/LL)**

“The Sick Skunk” (Cruz 2008, 37) Pasuchi, the skunk saw the coyote and was afraid (L). Pasuchi hid himself, feigned illness, asked why he wanted to kill him (Int), then offered only one paw in order to deceive the coyote and escape being eaten (Dct). The coyote leaned down to bite the skunk, and when he opened his mouth, Pasuchi passed gas so nasty that the coyote was blinded (Dcpn), and the skunk won his freedom (AE). Pasuchi was no longer afraid of the coyote (LL). **(L/Int /Dct/Decpn AE/LL)**

“The Legend of the Bat” (Murray 31). The bat was the ugliest and most unfortunate of all the creatures (L). The bat complained to God that he had ugly feathers, so God told him to retrieve one feather from each of the other birds. He did so and became beautiful

(LL), but he bragged (*implied* Int) about his beauty (Viol). Since he violated the moral code, God told him to remove all the beautiful feathers (Conseq). That's why bats fly late in the afternoon—they are ashamed to be seen so ugly (*Explan Motif*).
(L/LL/Viol/Conseq/Expl Motif)

IV. Extended Tarahumara tale structure

According to Dundes, the lesser motifemic depth of NAI tales is manifested in the small number of complex tales as compared to a larger number of extended tales. Whereas a complex tale has a great number of motifemes intervening between a L/LL sequence, and are more frequent in European tales, extended tales consist of essentially complete tale units told in succession. A Lack is often Liquidated before another Lack is introduced in the sequence. Also, the Consequence after an Interdiction/Violation occurs before a new Interdiction is initiated. A NAI tale can be called an extended tale if a new Interdiction is introduced in the sequence. The makeup of extended tales are morphologically similar to the shorter patterns discussed. A version of a tale could end at several points, but the introduction of a new pattern leads to another motifeme sequence, while these sequences are separate units (Dundes 94-95). There are a variety of sequence structures among the Tarahumara tales.

“The Serpent and the Woman” (Palma Aguirre 80) A woman, dressed in the sun, with the moon on her feet and a crown of stars, came down to earth in the throes of childbirth, but a serpent came to devour her child (L). She gave birth to a boy, but God took the child with him and hid the mother in a cave and protected her for several years (LL). After she left the cave, the serpent, who even God's angels could not kill, came after her (L), but

she was given wings so that she could fly away (LL). Then, the serpent started vomiting a liquid at her (L), but the Earth swallowed up the water (LL). Since then, the angry serpent began to pursue her other children who believe and follow the Word of God (L/LL/L/LL/L/LL)

“The Intelligent Man” (Batista, D 17; Cruz 1995, 65) A man was traveling a long distance to find work and he took *pinole* along to drink. He had forgotten his container (L), so he looked for a hole in the craggy rocks and mixed it with water there (LL). He heard a sound. It was a bear (L) that went directly to drink the pinole. The bear closed his eyes because it was so tasty, and when he opened his eyes, the man threw a handful of dirt at him and then tossed pinole in his mouth. While the bear was swallowing it, the man was able to defend himself with a stick and rocks (LL). Later, some mule drivers passed by, and upon seeing the dead bear, they asked if the man had killed him alone. He affirmed that he had-- plus many others. (short tale of valor)

(L/LL/L/LL)

“The Snake Place” (Batista, D 19) Two women were washing near a river when a bear carried one away to his cave, and locked her in with rocks (Viol). After a year, the girl had a son (Conseq). One day, she wanted some sun, so the bear let her outside. She told the bear to yell when he was on top of the hill (Dct) (so she could know when to escape). The bear unknowingly complied (Dcpn) and the girl escaped (AE). She returned to her home, but the bear was angry and pursued her (L), so he destroyed the house (Viol). The Tarahumaras were angry, so they killed the bear by stabbing him with lances (Conseq). The girl was freed (LL).

(Viol/Conseq/Dct /Decpn /AE/L/Viol /Conseq /LL)

“The Bear” (Burgess 1975, 20) In Rocoroibo, a bear kidnapped a woman and hid her in his caved (L). When the bear left briefly, the village people rescued the woman and put her in a church tower (LL). The angry bear followed them and jumped high on the tower to reach her (L). The people ended his life (LL).

(L/LL/L/LL)

“The Donkey and the Coyote” (Cruz H., 1995, 81) A Coyote met a donkey and threatened to eat him (L). The donkey agreed (LL), but said he had to go first to his house (Dct). When the coyote arrived at the donkey’s house as agreed, the donkey kicked him and ran (Dcpn). Then the coyote ran into a sheep and asked if he could eat him (L), but the sheep gored him (Viol), and the coyote lost his appetite (Conseq) and was no longer a threat (LL). **(L/LL/Dct/Dcpn/L/Viol/Conseq/LL)**

“Origin of the Moon” (Cruz 1998, 33) It is believed that long ago, the moon was ash like the cloud and did not shine (L). A man, a woman, and a child formed a wheel-shaped tile and put it in a lake, where it grew little by little. When it quit expanding, the three threw it into space where, since that time, we see it shine in the sky (LL). At first, it exuded its own light, but it did not take care of its light, so it went dark (L). The sun gave it light and warmth passing near it. Since then, it reflects the light of the sun (LL). **(L/LL/L/LL)**

“History of Cho’ma, the Deer” (Cruz 1995, 49; 2008, 49) A buck lost his mate (L) in the forest. He found his doe right away (LL). They saw a hunter who wanted to shoot them (L). They managed to escape (LL). **(L/LL/L/LL)**

“When the Water Churned” (Gardea 1998, 20) The world was formed in three distinct epochs: first, God had told us many times to walk the good path (Int-understood taboo), but we were deaf to his words and were binge drinking and forgot to be grateful for God who had given us breath (Viol), he punished us and sent a great flood during which many died and only the children, the next generation, survived (Conseq). During the second epoch, when God gave the people animals to eat and cannibalism was forbidden (Int), God was angry because people were eating each other (Viol), and so God sent the sun close to the earth and many people and the surrounding land were consumed by the fire (Conseq). During the third epoch, (Int) the people failed to sing and dance the Yúmari and make sacrifices to keep the sun shining (Viol), so God send an eclipse (Conseq). In order to create order out of the chaos (L), one of the ancestors recommended offering a sprinkling of water toward the four cardinal points (T) in the houses and on the hills. When they did so (TA), the light began to shine again (LL). **Int/Viol/Conseq/Int/Viol/Conseq /Int/Viol/Conseq/L/T/TA/LL)**

“The Old Way of Speaking” (Gardea G 45) Long ago, we did not understand the Spanish language (L). They took four rarámuri men out of our villages and instructed them to learn Spanish (T). They learned Spanish (TA), and complied with the mandate (LL), but when they returned, they were the Rarámuri’s worst enemy because they had changed from a rarámuri heart/soul to a chabochi heart/soul (Viol). As a result, the Church has continued to teach us to bow down before them (Conseq), as if it were the only way to talk with God/Onorúame. In the old days, it was an offense to bow down before anyone. It was only done during curing ceremonies. Now, bowing down for a man is a feminine position that

women use when grinding corn on the grinding rock (metate) (Expl Motif).
(L/T/TA/LL/Viol/Conseq/Expl Motif)

“The Coyote and the Rabbit” (Gardea 68) The coyote pursued the rabbit (L), so the rabbit hid under a giant rock to get away (LL). To get the rabbit to come out, the coyote lit a fire to some dried grass to burn (L), but the rabbit, unknown to the coyote, escaped through another hole in the rock (LL). (L/LL/L/LL)

Interestingly, Campbell W. Pennington found evidence that the ancient Tarahumaras in the area around Pamachic, Guagueybo, Cuaguachic, and Norogachi communities ate rabbits (Preface) and that the “use of fire for capturing animals must also be a relatively ancient custom among the Tarahumar” (90). The setting of the sierra and its creatures serves as a backdrop for the historic fiction of the Tarahumara texts.

“Canó the Giant” (López, 1980 13). Although he was a strong, valuable laborer, Canó was a villain who ate village children (L). In return for his labor, the giant was invited to eat, but the food was poisoned secretly (Dect) by those who feared him, he ate it (Dcpn), and the villain died (LL). The giant’s family was afraid and wanted to leave (L), but the pueblo convinced them that it was going to snow, so they covered the opening of their cave with brush to “protect” them (Dect). The giant’s family agreed to stay, but, the brush was set on fire (Dcpn). They perished, and the threat of villainy was removed (LL). (L / Dect/Decpn/LL/L/Dect/Dcpn/LL)

“The Rabbit and the Coyote” (Mares 1975, 85; 2003, 81; Gardea 67) Coyote threatens to eat Rabbit (L). Coyote requests that rabbit help him get a thorn out of his tail (T). Coyote removes the thorn (TA). Rabbit protests, “Don’t eat me (Int), I have some tasty meat to

share with you”. Rabbit had removed Coyote’s bladder (Viol) and serves him his own bladder (Dct). They ate Coyote’s bladder and enjoyed it (Dcpn). Coyote realizes the actions of Rabbit and threatened to kill him again (L). Rabbit escaped (LL). **(L/T /TA /Int/Viol/Dct /Decpn /L /LL)**

“The Badger and the Dog” (Palma Aguirre 82) The badger went to look for food during corn season (L). He saw a watch dog in the patch, and not knowing that he was being observed, the dog cut off a corn and ate it (*broken taboo*-Viol). Since the watch dog had eaten a corn, the badger took the liberty to copy him and follow suit (Conseq). When the dog heard the badger get his corn (LL), he hypocritically accused (*implied don’t do that - Int*) the badger of theft (Viol). The badger called his hand and told him that he had eaten a corn only because he had followed the dog’s lead; the dog was ashamed (Conseq), because he was supposed to be guarding, not eating his master’s corn, but he robbed like the other animals (Expl Motif). **(L/Viol/Conseq/Int/Viol/Conseq/Explan motif)**

“Blanca Flor” (Palma, H.) Blanca Flor and her *novio* wanted to get married (L). Her father, against the marriage, told the novio that Blanca had been with another man (Dect). The novio seemingly believed the father, because he came to tell Blanca goodbye (Decpn). The boyfriend left (LL). However, disobeying her father’s wishes (*implied Int*), Blanca ran after him, her feet bleeding from the thorns (Viol). Her father pursued her, and in the shuffle, he pushed her down striking her head on a rock, and she died (Conseq), (hero-thief outsmarts the victim). Her father buried her body near a well to conceal his crime (*broken taboo*-Viol). He returned to his house feeling sad (Conseq). After Mother called out for her missing daughter (L), she heard a voice answering from a beautiful flower near

the well, saying, “It is I. My father killed me”; the mother dug in the ground and discovered Blanca’s body (LL), The Mother then returned home to question her husband, but found him hanging from a tree (Viol), a victim of remorseful suicide (Conseq). Blanca Flor never withered by the well and simply grew more beautiful as time passed (Explan Motif).

L/Dct/Dcpn/LL/Int/Viol/Conseq/Viol/Conseq/L/LL/Viol/Conseq/Ex Motif

“The Adventure of the Disobedient Bee” (Palma, H.) In the Spring, the fields were turning green, all animals were enjoying the beautiful landscape, and in the middle of that field, a beautiful flower was growing, opening its petals with the sun and closing them at nightfall. With time, all the other flowers were withering, but not the flower that was as beautiful as its first appearance. One morning, when a family of bees was flying together looking for food (L) one disobedient bee separated (implied Interdiction) from the others and flew alone from flower to flower (Viol), being separated from her family (Conseq). As night was falling and a storm was brewing, she saw that the beautiful flower’s petals were closing in for the night and she would be without a safe place (L), so she flew inside just as the petals completely closed around her (LL). She stayed overnight without permission (Viol), and when she returned to her family the next day, they scolded her (Conseq). However, upon her return, they realized that they had no home (L), and the disobedient bee then redeemed herself by apologizing, they all flew to the beautiful flower she had found, and they all agreed to care for it as their home; they happily lived there for the rest of their lives (LL). **L/Int/Viol/Conseq/L/LL/Viol/Conseq/L/LL**

“The Girl and the Bear” (Palma, H.) A girl enjoyed walking in the forest, but she walked too far (*implied* Int) one day (Viol) and was kidnapped by a bear that had been stalking

her (Conseq). The bear kept her walled in a cave with a huge rock (*villany* Viol), and she could not escape. She gave birth to three half human half bear children whom she hated because of the circumstances (Conseq). When the bear was out looking for food one day (L), some lumberjacks heard the girl's screams for help and helped her escape to her parents' home (LL). When the bear returned to the cave, he saw that she had left the children alone, became angry, and set out to retrieve his woman (*villany* Viol). The townspeople protected and defended her with arrows and killed the pursuing bear (Conseq). The girl never walked too far into the forest again (Expl Motif).

Int/Viol/Conseq/Viol/Consq/L/LL/Viol/Conseq/Expl Motif.

V. L/NO LL

A structure that does not appear in the analysis of Alan Dundes or in other analyses of folktales reviewed, is one where the ending is not tied up with a bow, so to speak. The Lack is not Liquidated, the hunter does not get his game, nor is the initial problem resolved. This small group of Tarahumara tales are of that category. The theme of failure seems to permeate this absence of conclusion in the plot structure where mere survival, not success reigns.

“The Deer Hunter” (Cruz 1995, 57) We went to hunt deer (L). I threw rocks at one I saw, but missed and went home sad (NoLL). (**L/NoLL**)

“The Badger” (Cruz 1995, 73) The badger sat on the bank and felt hungry (L), so he jumped in the water, but he did not catch anything. He could not catch a fish, so he thought that it might be just as well to eat tadpoles; which he did immediately. He returned to his cave sad. (NoLL). (**L/NoLL**)

“The Fox and the Coyote” (Cruz 1995, 79; 2008, 33) Basachí, the coyote, and the fox were hungry and looking for food (L). The fox saw Basachí trap a chicken and followed him to steal it, so the coyote slyly agreed to share, but only if they first go near the water where there is a large cheese (Dct). The fox jumped in to get the cheese/moon (Dcpn) and drowned (No LL). **(L/Dct/Decpn/No LL)**

“The Lizards” (Palma Aguirre 84) When they killed the Son of God, many people, his mother, many villagers, and many animals came and heard Jesus ask for water (L). Many tried to give him water, but the guards would not give them access to quench his thirst (NO LL). Even though the lizard was able to bypass the guards because he carried water in his mouth hidden in a little sac below his mouth, Jesus had already died. This is how lizards survive when there is little water. **(L/NoLL)**

“The Citizens of San José Wakaibo Talk to Us” (Parra 124) There was a large snake that lived in a cave that had been eating goats and animals (L). Two men tried to kill it, but they could not (No LL). The snake, for revenge, stole one man’s wife and took her to a cave underwater in a nearby pool where she still lives in captivity today. **(L/NoLL)**

“The Bear” (Sebastián 24) A long time ago, a bear wanted to find a girl to carry to his cave so that he would not be cold (L). He wanted to feed her raw meat, rats, squirrels etc., so the bear walked various days and nights searching without finding her, until he became tired and stopped looking; since then he lives very sad and alone. **(L /NoLL)**

Conclusion

Prior to Dundes’ work with NAI tales, classification patterns were generally based upon tale types and other features of content rather than of form. Stith Thompson,

Remedios Wycoco, and Americo Paredes all published collections of NAI works, but incidentally, none of those collections mention more than a line or two about the existence of the Tarahumara of Mexico or their tales. Richard Dorson's standard *American Folklore* (1959, 1977) has chapters on American immigrant tales and African-American folklore, but excludes American Indian folklore.

The results of this study indicate that in the approach to Tarahumara texts, as in the North American Indian tales in the United States, one may analyze documented narrative as having structural patterns independent of specific content. Tarahumara tales are not formless bits of random actions, even though it is recognized that European plots in general are more stable in form perhaps due to a longer literary history. Conducting a structural analysis does provide a starting point for improved functional studies of comparative folklore such as prediction of a type of pattern in one group's repetition of acts "no more than four times" before success or the prediction that a borrowed tale may be adapted to fit the local folktale patterns, for example in the tales of the Pacific Northwest, a great number of salmon appear in the tales, whereas the "setting" of Tarahumara tales would never mention salmon.

A study of narrative structures may also introduce cross-genre comparisons, however, the Tarahumara text patterns seem to be consistent across lines of genre in tales of superstition, folktales, myths, and legendary narratives. The Tarahumara texts that are in narrative form can, however, be set apart from the more instructional tales that communicate "How we make tesgüino" or "How we fish", which Don Burgess documents in some of his collections, which are published by the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

The structural analysis approach also allows insight into the cultural determination of content within the frame of transcultural form (Dundes 100). Several structurally identical tales that follow the same motifemic sequence reveal patterns of the Tarahumara texts that are culturally unique. For example, forty percent of the tales analyzed in this chapter follow the nuclear two motipheme pattern. The problem is presented (L), with a situation of lack of food or another basic need. Either the searcher gets his food (LL), or the tale ends in failure (No LL). The inclusion of the latter pattern realistically reflects the simplicity of a hard existence in the sierra without much humor, permitting an open door to understand the cultural preferences and situation of the Tarahumara. Dundes does not include the No LL pattern in his work.

Stith Thompson, in his *The Star Husband Tale* (1953), compared different versions of one specific tale. He believed that the only way to arrive at any valid statements about folktales in general was to study folktales in particular. He focused his studies on a section of North America that is north of Mexico, which is divided into nine geographic areas (368). However, since very few versions of Tarahumara tales are available, and since they are not spread out over a wide geographic span, his analysis method of scrutinizing one particular tale over a wide area is not achievable with the sierra texts.

The study of form allows a more scientific way of analyzing tale content. One element that is consistent in the pattern of Tarahumara narratives is that more often than not, the Interdiction is implied rather than stated directly. Any teller or hearer of a Tarahumara tale would be well aware of the societal obligations to adhere to community norms, so when a Violation of an implied Interdiction occurs, native listeners and tellers

understand the error made and know well the nature of the Consequence. This study of Tarahumara texts will serve as a vehicle for the perpetuation of group behavior and norms by analysis of the structural patterns, will reveal wish and wish fulfillment of the tribe, and will consequently stand as a reflector of sierra societal reality. From an emic perspective, this structural and intertextual study will serve to secure a space in academia for Tarahumara texts.

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CHAPTER VI

WHAT DO MODERN SIERRA WRITERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONCEPT OF TARAHUMARA TEXTS?

There are few modern sierra writers who have published original works about the Tarahumaras. Two notable authors, Don Erasmo Palma Fernández and Humberto Quezada Prado have lived for several decades in the Norogachi and Nonoava areas of the sierra, respectively. Palma is a native Tarahumara who served as governor of his tribe, and wrote two books and many poems and musical pieces that present a native perspective of the conservative culture. Quezada spent almost four decades as a public educator and author who has promoted literacy in the sierra region of Nonoava. Their literary contributions serve as modern echoes of the native traditions gathered and analyzed in this study of Tarahumara texts.



Figure 12. Don Erasmo Palma of Norogachi as published in *El Diario de Chihuahua* October 23, 2016.

Don Erasmo Palma's autobiography is the testimony of a well-known Tarahumara native who resided for almost nine decades in the sierra. The documentation of his experiences serve to create an intertextual dialogue along with other relevant discourse from and about the area. His is not a politically charged message against the predominant Mexican culture, but is nevertheless a discourse of resistance that represents the problematic presence of a minority group that is relegated to play the role of the Other culturally, politically, and economically in Mexico. His writings exude the philosophy of his native culture from an increasingly scarce emic perspective. (Figure 12)

Writings of a Tarahumara Governor: Don Erasmo Palma

Don Erasmo Palma Fernández (1928-2016), born in a cave in Basigochi, lived most recently on a *ranchería* named Tucheachi, located down a gravel creek bed road from Norogachi and an hour and a half by paved road from Guachochi, in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. He was elected governor by the Tarahumara people of his region and has creatively promoted his culture with his writings, earning notoriety as an indigenous spokesman. He has advocated for using his native language in everyday cultural expression and has promoted understanding as a musician, motivator, and artist, who has dedicated a great deal of time and energy to sharing the story of his life and that of his people. He has lived between two cultures and languages: that of his tribe and the local mestizo community. His personal testimony, which was dictated to his niece, Margarita Aguilar, is documented in his autobiography, *Donde cantan los pájaros chuyacos* (1992). A translation of the title refers to the place of his birth and life: the high sierra setting

Where the Native Chuyaco Birds Sing. His testimony gives a personal, panoramic view of the Tarahumara comovision and approach to life.

Homage was paid to Erasmo Palma Fernández in the October 23, 2016 edition of *El Diario* of Chihuahua, as well as in many other periodicals throughout the state of Chihuahua. The facts given in his obituary confirm his origin in the Guachochi region of Chihuahua and his musical gifts. By the age of twenty, he had learned to play violin, guitar, and several wind instruments. In 1948, he began to write songs in the Tarahumara language for the Catholic Church. In 1975, he founded a choir for children in a boarding school in Norogachi to preserve the native traditions and to learn to express them in their native tongue. He composed hundreds of songs, many of them with a spiritual theme (<http://laopcion.com.mx/noticia/131771>).

Palma's music is often heard even today over the "voice of the Sierra Tarahumara" XETAR radio station in Guachochi. He traveled and played his violin with his choir of children in Mexico throughout many venues, as well as a concert in New York City. In April of 2016, Erasmo Palma was the guest of the Chihuahua Secretary of Education at a seminar that was held at the Casa Redonda, Museo Chihuahuense de Arte Contemporáneo to introduce the second edition of his autobiography, *Donde cantan los pájaros chuyacos*, originally published in 1992. In addition to his own artistic productivity, Palma has had a long history of contributing literarily as a popular translator and collaborator on several basic studies and other bridge-building endeavors. As evidence of his value as an educator and language promotor, *El Diario* reported that two of the three priests who officiated his funeral in Norogachi in October 2016 had been his language students.

Erasmus Palma had a good rapport with many kinds of people and was widely-known in the sierra and beyond. The author had the honor to meet him and visit with him about his autobiography and other works during Holy Week in 2011, where he and his family played his original music during Thursday mass in the Templo de Nuestra Señora del Pilar in Norogachi, the same chapel where he was baptized at the age of two (Palma *Donde* 7) and the place of his more recent funeral. He likely never met a stranger, and his personality glowed with love for his neighbor. Although he was a musician of note in his region, he did not possess recordings of his songs. The author was able to secure and then carry a dozen CDs of his music and a university baseball cap later to thank him for his interview. It was a moment that should be relived between cultures. Human to human. Erasmus Palma was a noble artist who was a bridge between two cultures, his own, which he had managed to help conserve and that of state officials from Chihuahua, who have honored his literary production and social promotion as valuable to Mexican culture.

Erasmus Palma, a multifaceted figure, is situated in a process of duality like Janus, Roman god of beginnings and conclusions. His works trace the active role of an indigenous who functions in the process of transculturation during a time of globalization in this later twentieth and twenty-first century. One sees the viability of a cultural hybridity that results in an “authentic experience of indigenous autonomy, expressed in territorial terms, of recognition of the systems of government and justice, of a search for institutionalized mechanisms of intercultural communication, and of substitution of development for the collective good” (Sariego 270). The texts of Erasmus Palma are written

from a tradition of historical origin that stand face-to-face with modernity, maintaining relevance toward a new future.

Discourse that speaks from a native social perspective is situated in the conflictive union of societies and cultures, and the writings by Erasmo Palma trace the transformation of an oral discourse to its written form, which serves to support the Tarahumara institutions, but at the same time criticizes some of the native traditions. His way of writing does not suggest a process of assimilation to the dominant mestizo culture by any means. He dictated many of his songs and stories in his own native language, and the content therein supports the philosophies of his ancestors. On the other hand, he made some of his works available in Spanish in order to use the dominant language to express his native thoughts, to promote his proud native heritage, and to educate the dominant society that surrounds him. He fosters a native Tarahumara philosophy through his writings, and his niece has been his main translator, according to the introductory notes in his autobiography. His testimony supports many of the beliefs of the past, but also enters into a negotiation with another system of communication in order to rewrite the trajectory of his people.

Along the same vein as other folk music writers in the history of the Americas, such as Atahualpa Yupanqui of Argentina and Victor Jara of Chile, the mission of Don Erasmo Palma, a life-long musician, is to cultivate a connection between a people and their place in the world and to commemorate and to perpetuate the philosophies and memories of the society in its sierra setting. In *El Canto del Viento* (1965), Atahualpa Yupanqui (born Hector Roberto Charero Aramburu (1908-1992)), searches in the Buenos

Aires night for the guitar that would speak the language of his blood...that would with a sacred accent, say the word *pampa*, his native land (86). Likewise, the folk music of Erasmo Palma, seeks wisdom from the cherished *chuyaco* birds who impart wisdom high in the pines of the sierra sky regarding the whereabouts of his parents. The artistic contribution to their respective cultures serves to inspire group members to hold dear the land and the lessons of their history and ancestors. This popular wisdom among the Tarahumara is borne from life experiences and has been guarded by each subsequent generation. Native art forms, such as dance and music are sierra institutions with musical expressions based in the *pascolas* and the *matachines* of the sierra, the latter being the type that Erasmo Palma has primarily used in his writings.

The manifestation of the message through song, many times via the *shaman* during native fiestas, has been for the Tarahumaras, since time immemorial, an affirmation of identity, expressions of loyalty, sadness, and happiness. Dancing, drinking, and sacrifices give thanks to Onorúame for good crops and rain, or to offer up a type of penitence with anticipated reciprocity. The musical chanting is to draw the attention of gods to ensure rain and life, as well as to gain protection from evil such as diseases of man, animals, or crops.

Understanding the importance of music in a culture requires centering not only the interpretation of the musical sounds, but also considering the social context in which it is produced. Among the Tarahumaras, music is frequently entoned by the shaman during a ceremonial dance where symbolic elements and esthetics form part of a historic memory of the group. These gestures and rites are reproduced and passed down from ancestors to

affirm God's chosen children. Dance and music among the Tarahumara are important components of the *fiesta* and are considered to be their form of religious expression, reiterating their cosmivision with each ceremonial cycle. The carrying out of these religious obligations of dance and song, is considered to be one of the fundamental norms of their moral beliefs of obedience. At the same time, these manifestations of dance and song also are closely linked with the conservation of their traditions and group identity (Galasso 225-226).

Tarahumara music at fiestas expresses not only tribal moral values and exhibits group cohesiveness and loyalty, but also demonstrates their oneness with the sierra and all of nature that surrounds them. In ancient Greece, music was thought to be a magical kind of communication that spoke directly to the human soul. This concept, known as the doctrine of *ethos*, holds that the right kind of music has the power to heal the sick and shape personal moral character in positive or negative ways. Aristotle believed that the emotion expressed by music possesses the power to be reflected or even magnified in the emotions of the listener. A division of melodies was proposed by certain philosophers into ethical melodies, melodies of action, and passionate or inspiring melodies, each having a mode corresponding to it. Such is true in the Tarahumara realm: In the Spring time, the fiestas are happy, as the dance expresses, the clothing is festive; and the sound of the violins and guitars in the *matachine* dances is invigorating during the hopeful Easter, Christmas, and King's celebrations, and especially in the dance of the *pascol*. During the winter cycle, in contrast, the dances are austere; dancers dance to the incessant, march-like beat of the drum and flute dramatizing the fight between the *pintos* and the *fariseos*

against the soldiers and reminisce the archetypal combat between good and evil (“Música tradicional Mexicana” <http://macuala.blogspot.com/2009/07/raku-wikaraame-palma-que-canta-coro.html>).

These art forms of a culture are the language of the soul of that society. Aristotle said that the aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. Erasmo Palma’s writings remember the past, but are also prophetic so that the memory of the past stays fresh and is internalized by each new generation. The native art forms of Erasmo Palma etch the memory and the emotions of his people and have documented a proud identity in the present Tarahumara era.

Even though native customs carry strong convictions among traditionalists, Don Erasmo Palma Fernández of Norogachi writes between two worlds, and has been given a position of honor for his contributions to Mexican culture, as well. His ability to circulate among various social spheres reveals a hybrid figure who reveres the memory of the past, but at the same time looks toward the future. He has served as a local governor, but has also contributed to the national and international culture of Mexico and beyond. His compatibility with not only his fellow Tarahumara citizens is evident in the first Gawí Tónara that he won during the Omáwari Encuentro de Naciones Hermanas in September 2008 in the Theater of Heroes in Chihuahua, Mexico. He shared the stage with the renown Italian tenor, Plácido Domingo and with Rigoberta Menchú Tum of Guatemala, the author of *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú, y así me nació la consciencia* (1992). In 2013, Palma received another recognition for his outstanding career as a musician, composer, painter, writer, and philosopher in the thirty-second National Festival of Art and Culture of the

Technological Institutes in Chihuahua. Also, in 2014, for his arduous labor in the dissemination, preservation, and promotion of richness in the Mexican culture, Don Erasmo Palma Fernández, musician, painter, and poet, received the Medal of Cultural Merit “V́ctor Hugo Rasc3n Banda”. (Figure 13)



Figure 13. Don Erasmo receives “Victor Hugo Rasc3n Banda” Medal of Cultural Merit, 2014.

It has been said that the pen is mightier than the sword. These two entities: the pen (the expression of ideas) and the sword (brute force) have clashed throughout the history of the world. At different times, each has dominated the other; however, the pen conserves its force in the arena of public opinion. Various versions of this refrain have appeared in the writings of the French Revolution, in the Book of Mormon, in the fall of the Berlin Wall, and in other decisive moments throughout time. The written word has power, and the autobiographic testimonies of subaltern groups have served to mark their very existence and to operate as tools of resistance against the dominant society without the almighty saber. The *Prologo* of Palma’s autobiography is penned by his niece, who states

that she writes down her uncle's words with the same passion that the narrator himself speaks. She continues to say that remembering the events of the life of such a man from indigenous heritage is not only an interesting anthropological adventure, but is filled with references to customs and their way of life. She predicts that the true value of the work will be in its strong documentary evidence, rather than its artistic literary contribution.

This testamentary evidence, penned by subaltern voices, whether it be an individual story or a collective tale of a people group, forms an intertextual dialogue with other narrated works by minority voices and serves as a guardian of native cultures. The term 'subaltern' here is taken from an interpretation of Antonio Gramsci to refer to groups that are outside of the main structures of political representation in a society (Louai 5), such as the Tarahumaras, who live in the mestizo-dominated Mexico. The art of writing—a passive rite of internal expression—is a spiritual search where the soul searches for the truth. There is no such thing as a single minority voice; the oral narratives from centuries speak collectively to the suppositions of other ethnocentric ages.

The cyclical trajectory of alternating oppression and redemption in Latin America history intertextually weaves the threads into a Latin American tapestry that serves as a reservoir of memory, and the steadfastness and boldness of these expressions are perceived to be declarations of resistance in a hegemonic world that would destroy their traditions and way of life. There are very few such voices flowing from the Tarahumaras. Their silence has relegated them to the corners of the sierra without a literary or political seat at the table. However, Erasmo Palma, truly a unique man, has not only taught and promoted music in the Tarahumara language to the next generation of sierra school

children, which bolsters and enriches their own culture, but he has, in addition to a few other writers, contributed to the preservation of the dignity of his people. This native artist collaborated with Mexican literary professionals, film makers, and other musicians and anthropologists, in the language of the *conquistadores* so that it can be honored and promoted outside of the Sierra Tarahumara.

One collaborator associated with Don Erasmo Palma is Ángel Estrada Soto, the Mexican director of a documentary, *El Ladrón de violines/The Violin Thief* (2009) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6e4i_6tQtjc. It is a twenty-three-minute piece that includes an interview with Palma along with excerpts of performances of his music and a bit of his philosophy of life. In the film, the octogenarian relates an experience in Oaxaca where he felt racial persecution. He had just recently returned from performing in New York, and his tour subsequently carried him to Oaxaca. His group went to visit a museum at Monte Albán, but he was denied entry to the museum because he was wearing his traditional native clothing. He became perplexed and then angry about this rejection of his core identity, so he went and sat under a tree outside and wrote a song to express the way things should be. “Brothers are, all of us from the world, Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. We are all children from the same father, from Europe to Latin America.” Palma jokingly admits that among the Tarahumaras it is understood that people who sing are *loco*; however, the director of the film opines that Erasmo Palma transcended this common native belief and was inspired to be an innovator among the illiterate who do not rely on written elements to express innermost thoughts. He was a true Rarámuri philosopher who incorporated new lyrics with traditional native tunes. Several of his poems appear in both

languages with text and score in a collection of musical transcriptions, *La música indígena y mestiza de Chihuahua* (2002) by Arturo E. Ochoa Salas, a Mexican anthropologist who is also a well-known educator and musician in the Chihuahua area.

Erasmus Palma's writings, his autobiography and his poetry, are valuable sources for understanding the Tarahumara cosmovision and serve to reinforce content found in many of the native sierra tales. In fact, he interjects several native tales in his autobiography regarding native beliefs, and superstitions (15, 48, 83), such as what one must say when one leaves a body of water to avoid illness (12). The engaged reader is able to sense the fear of Tarahumara children who are abandoned by those who are to care for them (16) and the joys of simple times shared with close ones (48, 50, 52, 76). The dialogues that are narrated between Erasmus Palma and those with whom he comes in contact, while trekking across the sierra, give an appreciation for the unusual perception and strength required for him to boldly gauge and pass judgment on the intentions of tribal leaders. There are real people in his memory who suffered the trauma and drama of the real sierra environs: the stereotypical unsympathetic Tarahumara mother figure (60-61) and *mandona* wife who is ill-tempered (82), drinks too much resulting in bad language (89) , and whose screeching voice is commonly identifiable(60). Other memorable references in the tales that are reflected in the real sierra are the typical quiet-spoken, hen-pecked (13), smiling father whose character may be of a less-than-stellar, do-as-little-as possible provider, the dynamics of sibling rivalry and torture, the bad influence and antics of unruly, unsupervised children run amok (8-9) , and the sobering reality of adults who neglect the care of their children (56, 108).

The works of Erasmo Palma have given a literary voice to the Tarahumara, a society that has been largely swept to the side in Mexico. The study of his works addresses a goal of postcolonial ideology, which is to give voice to those previously silenced by the prominent majority in a society. Rather than allowing the writings of observers from outside the sierra describe his people, Palma tells his own story, edited for more fluid reading due to his many native terms and unsophisticated Spanish grammar (4). Palma describes *tesgüinadas* with novelistic Bildungsroman-type elements regarding the educational and moral development of the children abandoned by their parents during the communal gatherings (51, 58-59) and the lonely task of shepherding the *chivas* here and there (53, 56, 60, 66). He tells of the shame and tragedies suffered related to the consumption of *tesgüino* that he observes within his culture: those who fall asleep drunk and roll into the fire, others who have murdered while intoxicated (85), those who rape innocents (9), those who die inebriated on the road home while reveling in the brew, and those who leave their families for days without food (108). “How many children suffered when they disappeared? Many were devoured by the animals (16).” Although the weekly sermons, which are delivered by the elected governor, speak directly to the dangers of intoxication and promote moderation, there seems to be little deterrent for those who get caught up in the excesses of their obligation to obey Tata Dios and respond to the native call to “work” to ensure the future of the planet.

In his autobiography, Erasmo Palm talks about the history of his region, about his childhood in the sierra, where he often banded together with other children left alone by parents who roamed outside, because they were left home alone. An orphan girl, who was

tossed from family to family and then literally abandoned outdoors by her *padrinos*, found herself wandering the countryside and had the misfortune of encountering a drunk couple fighting. There are many accounts of children trying to hide from approaching drunks. In the orphan incident, while the girl was frantically trying to find her *padrinos*, she saw the drunk man stone his wife to death. The child witnessed the horrifying murder and fixated on the bloody stone from her hiding spot (15-16). Erasmo Palma even shares his own personal fear about the incident because it relates to a time when his own vindictive mother beat his father's head with a rock when she was angry with him, because he had not kept his word to come and get her for the beer festivities. She only stopped her attack because Erasmo, being a small child who had mobility issues and was strapped to her, came loose from his burrito-wrapped bundle and fell off (13-14).

As an adult, Erasmo Palma served as an elected statesman of his people, he was a well-respected promotor of Tarahumara culture by teaching school children and composing songs in his native language, and he even acknowledged that the moderated custom of drinking *tesgüino* communally was mandated by Tata Dios, so that the world would not end. However, this venerated indigenous governor offers a surprisingly negative analysis of this most ceremonial tradition, very much like the criticism penned by the seventeenth-century Jesuit priests, Fathers Joseph Neumann and Juan María Ratkay, who protested native celebrations in their letters and journals. Palma writes, "The illness of the indigenous race is *tesgüino*. All that I have written about here is proven (his previous testimony about the negative effects of drunkenness among Tarahumaras).

...crimes continue happening because this ignorance has not ended. And the governors preach and say that *tesgüino* is not bad!” (110).

In addition to the ills caused by *tesgüino* and other mind-altering herbal consumption, Palma narrates his real-life struggles to find food sources on in the sierra. Many natives today still forage for *quelites* (greens) from the *barrancas* and wild game such as lizards among the rocks, while having to avoid venomous snakes (49). Palma talks about a trip with an aunt when they stopped on the side of the path to catch *cíboli* and *chicharras* from the water (72) to cook on the side of the road. He reveals the seemingly constant search for nourishment, especially the scarcity of meat. While looking for *quelites* one day, they ran across a dead mule. Bauticia had a craving for protein, so he cut off a chunk of the mule and cooked and enjoyed it (49), not knowing how long it had been there.

Erasmus Palma narrates excursions, even those in his dreams, through nature—the valleys, mountains, rock formations, and forest settings of everyday cross country nomadic wanderings typical of the Tarahumara even today. Palma and his own family walked long distances to and from caves and various villages (19, 67) in order to change domiciles, to his first visit to a church (46-47), in search of food, retracing steps to find a special missing *huarachi* (65-66), to locate missing family members (53), and fleeing from a devouring lion and a wolf. As in the traditional tales, it is evident in Palma’s works that as they trekked across *barrancas* and *cerros*, and that the family hunting dog is cherished as part of the family. Whenever Palma narrates about a visit to a neighbor’s house, he

recites the name of the dog there (52), and praises their value as not only a family member, but also as a hunter, an important asset in food-procuring.

Besides learning about the narrator's historical Tarahumara reality in the sierra, the content of Erasmo Palma's writings also offers a political perspective from an emic point of view. A reading of his works helps identify and combat imbedded colonial imposition in the culture, which is another goal of some Postcolonial studies. Rather than rehashing a subversion/domination dynamic experience in the narrative, he identifies how the Tarahumaras have tried to move forward to a third space of mutual respect, when attempting to resolve perceived imbedded colonial hegemony. Palma's works interject an intellectual discourse that includes elements of the analysis of a system of political structures and social institutions. The memories of Erasmo Palma give an account of the people who live and interact in the sierra region. Although he testifies mostly about his family, his memories include both indigenous and mestizo characters.

In his autobiography, Palma recalls a situation of conflict about the horses owned by mestizos that destroyed their crops. The animals ran free and would often break the fences to eat the Tarahumaras' newly sprouted corn (41). "The mestizo hated the indigenous race and the indigenous feared the mestizos" (30). So, Erasmo's father and others of the tribe decided to take matters into their own hands *a la Tarahumara*—without direct confrontation. They made a corral of tree trunks deep in the forest and held the unsuspecting horses imprisoned for days so that they would not eat their crops. After a week with no food or water, many horses were too sick to leave the corral when it was finally opened. The mestizos never realized what had happened, and the horses that were

able to leave never returned to steal their crops (42). Even today, the Tarahumara choose to not directly confront those of the dominant class. While history is being recounted, Palma's writings also present a method of telling the world about the long-term injustices suffered by the Tarahumaras.

Erasmus Palma's writings indicate that he was very aware, even as a child, that he lived between two worlds and that the languages that he heard differed. He notes several discrepancies in the place names in his world, stating the Tarahumara name of a pueblo he passed, and in the same phrase recounting the mestizo name. He tells about one January 6th, a day when Mexican children receive gifts from the Magi, when the *matachines* were dancing and passed him on the road to Gomárachi, or as the mestizos called it, Las Bolas (48). However, in other situations, he does not restrain himself from calling out his own indigenous authorities, his own *raza*, who in the past often unjustly punished those who got drunk at *tesgüinadas*. The native authorities claimed that they were the good guys because they were with the government, but whipping was prohibited by Mexican law. However, the indigenous authorities did it anyway. They said that those who did not whip the *borrachos* were not good governors. Palma recalled that the Catholics (mestizos) were not legally allowed to govern in such matters as native celebrations (30). This artist has lived, analyzed, and written about his history and experience within the two distinct traditions, and his writings indicate that he is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of both.

Traditional elements of Tarahumara lifestyle, such as using native place names and wielding local indigenous authority, have not been erased in the sierra, but have found a

way to exist in a mestizo world. In her article, “IncurSIONes en torno a hibridación: Una propuesta para discusión de la mediación lingüística de Bajtín a la mediación simbólica de García Canclini,” Rita De Grandis cites Néstor García Cancli, who articulates that the term *hybridization* does not indicate that which is traditional is being marginalized and finally erased completely through the processes and effects of modernization. Instead, she implies that the traditional elements morph to a new original structure (de Grandis 41), much like music notes on a page in a new variation of the theme. In other words, the sociocultural processes move from discreet structures or practices, just as the place names, that existed previously in a separate form to merge and generate new structures, objects, and practices. The process is not a unilateral operation like assimilation, but is instead a harmonic interexchange between both norms where a dynamic new system is negotiated.

In his article, “Cultura, identidad e historia,” from the collection *Teoría de la cultura* (2005) edited by Gerhart Schroder and Helga Breuninger, Edward Said proposes that Western artistic and academic tradition systematically has considered the contributions of the colonized world to be inferior. He continues to assert that these interpretations, formed by the Imperialism of previous centuries, have imposed that Western intellectual and artistic endeavors are central and universal. Said establishes “...two important points: 1) no cultural identity appears from nothing; all are constructed from a collective mode over the base of experiences, memories, traditions (which also can be constructed and invented), and an enormous variety of cultural, political, and social practices, and 2) ...the central notions of the West...and of Western European identity are

found tightly linked with the rise and fall of the great Imperial powers of Europe...and the United States” (Said 39-40).

Postcolonial studies have sought to understand the strong dominion of the West and its inclination to consider the discourse of the marginalized or the subaltern to be myth or folklore. The author has talked with a number of *chabochi* Mexican citizens who lovingly refer to the Tarahumara language as “su dialecto/their dialect” and consider their tales to be mere folklore, works of fiction. Perhaps unknowingly, these monolingual Mexican Spanish speakers are unaware that Rarámuri has its own language with three to five dialects strewn in a continuum across the sierra. The studies of original testimonial writings from minority groups highlight the value of recognizing the social relations of power against oppressed groups, for whom their presence is crucial for the auto-definition of the hegemonic group.

According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*'s online publication of June 23, 2016, guest blogger Jeffrey Herlihy-Mera, an Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities at the University of Puerto Rico, observed that United States university departments of Hispanic Studies and Spanish question the value of studying the literary production of Latin American sources, which would then consider smaller people groups, such as the Tarahumara, to be an even less valid consideration in academia. He states that “Despite efforts toward cultural democratization in the 1970s, nearly all Spanish-language departments in the United States are overwhelmingly Eurocentric.” University faculties have been organized so that “our seminars discuss Cervantes’s Mozarabic wordplay but not Titu Cusi’s *quechueñol*, ...we see ourselves in Velázquez’s rather than Tezcatlipoca’s

mirror.” Latin American writings, if they are offered at all, are often presented as less valuable in historic and literary circles. However, it is important to consider not only the hegemonic structure of the academic environment in which such writings are evaluated, but also the reaction of the subaltern to the imposition of the Other. This manner of articulation by Erasmo Palma is productive and historically and literarily valuable, not merely reflective, and it is a space that engenders new considerations for viewing cultural history (Bhabha 1994).

In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha proposes that a third space of expression can form when two social groups that practice different cultural traditions encounter each other in a conflictive hegemonic power situation (Bhabha 2). This type of negotiation in a “contact zone” provokes a dissemination and displacement of both traditions in order to form a new identity of hybridity, but for Bhabha, this third space is not possible outside the site of cultural translation. He relates the situation of agricultural workers outside of Agra, India who accept the Christian language of catechism, but at the same time, reject conversion to Christianity because they do not want to accept the Word of God from the mouth of a carnivore. They demand a vegetarian Bible and will not succumb to the rupture of an outsider. This theory of the third space is a concept that is produced and reproduced with the progress of time and the evolution of a society. The subjects of postcolonial discourse, such as Palma, are stuck between the margin and the center of society. They exist between the spaces of a cultural site. They live, travel, and cross barriers between the two spheres in order to permit the co-existence of two distinct

narratives. Don Erasmo Palma's life and work has been revered and acknowledged positively by both sierra spheres.

According to Gayatri Spivak, a subaltern discourse hesitates to express its own traditions, but rather has to surrender its own knowledge and assimilate to the thought, reason, and language of the dominant Other in order to participate in the cultural conversation (Spivak 28; Kalscheuer 39). In an alternative view, Hannah Arendt proposes an "enlarged way of thinking" where the two sides of a dialog consider the point of view of the Other in an open conversation where moral values are not dictated (Forti 20, Volf 212). Don Erasmo Palma seems to operate according to Arendt's philosophy because he does not hesitate to express and actively promote his traditions, to proudly wear his *kowera* and other traditional clothing, to teach and speak boldly in his native language, and has not surrendered his beliefs and knowledge to the dominant Other in order to speak up in his sierra milieu. He has served as a true man of the third space, building bridges between the two spheres. Palma has been a strong ambassador for Arendt's "enlarged way of thinking."

One of Erasmo Palma's unique contributions to his native tradition is to add text to the music of fiestas, because in the traditional style, one does not sing. This aspect is noted in various anthropological studies where it is stated that the most outstanding characteristic of these *fiestas* was the absence of words. "The only singers in the...*fiestas* are chanters...humming and shaking a gourd rattle...there is some indication that the Tarahumara chanters once had words...which have since degenerated into a simple humming...In fact it might be observed that the outstanding characteristic of the native

fiestas is their silence. No ceremonial words are uttered...only the chanter at the rain ceremony suggests a prayer by its supplicatory contents” (Bennett and Zingg 1976, 365). Also, Carl Lumholtz observes that “it is characteristic of the *yumari* songs that they generally consist only of an unintelligible jargon, or, rather, of a mere succession of sounds, which the dancers murmur” (Lumholtz 67).

In the twenty-first century, Don Erasmo Palma has etched a new song and has trumpeted a new voice for the celebration of the Tarahumara *fiestas*. This solidarity of respect between the writer and his fellow Tarahumarsa has served as a unifying force for the traditions that animate them to be better brothers and to care for the land that their forefathers left in their care (Galasso 225-226). Coming from a sierra base, Palma has employed his creativity as an essential vehicle of transmission for his culture. While his music elevates and praises the sierra life: the forests, the mountains, and the sage *chuyaco* in the sky, this former governor of the Tarahumara nation and distinguished citizen of Mexico has negotiated a new day by writing a type of *palimpsesto* to recuperate the lost traces of a previously existent native text. At the same time, he has fixed his sight on the future with a moral vision that is congruent with the Biblical teachings of the Christian philosophy of the mestizo culture. He has offered an objective view of life that is critical of the vices of his own race and denounces the *curanderos* of his own culture. Don Erasmo Palma was a man of the new order who valued and promoted the traditions of his people, while at the same time, he motivates a new generation toward their future reality.

In the first book of songs/poems published by this author, *La Poesía musical de Don Erasmo Palma / The Musical Poetry of Don Erasmo Palma* (2008), eight selections

are considered. “Semati Siyona” is the only work therein that is not original, but it is included in this collection because Palma recounts a memory when he was a child and his mother would sing the *corrito* to him while she carried him on her back, and it evokes memories of her. He includes the text of the song so that he can conserve the memory of her singing it to him. This is the song that he mentions in his autobiography, *Donde cantan los pájaros chucayos* (1992), and the theme reflects the reverence that the people have for the blue bird.

(Tarahumara)

(Spanish)

“Semati Siyona”

“Bonito azul”

Semati siyona mí re’pá ko ne
Semati siyona mí re’pá ko ne
Semati siyona mí re’pá ko ne

Bonito azul allá arriba
Bonito azul allá arriba
Bonito azul allá arriba

Kumi aré simiári kini iyé ko ba?
Kumi aré simiári kini iyé ko ba?

¿A dónde se irían mis padres?
¿A dónde se irían mis padres?

Semati se’pori muchuwi ami re’pa
Semati se’pori muchuwi ami re’pa
Echi berá ju tamí ma’chiruwi.

Bonitas estrellas están allá arriba
Bonitas estrellas están allá arriba
Ellas son las que nos alumbran.

Kumi aré simiári kini iyé ko ba?
Kumi aré simiári kini iyé ko ba?

¿A dónde se irían mis padres?
¿A dónde se irían mis padres?

Piri ache ta oraba rasiama ke ko ru
Piri ache ta oraba rasiama ke ko ru
Pe mu’kumea rasiame ke ko ru.

¿Qué ganamos con ser aprovechados?
¿Qué ganamos con ser aprovechados?
De todas maneras morirá.

Kumi aré simiári kini iyé ko ba?
Kumi aré simiári kini iyé ko ba?

¿A dónde se irían mis padres?
¿A dónde se irían mis padres?

Na’í tamí rewesa simiáre tub a ne
Na’I tamí rewesa simiáre tub a ne
Wi’chimóba ne a’sagá o’korá nejé ko ba.

Aquí me dejaron y se fueron
Aquí me dejaron y se fueron
Estando en la tierra vivo sufriendo.

Kumi aré simiári kini iyé ko ba?

¿A dónde se irían mis padres?

Kumi aré simiári kini iyé ko ba?

¿A dónde se irían mis padres?

(*Palma La poesía 52*)

(English)

“Beautiful Blue”

Beautiful blue there above,
Beautiful blue there above,
Beautiful blue there above,

Where did my parents go?
Where did my parents go?

Beautiful stars are there above
Beautiful stars are there above
They are the ones that shine on us.

Where did my parents go?
Where did my parents go?

What do we gain by being diligent?
What do we gain by being diligent?
No matter what, one will die anyway.

Where did my parents go?
Where did my parents go?

Here they left me and went away.
Here they left me and went away.
Being in this world, I live suffering.

Where did my parents go?
Where did my parents go?
(translation Barrett)

The narrative voice beckons the beautiful elements of nature, the fowl of the air and the stars of the night, and implores the blue bird, the one native to the sierra, the one who sees all from his vantage point high in the skies above the highest pine trees, to answer profound questions of life. What do you see that humans cannot see? What do you know that we cannot know? Where do we go after death? It is interesting to note the symbolism

and the connection with another brief folkloric song from a collection that was dictated by linguist Don Burgess:

“El pájaro azul”

(“The Blue Bird”)

El pájaro azul está sentado arriba. (The blue bird is seated above.)
Se oye cantar, se oye cantar (Burgess 17). (Singing is heard, singing is heard.)

In *The Tarahumara, an Indian Tribe of Northern Mexico* (1935), by Robert Zingg and Wendell Bennett, two anthropologists from the early twentieth century, there is mention of a blue bird that is approximately the size of a crow that according to indigenous superstition, attacks the soul of persons who sleep with their mouth open (Bennett 266). The animistic Tarahumaras believe that plants have souls and that some animals are their ancestors reincarnated, and because of this, they revere all nature in the forest. In “Beautiful Blue,” the lyric voice praises the beautiful stars in the sky, which according to William Merrill (87-90), is the celestial destination of all the Tarahumara in the afterlife. In addition, the upbeat narrative voice seeks counsel from the blue bird, rather than expressing fear of the soul thief that Bennett documents.

One nostalgic element in the traditional poem that Palma remembers his mother singing to him, “Bonito azul”, is the verse “Adónde irían mis padres?” (Where did my parents go?). This idea resonates with the adult author because in his autobiography, not only may he be thinking about the afterlife of his parents, he reflects back to a time or several times, when his parents left him at home alone to care for the goats while they went to celebrate a community *tesgüinada*. He felt abandoned and had to fend for himself as early as four years of age, sleeping with the dirty animals and scrounging for food (Palma 59).

One of the original songs from his collection is “Anayáware” or “Los antepasados” (The ancestors) (Palma *La Poesía* 56). This poem encourages the Tarahumaras to conserve their traditions, to observe the wisdom of their ancestors, and especially to take care of all nature. He interjects a spiritual element when he proposes that “ya todos los antepasados se han ido, sólo Dios es el que guía, sólo él es muy bueno. No hay que ponerse tristes...él nos cuida...es Dios quien nos cuida” (All of the ancestors have already gone, only God is the one who guides, one must not become sad...He cares for us...It is God who cares for us). Palma does not evoke the name of *Onorúame*, the Father Sun or Mother Moon, the gods of the Tarahumara, but instead relies on the one Christian God of the Catholic Church when he declares that even though mankind will not always be with us here on earth forever, God is the one who will guide and is the one who is faithful in the universe.

Pedro de Velasco Rivero distinguishes among three basic groups of believers/non-believers in the Tarahumara society: 1) the “gentiles” who have rejected Christian baptism and the intervention of the Catholic priests and who live in isolated groups far away from the center of the community; 2) the acculturated who live in the cities or communities of mestizos, have received a formal education, have adopted the economic system of the *chabochis*, and are rapidly losing their tribal traditions and language; and 3) the last group who has accepted the Christian baptism and attend the Catholic worship services, but has at the same time conserved many of their indigenous traditions. This third group is called Rarámuri Pagótuame and is the predominant one in the modern sierra culture (de Velasco Rivero 29). Erasmo Palma fits in the third group of the Tarahumara society as is evidenced by his religious affiliation with the Catholic Church. In the poem “Los antepasados”, he

proposes the conservation of the forest and respect and honor for ancestors, which is a key tenet of Tarahumara tradition, but at the same time, the poem concludes with the thought that the one Christian God is the ruler of the universe.

Palma's poems promote two prevalent Tarahumara cultural themes: 1) promoting harmony with and caring for all nature, and 2) perpetuating the moral obligation that each Tarahumara should serve as a link to the following generation to conserve the traditions of their ancestors. However, his autobiography, or testimony, offers a less traditional and more personal and direct approach in his hybrid sierra society. His work is situated in a pluralistic vision of Mexico, and his voice has amplified the social frontiers in order to articulate the transculturation of his own Tarahumara society. In *Donde cantan los pájaros chucayos* (1992), the author recalls his memories in an almost documental format. The content, told from his adult perspective, covers the narration of his birth through his seventh year, and therefore remains incomplete.

Written in the testimonio genre, *Donde cantan los pájaros chuyacos* (1992) is a powerful narrative. The reader travels with the narrator through a nostalgic journey of a man who identifies closely with his people, *la gente serrana*, and is obviously thoughtful about conserving and perpetuating the traditions of his people. It is interesting to note that the author exhibits a double conscience: he is pure Tarahumara and at the same time is a global citizen. He speaks his native language, Rarámuri, but has also learned to communicate in Spanish, the prestige language and that of the colonization of Mexico. He has learned how to negotiate through social domination through his writings with the

help of his translator who is more bilingual than he. Palma has learned to narrate, navigate, and negotiate in order to share his culture with the world.

The narrative structure begins with a two-page prologue of testimony. The book contains two parts with twenty-nine chapters in the first part and nineteen in the second section. The format of the narration is organized with a general description of a custom or experience followed by a personal or familiar example. He uses dialogue, stories within stories, pertinent dates and documented situations to share his memories. He employs truncated words, Rarámuri terms, and a fragmented narrative resulting in a colloquial description of his childhood.

Erasmó Palma belongs to a new order of Christian thought that places at an arm's distance the *curanderos* and the cooperative labor of his people. In some instances, he tries to reconcile the teachings of his ancestors with Christian concepts, but in other situations, he confronts the healers directly and advises them to rely on natural herbs or modern medicines to help his people, not to misguide them with unreliable methods of healing for hire (97). Because of his childhood memories of abandonment during community *tesgüinadas*, he directs severe criticism to the traditional system of *curanderos* in the treatment of illnesses and the social problems caused by *tesgüinadas*. (110).

The narrative of Palma's autobiography begins in 1928 with the search for a place to give birth, much like the biblical Mary and Joseph searching for a room in the inn. His parents walked up and down arroyos on the important day. They searched for a place where the sun would bathe the child with its rays. A couple of caves were ruled out because they were too close to the road. The two travelers avoided cacti and steep inclines. Only

the sun, the parents, and the baby's siblings would know that he was to be born. The autobiography dwells on some moments in his life, expresses others with passing comments, and concludes with an episode in his life when he was seven years old. The narrator tells the stories sometimes in first person and sometimes in third person without chronological order. Events included are from the 1930s, the 1940s, and through the 1990s and give the impression that the trajectory of traditions have not changed much in their society. When he was born, "...los pájaros chuyacos cantaban alegremente en los altos pinares, como anunciando el primer día de me llegada a este mundo. Los pájaros chuyacos son como advinos: siempre anuncian cuando ven algo" (6). (...the chuyaco birds were singing happily in the tall pines, like announcing the first day of my arrival in this world. The *chuyacos* were like fortune-tellers: they always announce when they see something.)

Erasmus Palma writes in a sort of 'stream of consciousness' style about his life and culture and about the animals and plants and their spiritual significance in his community. He shares about uses for the native edible plants and animals, hunting techniques, and traditional preparation methods for cooking the game. Legends of memorable ancestors are shared, his experiences as a goat herder lend understanding to the lonely occupation of many women and children in the sierra. A description of former rudimentary family houses, and traveling between homes in Basigochi and Tucheachi brings back spacial memories of place, his first time to see an airplane overhead in the sky is one of his first encounters with the outside world, and many instances of the tremendous hunger in the sierra reveal a rather insecure childhood. He talks about his difficulty when walking, although the reader never fully understands why he limped, and he recalls the non-

sympathetic reaction of his family and community because of his disability. Someone in his family would have to tote him from place to place over the sierra. He speaks affectionately about an authoritative mother who was a *tesgüino* devotee and abandoned him on occasion for the occasional *tesgüinada*. He was carried about by siblings, in the absence of his mother; some were gentle, others were not. The memories shared are of a loving father who was weak in character, and of the fraternal deception of a deceiving godparent.

In addition to offering the reader autobiographic details, Erasmo Palma also weaves in Tarahumara beliefs, condemning the tradition of *tesgüino* consumption where the participants fight and argue under the power of the native *sanador* (healer) who mistreats innocents. “El *tesgüino* no es una cosa sana...hay mucho peligro...el borracho se perjudica a sí mismo...”(9). (*Tesgüino* is not a healthy thing...there is much danger...the drunk is detrimental to himself...). Even though the governors preach the culture values of drinking the corn beer (that along with ceremonial dancing keep the sun shining and thus maintains life), the author recalls that under the effect of the concoction, many deaths and other tragedies have occurred (9). Due to the effect of the intoxicating substance, the Rarámuri have succumbed to such natural forces as drowning in the arroyo current, falling in the campfire, falling down in snowbanks upon exiting the *tesgüinada* and not being aware enough to get up. Many children have died at home during the drunken gatherings, because they are left without parental protection. Although many Tarahumara chalk those tragedies up to fate because they are following the tradition,

Erasmus Palma steps outside his role as community leader to denounce this as detrimental to his people.

In the first part of his work, Erasmus Palma inserted various native beliefs in order to present the native customs to the reader. He presents his mother's role as a domestic, one where she stayed in the home and worked with the corn and animals, singing while she worked. She would speak to him in Rarámuri, "ma ku bá" which means, "Let's go." He explains that this is a phrase that must be said to a child as they leave a water source or he/she will get sick. The child's soul will fall in the water and the serpents of the water will steal it. The serpent will allow the child to nurse. "These are the beliefs of the people before us and now, of those who have gone to sleep and they are still prevalent today" (12). Palma seems to wholeheartedly participate in the belief that soul loss is a real danger, a very prevalent tenet among the Tarahumara. It is also believed among the Tarahumara that the aquatic monsters (wahúluai) have an alliance with the Devil, live below the earth, and capture and keep there the errant souls of the people. The only remedy is a curation ceremony conducted by the *sanador* who requires food and money in payment for his/her services. Erasmus Palma is critical of those whose only motivation for helping others is to gain material possessions (101).

William Merrill explains that the healers claim to have spiritual powers to cure illness caused by the elusive soul, also. When someone's soul has been captured by the water ally of the Devil, the healer, the patient, and his family gather by the bank of the water at the site where the soul was taken. It is customary for the family of the patient to give food or money to the healer, so that he will get in the water to rescue the lost soul. At

times, the healer sucks worms from the body of a soulless person, and sometimes he requests money, beer, or food before he will conduct the healing ceremony (Merrill 143). Most Tarahumara curing ceremonies are conducted with *tesgüino*, and although tradition says that only a few participate in the guarded peyote ceremonies, Erasmo Palma presents many occasions where his friends and neighbors have devastating peyote addiction problems due to referrals by healers (91-93, 95, 97, 100).

The Tarahumara governor is able to take an objective view of the traditions of his people. He is one of a few Tarahumara voices that has dared to question the revered native healers. Perhaps his global experiences between two worlds has provoked his third space reaction to the tragedies of his people and has provoked a new dialogue regarding the adherence to the native traditions, although he stated to this author in 2011 that he does not object to *tesgüino* consumption in a responsible way.

In his autobiography, the elder statesman relates an episode that occurred when he was working with the Jesuits in the community. He was walking over a mountain pathway to give an injection to a sick man, and he ran into a native healer on the trail. He began to inquire about the healer's methods because he had observed contradictions in the results of some ceremonies. Erasmo Palma ended up calling him a fraud to his face. "No andes engañando a tus hermanos del mundo. Algún día te vas a morir y en el otro mundo iremos a pagar. Cúrales con hierbas y no lo engañes. No les andes robando comida...no andes soñando nomás" (97). (Don't go around deceiving your brothers in the world. One day you are going to die, and in the other world, we are going to pay. Cure with herbs and don't deceive people. Don't go around stealing food...don't go around dreaming). He

mentions that in those days there was no hospital and there were many sick people. The Jesuits had a pharmacy, and they would send Erasmo Palma to sierra dwellings to deliver medicine to those who were in need of it (96-97). When the sick were better, the healers would take advantage of their improved situation, taking credit for their healing, and would demand that the patient make them corn beer and food for their services.

Erasmo Palma found himself between two worlds: working alongside the Jesuits and among his own Tarahumara, between the world of modern medicine and traditional Tarahumara remedies. He chose to help his people by administering modern medicine from the Jesuit church pharmacy and to reject the traditional remedies offered by what he deemed to be lying *curanderos*. He boldly repudiated several native healers and insisted that the healers use herbs to heal the people, not deceive them with their claims to be able to heal during dreams. In chapters seventeen and eighteen, Palma narrates conversations that he had with the native healers, speaking directly to them, eye to eye, criticizing their deceitful approach among his tribe. He warned them against promising the vulnerable healings by extracting rocks or organisms through a Tarahumara sucking ritual (101-104) and against prescribing *tesgüino* to draw in the innocents (105) as a remedy for exorcising the innocents' being bewitched and in need of healing. In addition to scrutinizing the practices and motives of the native healers, Palma advocated using modern medicines from the outsider Jesuit world (97).

Since one of the most important factors of social control in the Tarahumara culture is community solidarity, the direct opposition to the healers' methods, as dictated by Erasmo Palma, could chip away at their core beliefs and cause an enduring impact in the

Tarahumara society. In this sierra culture, it has been very important to live within time-honored guidelines reiterated weekly in the native sermons, so that one conforms to the traditions that have been transmitted orally from generation to generation via the family and authorities of the community, without prior obstacles or contradictions. The community celebrations, including the traditional *tesguinadas*, occur concurrently with the curing ceremonies, and these events remain at the center of social and moral life.

If the Tarahumara turn to the belief that the modern medicines of the West are more effective than the maggot-sucking and reciprocation of food and *tesgüino* in exchange for healing, the situation could result in the debilitation of the social power of the native *sanador*. Such a transformation could have a tremendous impact on the concept of the Tarahumara soul and the healer's ability to retrieve it from the serpents of the water. The destruction of said traditions may cause a fundamental change in perspective within the holders of the Tarahumara cosmovision. Don Erasmo Palma was elected governor and he has been a figure for change among his people. For many years, he was a very visible and vocal figure in Mexican literary and political circles, but considering that a large number of Tarahumara do not read his writings in either language, the widely dispersed living arrangements of the sierra population, and how slowly the society has changed in the last four centuries, it will probably not slide into a radical transformation quickly, because the tradition of the healers is long and the Tarahumara have faithfully and successfully resisted assimilation to *chabochi* ways since the arrival of the Spanish conquerers.

In summary, this agent of postcolonial discourse, Erasmo Palma, relates many experiences through his writings, where he lived for many years in the interstices of the predominantly Mexico (mestizo) society. He existed in a mediated space between the long tradition of his indigenous ancestors and a contemporary broader perspective. Because of his evident merits as an artist, intellectual, and cultural promotor, he has been conceded the highest recognition given to Mexican artists by the federal government, and at the same time, has been elected governor of his rural region, the central figure of Rarámuri respect. This man of double identity accepted Christian baptism and participated in the local Catholic Church, but at the same was an icon in the indigenous sierra due to his promotion of children's choirs, his writings, and his cultural ambassadorship to the outside *chabochi* world.

Gayatri Spivak reminds that in the labor of social transformation, it is imperative to not ignore the fact that the point of departure is not firm and the end is not conclusive. She proposes that it is important to focus on the margins and not the dominant or the subaltern discourse (Pérez-Torres 157). It is the interstitial element that affirms a position that is neither foreign nor totally familiar in the cultural hybridization process. In the Sierra Tarahumara, whether or not one is for or against change, this contact zone of mestizo and indigenous culture may not forever maintain the fortress of tradition that has so cohesively held the Tarahumara together. Palma was an iconic innovator who created a hybrid alternative way of thinking. Like many true artists, his creativity was instinctive and spontaneous; he was a tireless creative promotor of his native beliefs. He expressed them in his own language and in the language of the dominant Other. By establishing his culture

as an important part of Mexican heritage with the hope of educating those inside and outside the Sierra Tarahumara, from atop his bridge between two cultures, Don Erasmo Palma was the ultimate Subject, Object, and Author of cultural transmission via Tarahumara texts.

Humberto Quezada Prado, Sierra Educator, Author, and Literacy Promotor

The transmission of Tarahumara culture has been documented since the early 1950s, when Don Burgess and other linguists wrote several versions of *Cartillas* to promote literacy among the Tarahumara. Since that time, language learners from a couple of generations of sierra residents have read about the indigenous culture and language varieties in both Rarámuri and Spanish. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an authoritative source for information on the state of education in sixty-five industrialized member countries, reported in the online version of April 30, 2011 of Reuters that only sixty-two percent of students in Mexico ever reach secondary school (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-education-factbox-idUSTRE73C4UY20110413>). About half of those in secondary drop out, and only about forty-five percent finish secondary, compared to seventy-five percent in the United States. Fifteen-year-olds came in forty-sixth place out of sixty-five in reading level in that year, and it is estimated that Mexicans generally read less than three books a year, although there is a ninety-three percent adult literacy rate as of 2015.

Although five percent of the national budget is said to be allocated for education, not all of the funds actually are available for that purpose. Eighty-three percent of the funding goes for teachers' salaries. There has been little notable progress in rural schools

since José Vasconcelos served as minister of public education in Mexico from 1921-1924. He was a pioneer statesman who was responsible for establishing the first schools in indigenous and rural Mexico. However, there is today in Mexico a modern shining star in the Sierra Tarahumara: a writer, an avid reader, and a promotor of literacy to those with whom he comes in contact, Professor Humberto Quezada Prado.

Humberto Quezada Prado, born in 1959, has written several historical texts about his native Nonoava: *Cuentos de Nonoava*, which won the Premio PACMyC in 1998, *Nonoava, historia desde lejos*, which garnered the Premio PACMyC in 1999, and *Interpelación a mi maestro* in 2000. He also has collaborated in various anthologies, “Nueve Leyendas de Chihuahua” (1998), “Antología Poética del Magisterio” (2005), “Huellas del tiempo” (2007), and *Tintas del desierto*” (2012). The prolific Mexican professor of Spanish heritage has also edited a number of anthologies, has penned several prologues for various publications, and has been invited to speak at numerous academic conferences on poetry, Mexican legends, and other literary endeavors. His submitted biography shows that this recently retired *profe* has a dozen works in progress to publication. One collection of short stories, his creative work of fiction, *Los Cuentos de Francisco Machiwi* (2007), won the Premio PACMyC in 2005, and is the focus of this present chapter.

It is important to consider that Humberto Quezada’s nearly four-decade career as a public educator in the sierra may be one of his motivators for writing, because one of his pedagogical goals as an educator has been to instill a desire for reading in his region and to increase the literacy level of all ages there. The collection of tales about Machiwi was

used as a reader in the curriculum of the public school at Ciénega Prieta, near Guachochi, in 2010, where it was given to the author as a gift. Quezada's illustrious career embodies the many bicultural and mestizo rural teachers in the sierra who have been instrumental in promoting literacy, as well as providing a platform for indigenous *ancianos* to document their traditions and tales for both native posterity and for people beyond the sierra region. He continues to promote literacy within the public arena, and in fact, as recently as November of 2016 is posting chapters of a new original narrative, "El Tilichero de Wachochi" on his Facebook page. His former students and friends respond to each reading, and he usually responds to each comment and encourages those readers to keep up their good reading habits.

In order to promote reading in the sierra, the author clearly states that he wrote these stories, which surely have occurred in reality somewhere in the sierra, to inspire citizens of his region, perhaps many of his former students, to enjoy reading about familiar places, people, and a sierra way of life. *The Stories of Francisco Machiwi* (2007) is a collection of forty short episodes that narrate the life and experiences of a fictional indigenous Rarámuri/Tarahumara named Francisco Machiwi, his wife Tomasa, *su Tomasa*, and their son Régulo. Each tale stands alone as an adventure or moment in the life of the characters, but the whole compilation, as a unit of sequential tales, has an important novelistic element: that of telling a story, of narrating episodes in the individual and collective daily life of a typical Tarahumara family.

The narrative begins at a point in the adult protagonist's life and progresses forward somewhat chronologically to a later stage of his life. The reader perceives the

innermost thoughts of Machiwi and *his* Tomasa and observes their relationship from an observer's perspective. The first tale begins in a fog-like situation with an inebriated Francisco roaming alone at night, disoriented in a "noche que era boquilobo (7)," (a night as dark as a wolf's mouth) stumbling home. As the story of Machiwi unfolds and develops, it advances through and reflects back upon various stages and events of his life until he is drawn in to the modern world with the acquisition of a satellite dish, which requires, of course, the luxury of installing electricity in his home.

The novelistic strategies that are incorporated in this work help to shape the narrative with a loosely sequential organization of action and scenes, largely through the development of his son, Régulo and his educative process. In September, the boy starts school at the new Francisco I. Madero School, recently constructed according to the style dictated by the Mexican government and not at all dilapidated compared to the old school where Machiwi attended in Nakásurachi. By April, only seven months later, Régulo is already reading in Spanish, something that his father never could do even in his own language (26). Machiwi reflects back on his teacher, Abelina Mercedo, at the Nakásurachi School, twenty-two years earlier, who had tried to convince her unwilling student that reading is a pleasure and not just an educational obligation. His hard head did not allow him to understand how reading would be an asset to putting food on a table. The significance of the old school being replaced by the new educational site is not lost as the reader comprehends the memories of Machiwi. The day that his *chamaco* came home with his new books, it penetrated Machiwi deeply that he himself had not completed sixth grade (26). A phrase from Régulo's reading touched Machiwi's heart, "los libros para la vida",

and the father was convinced now that books would open a new and different horizon to his son. Régulo's generation of literate Rarámuris, living and learning to read in Spanish in the sierra, would forever effect the indigenous landscape of the Tarahumara culture and educational possibilities.

As in some of the stories of the Uruguayan writer Horacio Quiroga (1878-1937), such as the jungle boat journey in "A la deriva", time seems to stand still in Machiwi's natural environs. Machiwi is a universal character who struggles daily for survival in the sierra, as do regular people in all regions of the world and in any time period of human existence. He does not wear a watch. He does not know how to tell time. Tomasa washes clothes in the arroyo "con una calma de Tortuga"/ "with the calmness of a turtle". Reader anticipation is created in the narrative by planting perplexing situations that beg for clarity, which will be resolved as pages are turned. The use of time is compressed throughout the work. Fictional time leaps over non-essential life events and selects those that advance the plot and are seemingly the most emotional or representative to give a fuller impact of their lives, instead of following a day-by-day linear narrative.

This collection of tales, narrating the lives of the sierra-based Machiwi trio, can be placed in the category of regional literature, since the geographic location is an intrinsic and necessary part of the tales. The relationship of the setting of the Sierra Madre to the narrative in *Cuentos* is integral to the action. The physical location, the sierra *barrancas* and *cerros*, set the stage in this "land of the Tarahumara" (Artaud 13), the traversing grounds and home of the characters. "This inhabited Sierra, this Sierra which exhales a metaphysical thinking in its rocks, the Tarahumara have covered with signs, signs that are

completely conscious, intelligent, and purposeful” (Artaud 16). Machiwi travels to and from several *rancherías*, cited in the text, which in reality exist today, as this author has visited roughly half of the twenty or so over the past decade. Like the characters of Tarahumara tradition who traversed across untamed lands, the more modern protagonist Francisco knows well the paths that crisscross his particular existence (Artaud 14).

The descriptions of geographic locations have been an intrinsic and necessary part of other works of historical fiction such as the tales in Benito Galdós’ novels. He sought to describe with almost mirror precision the layout of the Madrid of his time. He seemed to manage a balance between the exact reality of description and a gentler, more complimentary version of the lay of the land. However, in Quezada’s descriptions of the sierra landscape, many villages are mentioned in a very realistic way with little fluff or mincing of words. In Nakásurachi, or as the natives called it, Nakúri, the old school building is dilapidated (26); in Otóbachi, the *tecolote* owl hooted outside, a bad omen in the sierra, while Machiwi and Tomasa lost a night of sleep trembling in the little hovel they rented from Távale García (29). Machiwi fell and dislocated his ankle while he was walking on a path below the Cave of Yerbabuena in the bitter cold of January, his ears accustomed to weather below zero (13). Life in the sierra is not idealized in the tales of the life of the Machiwi family. When a reader from the region encounters a name of one of the *rancherías*, the memories will jar the knowledge of these and many other memorable landscapes, citizens, and events as announced daily via the XETAR radio station: La voz de la Sierra Tarahumara.

The Tarahumara trails between *rancherías* in the sierra topography also impressed the French playwright Antonín Artaud, who after presenting academic papers in Mexico City spent a month roaming the landscape and learning the secrets of the peyote ritual. During his travels in 1935-36, he marveled at what he envisioned to be secret messages along hidden trails that only the indigenous used: trees in the Sierra Tarahumara that had been burned in the shape of a cross, narrow passageways between rocks, marked triangles upon rocks, and rocks placed in man-made formations to communicate within their group (Artaud 16-17). In a similar way, one day as Machiwi was walking to Cieneguita, he placed a round and unique rock in a special place, but when he returned four days later, it was not there. He looks everywhere, even jumping the rock fence to see if it was tossed in the meadow. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw it and returned it to the original place in the corner of the fence. In fifteen days he repeats the same search and replaces the special stone. Time is compressed and the narrative jumps to fifteen years later. Francisco does not stop at the fence corner to search for the rock now. He thinks how it would have been a good idea to leave a sign at the same corner of the fence with a unique rock, but he always forgot (Quezada 12). Perhaps he had been just daydreaming.

This type of communicating with a marking on or a placement of rocks was apparently a method Machiwi learned as a young boy. The stories do not indicate that he has passed on this scouting tradition to his *towi*, Régulo. However, the encouragement that Machiwi does pass on to his offspring is to stimulate his imagination by telling him tales such as the return of the *ganokos* (giants) to the sierra (51), so that he will not forget his native tradition, and at the same time, encouraging his learning to read in Spanish in

school. He, like the literacy-promoting narrative voice, encourages Régulo to continue to read “the books for life” (26) that will open a wide horizon of opportunities for higher education. Both Machiwi and Tomasa, *his Tomasa* will see that reading is a priority.

This support shown by Machiwi and Tomasa for a *mestizo* education in the Spanish language is not in harmony with native tradition, as narrated by Juan Gardea García’s interviews of native Tarahumara leaders in the sierra. One elder leader lamented that in the old days, Rarámuris did not understand the Spanish language and certainly did not embrace the idea of native youth learning the tongue of the enemy. He tells that long ago, four Tarahumara men were selected to leave their *rancherías* to learn Spanish, so that they could come back and teach the others the prestige language and mestizo ways. The indigenous who stayed in the sierra felt betrayed upon the return of the four to the sierra, because the educated Tarahumara men had changed from a Rarámuri to a *chabochi* heart/soul. The interviewee also noted that since that time, the Church has insisted that the Rarámuris bow down to the priests. In the old days, it was an offense to bow down except for during traditional ceremonies. The leaders felt a sense of culture loss when their language was displaced and when they knelt in church, because they were made to lower themselves to a feminine position, like women surrendered to grinding corn on a metate (Gardea 45). (Figure 14)



Figure 14. Tarahumara female grinding corn on a metate, Basiwari. Photo by Luis Verplancken
<https://swco-ir.tdl.org/swco-ir/handle/10605/7794?show=full>.

From his societal position as an indigenous Tarahumara man with purportedly native values, Machiwi is uncharacteristically proud of his son's academic progress at the new Francisco I. Madero School where Régulo attends and is experiencing a world of possibilities through learning to read in Spanish, even though his father, Machiwi, did not have the same opportunities as a *towí*. The protagonist, Machiwi, much like the very real former Rarámuri governor, Erasmo Palma, lives between two worlds: his native organic Tarahumara *ranchería* circuit and a dominant mestizo Mexican culture, which is increasingly opening up more opportunities for him and his family, but continues to treat him as a less valuable constituent. The characters live out their traditions and mundane existence plodding in and around the landscape near the Guachochi area of the Sierra Tarahumara, only venturing to the pueblos when necessary. Humberto Quezada told the

author that *Cuentos*, “En realidad es un retrato de la conducta de los Rarámuri...social e individual”. “In reality, it is a portrait of social and individual Rarámuri conduct”. The main character is an ordinary citizen with whom the sierra dwellers can identify on many levels. He lives an unpolished organic life; his tone and approach to life reject notions of aspiring to be a chivalrous gentleman of a higher social class. He seems to be a peso short most of the time. Without emotion or a trace of embarrassment, Machiwi takes in stride the steely glare of the judgmental store owner as he asks for credit—again. He wants to be self-sufficient as his ancestors were and to provide for his family, but he, unlike his forefathers, has had to work for outsiders in order to feed his own family.

Following the Machiwi trails in this collection, the reader may detect a few narrative elements with a quixotic flavor that suggest a distant portrayal of a wanderer much like the famous protagonist in *El Ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha*. The narrative structure of the work is episodic with the main character, Machiwi, regularly slipping away from home in search of a *tesgüino* party or another endeavor, much like Don Quixote in his more noble travels to save the world. Machiwi, however, is not of noble origin with time on his hands spent reading novels of chivalry. He is a semi-illiterate whose aspirations do not rise above the mundane.

The name *Machiwi* itself is not imbued with noble implications. The term *machiwi* refers to the liquid that drains from mixing Nixtamal, mature grains of corn boiled with lime, to make tortilla dough. The liquid oozes down on the *metate* in the process of mixing and is tossed out with scraps to the family animals in the form of *pig slop*. The protagonist himself is not a main course type of citizen, but is rather portrayed as a dispensable,

marginalized *sinverguenza*, a riff-raff, who drifts between the old and new ways of life, between stubbornly maintaining some of his native traditions while at the same time finding merit in the surrounding *mestizo* milieu. Machiwi evokes the remnants of an ancient past; he is a figure from another era who is faced with the reality of an irreversible, albeit slow movement toward modernity. The reader perceives the emotional reactions to comical situations that the rascal Machiwi encounters along the way, as well as the frustrated life that his wife, Tomasa, suffers while dealing with her husband. The ill-tempered reactions to her husband's shortcomings, unlike the romanticized and idolized Dulcinea admired from afar by Quijote, affirm Lumholtz's characterization of the stereotypical screaming Tarahumara wife. The tales of Machiwi, like those of the antics of the Man of La Mancha, share stories within stories, link recurring themes, much like a Mexican telenovela, and the stories reveal attitudes, opinions, and commentaries regarding the social criticism of and among the sierra dwellers.

The merits of writing and reading literature are addressed in both the adventures of Don Quixote and the episodes of Machiwi. In the Author's Preface of *El Ingenioso hidalgo de Don Quixote de La Mancha*, Book I, Miguel Cervantes tells the reader why he wrote his work. He wrote because during his time, the most popular type of literature being read were books of chivalry about knights who slayed dragons and rescued damsels in distress. He was annoyed that these stories were fiction and did not address any real world problems, so he created a parody of the tales that has resonated and entertained many readers who were familiar with the places mentioned in Spain, the protagonist's stomping grounds. Similarly, the narrative voice in the first story of *Cuentos de Francisco Machiwi*

begins by describing his purpose for writing, with the hope that reading the texts will amuse, entertain, and contribute to the development of good reading habits. “Nobody in his right mind can deny the importance of reading extensive works, such as those immortal novels that contribute to the knowledge of readers who consume their days devouring pages and pages (Quezada 5).” He reasons that the work is not a collection of long works, because the people who live in the sierra region will benefit by learning to read basic works with familiar content of the places mentioned in the Sierra Madre and about the Tarahumara way of life (5). He also adds that the creation of these minuscule tales were cathartic to the writer, giving emotional satisfaction for artistically scratching his itch in his passion for writing (5).

Humberto Quezada maintains in a Facebook message on November 25, 2016 to the author that *Cuentos* is not a novel, although it does fit within some aspects of the general definition of the genre: it is a fictitious prose narrative of book length that represents characters and action with some degree of realism. The characters are much like many sierra dwellers that are caught today between the past and the present. The language employed in the text is a dialect of Spanish that has been in contact with the native Rarámuri language for centuries; it uses colloquial Mexican phrases such as “unicuijo (6),” and is mixed with Rarámuri terms such as *towí* for boy (41), in a very realistic impression of the bi-cultural environment of the sierra. The fictional characters’ day-to-day routines include roaming among the *rancherías*, washing clothes in the arroyo, eating osha root and other native plants to remedy such illnesses as gastrointestinal pains, and gathering *verdolagas* and *mekuázare* (39) from the canyon to cook for dinner, without

much thought of the world outside the sierra, very much like the natives of the historic Tarahumara tradition. The narrative perspective is that of an omniscient observer for most of the work, although a first person voice interjects an occasional personal comment. The action clearly has a definite *media res* type beginning, but the final pages of the collection promise that the characters will continue weaving stories, at least until Onorúame opens the doors of heaven to them, leaving the sierra episodes without a conclusion, just as did Part I of Don Quixote.

Although Machiwi is far from a knight in shining armor, there are flashes of romance in both the adventures of Don Quixote and those of Machiwi. Some characters in Don Quixote's world seem to have given up on romantic love. However, Don Quixote and a few other characters uphold this ideal, even though Don Quixote actually mocks romance by idolizing a fair maiden that he has never even met. Love prevails as an important part of the matrimonial commitment of Sancho and Teresa, which is observed in Teresa's desire to honor her husband at court. In a similarly tender tone, romantic love does exist between Machiwi and his Tomasa. Like most married couples, they have disagreements—mostly about his rogue behavior. He will not give up his life as a Tarahumara *pícaro*, he eagerly gives in to his restless itch and abandons his home, without his wife, wherever he hears the *tesgüino* call. He is known well among the *rancherías*, small intimate family groups, because of his happy spirit, and so is invited to many fiestas (Quezada 77-78). There are romantic sparks however, when the final episode promises more stories about this family. Tomasa, his Tomasa, will continue showing her dissatisfaction toward her partying husband by responding to his escapades with a stick

from the firewood stack (37) and will continue spewing the saliva that she had been saving for the four days of his recent drinking binge (24). Tomas will be drawn in by those few tender moments when she sees Francisco's flirty eyes, the ones that loved her and still hold their enchantment, even when he takes part in the *fiestas* along with Bautista, another Rarámuri of the same condition (77).

The relationship between the Machiwi couple is characteristically antagonistic (25, 28, 47). Tomasa observes the actions and situations of others in the *ranchería* community and perceives that things could be different between them. She compares and contrasts situations she sees, and is convinced that their life would be better if only her husband would not submit to his carousing *tesgüino* addiction. Machiwi does not get caught up in comparisons, however, although he concedes that it is impossible to know what is better or worse without such considerations. He sees that making comparisons is not productive; doing so does not generate any income, and so Machiwi is "faithful to the famous idea of the ingenious hidalgo, El Quijote de la Mancha: a job that does not feed its owner is not worth "dos habas (Quezada 57)." He prefers to ignore his wife's incessant comparisons of who has a new truck and other such mundane comparative rumblings, until finally, fed up with hearing things that he did not want to hear, he makes a secret gesture, crudely blows snot on the door, and shuffles inside to get away from the non-productive banter.

In both works of Cervantine episodic structure, there are systems of morality at odds with each other. Don Quixote tries to make his world a better place by adventuring into his world as a knight-errant in an attempt to bring attention to societal ills. He tries to make his contemporaries see and face their own shortcomings to maintain the old system

of morality, the chivalric code. There is a conflict between the old and the new approaches to life choices, just as Machiwi and his family are faced with two codes of life: adhering to the time-tested Tarahumara tradition or following the Catholic mestizo approach to life. Machiwi clings to the tradition of fiestas and consuming the native corn beer, yet he also pursues the mestizo lifestyle and works for a *mestizo*, Julián, at his sawmill. Machiwi no longer wears a *tagora* (diaper), but does still wear his *coyera* (head handkerchief (46). Although the Tarahumaras have a tradition of conserving nature, the sierra sawmills and their economic benefits have offered a viable option for Rarámuri bread winners. This commercial disposal of natural products has caused a moral dilemma for native environmentalists, however, who have for generations obeyed the mandate from Onorúame and have protected the forests and the nature within them.

This conflict between the old and new is evident in an explanation of what things divide and classify social status among the Rarámuri: those who have at least one goat and those who have none. Even if a family has no land, due to the traditional nomadic travels between family sites, they must keep goats for the celebratory sacrifice of meat called *tónare*. To not have meat for this ceremonial occasion is a strict violation of cultural code (31). Tomasa and Machiwi reside in Piedra Agujerada, a suburb of Guachochi, but they have no goats, no piece of land to call their own, and they do not make *tesgüino* on a regular basis. Their social status is between two cultures—they “flirt with the chabochis (31)”. They no longer live on a *ranchería*, although they celebrate *tesgüinadas* with rural friends and family who still live there. They attend *mestizo* dances in El Cimarrón, they are fully invested members who attend church regularly in the mestizo Cathedral, and their

towí Régulo attends Francisco I. Madero School, a fully Spanish-speaking institution, which is not a bilingual school, and is not an indigenous boarding school. Some of the old ways have gone by the way, such as owning goats, and new ones have opened up a new world to the family of Machiwi. They have bartered native traditions for a colored television, pirated cassettes of Nintendo, a school sports uniform, some canned meat, and “los pininos de español”, the first incursions into using the mestizo language (32).

The characters of Quezada’s work inhabit and roam the same geographical area as Don Erasmo Palma’s experience. The plots of the tales of Machiwi highlight community and individual events or issues that mirror contemporary life, such as personal relationships, societal traditions, and moral dilemmas. Time is suspended while this historical work of fiction reveals the importance and roles of pine trees, canyons, caves, owls, frogs, chickens, rock walls, and hidden paths that have been part of the mystery of this native people group for centuries. The activities of the characters revolve around a family that adheres strictly to some Tarahumara traditions but have abandoned other customs. The reader is introduced to a comparison of Tarahumara vs *chabochi* philosophies and values as viewed from the perspective of a narrator who is knowledgeable about the real adversities and conflicts of color and traditions of both groups.

The narrator proposes that basic philosophy of the *chabochi* lifestyle is very different from that of the indigenous sierra dweller. The former is presented as a product of two things: the different world in which they live (outside the tribe) and the level of scholarly education. Such things do not impact Francisco Machiwi, representative of a



Figure 15. Phallic-shaped rock in the sierra. Photo by Luis Verplancken.
<https://swco-ir.tdl.org/swco-ir/handle/10605/7794?show=full>.

more primitive Rarámuri mindset, who operates under another philosophy of life, death, nature, and social events. He connects the nature around him, such as the rock with a phallic form that he sees on the forest path (Figure 15), with traditions such as the Semana Santa celebration dance where the straw figure of Judas is created to have an oversized phallus and is burned as an insult against the violations that the *chabochi* has historically forced on the Tarahumara race.

This double phallic form of nature, the shape of the rock along the path and the ceremonial phallus, as well as the double-cultural meaning, overwhelm the cultural duality to which Francisco Machiwi is subjected. The high value placed on formal education and appropriate civilization in the *mestizo* community has prohibited the total integration of the indigenous in the sierra in a world that accepts only those who do not clash with *mestizo* ways. The Rarámuri, more inclined to be less pragmatic, according to *mestizo*

terms, and to be believers in fantasy and soul travel during dreams, do not pursue material accumulation or advanced education on a grand scale, an approach that they believe puts them in line to blessings from Onorúame, their creator (35-36).

The hegemonic values of the *mestizo* style of civilization are evident in Francisco's memory. He recalls hurtful situations that he experienced as an outsider. Deep down in his emotions, there in the area where his soul abides, he carries with him the memory of the sarcastic laughter that he suffered from *mestizos* he has encountered. He once ran into four men on a pueblo sidewalk who were intoxicated by an agave spirit. He thinks back about being mocked many times by *mestizos* ever since he could remember. He decided to continue on his way down the sidewalk. Wondering why he was being targeted, he was certain that it could not be because of his manner of dress, because he no longer wears an authentic *tagora /zapeta* (native diaper pant), even though he does still wear a *coyera* (headband). Just like many aspects of his hybrid sierra life, he has retained some native traditions, but has also adopted some mestizo ways. He has grown accustomed to wearing cotton pants and a cowboy shirt, of fluorescent and bright colors. He decides that it must be the color of the shirt that is drawing the insults! The flashy yellow does not match with the blue pants. He is suddenly aware that his green faded crocodile leather boots do not match with the rest of his ensemble. On this yet another adventure through hostile mestizo territory, Machiwi ponders whether or not to metaphorically stay where he is or to conform to *chabochi* territory; should he return to his house to change clothes to please the *mestizos*, just like he has changed many other elements of his Tarahumara lifestyle to avoid being at odds with their judgement (45-46)?

Although Machiwi has been pulled by two cultural magnets, the one native tradition that is firmly held by Machiwi is that of attending *tesgüinadas* and consuming *tesgüino*. Although drinking the corn beer has for centuries been an obligation to the triangular combination of the dedicated authentic Rarámuri cycle: dance for rain, plant corn, harvest corn for making *tesgüino*, the reader realizes that the frequency of parties is more than just a ceremonial fulfillment on Machiwi's part. Machiwi and his cousin, Bautista, are portrayed as typical Tarhumara men whose drunken behavior is detrimental to familial and spousal relationship, to the ability to keep a steady work attendance, and to the need for chopping firewood, but is overlooked as an accepted part of the Tarahumara adult behavior. Just like the out-of-control characters in Quezada's work of fiction, Don Erasmo Palma's autobiography warn against the dangers of consumption and the loss of life and disasters that have been caused because of the vulnerable state of those who try to walk outside in the snow and near dangerous canyons while intoxicated with *tesgüino*.

Over half of the forty tales mention either the results of a drunken brawl or other destruction due to a *tesgüinada*. One day, Machiwi saw smoke as he walked to town. He went to see what was burning, and after he could get nothing from the old Tarahumara man sitting in the sun, he casually chalked up the destruction of the president's office to the most recent "teswinada" (17). Another time, Machiwi was to run a marathon and refused to wear the ridiculous green short, but would wear a mestizo T-shirt with the number one hundred forty-eight on the chest. Machiwi, in true Tarahumara fashion, did not make it to the finish line. He showed no concern for contacting his family for several days. Still wearing the same clothing, he had gone directly to La Yerbabuena where he

and his cousin José Bautista knocked off two containers of *teswino* and heard over the radio who the race winners were (23). The drinking spirit is part of every Tarahumara fiesta, with any pretext, in any place, and at any hour. The next day, there's the hangover while chopping wood while carrying water to the house. Tomasa, who knows that their culture is just like that, is mad at his antics, then gives him the silent treatment, and so it will be until the next *tesgüinada* (24-25).

After all the anger shown toward her roaming husband for his behavior, Tomasa decides to turn the tables during the last *tesgüinada* of the series and seems to try show her husband how it feels to have a spouse stay out all night (68-69). Their roles completely reverse when Machiwi goes looking for his wife who has not been home in two days. He talks himself into not overreacting, because the party is at Bautista's house. He does not want to offend Bautista's wife and children. He reflects on how many times he has been in Tomasa's shoes. He wonders if she is hiding from him just to act vengeance on his many marital infractions. How dare she leave without asking his permission. He arrives to see that his wife is enjoying the festivities, and like Don Erasmo's mother, she revels in the fiesta and is seen burping like a professional, belching belly laughs at the raunchy jokes told. They couple become intertwined in the fiesta and libations, while like many Tarahumara children left to fend for themselves, their son Régulo is left at home alone, tended to by the family animals (75-76).

Machiwi embraces his native Rarámuri lifestyle in many ways, but he also has adopted *mestizo* ways. He is not a man of a negotiated space who lives comfortably between two cultures; his lifestyle and conduct, according to the narrator, is that of a

Rarámuri, but he has incorporated ways of the dominant society because it is to his benefit personally to do so. On the spectrum between a “spurious” and “genuine” culture, the Machiwi family vacillates between two cultures because the needs of the family regarding food sources, shelter, and clothing are covered. The family is equipped for living in the rugged sierra, and they have managed to endure living as native Rarámuris in a modern mestizo societal, religious, and social environment, even though they are not fully integrated.

Whereas a dedicated, more authentic Rarámuri honors the teachings of his ancestors and works hard to “walk well” by living peacefully and obeying the teachings handed down by generations, Machiwi mentions the Rarámuri God, Onorúami, only a few times in the tales, once when he contemplates the Virility Rock and its symbolic union with the underworld and the celestial and magical realism from where Onorúami decides and commands the most hidden destinies of the Rarámuri (16-17), and another time when he was fleeing from four drunk *chabochis*. They were mocking his way of dress, and so Machiwi sent up a flurry of pleas to Onorúame, which were thankfully heard (45). His relationship with Onorúame seems to acknowledge that Onorúami is all-knowing, has control of Machiwi’s destiny, and will hear his prayer when he is in need, much like the personal Christian God instead of the Tarahumara deity of ancestors. And, after all, the characters who comment in the narrative about Machiwi all seem to have a similar critical opinion about how Machiwi does not “walk well” with others: the disapproving owner of the Surtido who always has to extend him credit, his own Tomasa, who critically compares the ways of Machiwi, her *tesgüino aficionado*, with the wise investment in goats that

Ventura Rojasárare made, and finally to the disappointment of Machiwi's sponsor in the canyon marathon who was deceived because Machiwi chose to not finish the race, but to go drink instead with Bautista in Yerbabuena (68-69). Of all of these offended constituents, much like the slighted constituents of the final episode of *Friends*, none would say that Machiwi "walks well" and upholds the high moral values of his Tarahumara ancestors.

Although Machiwi does not adhere to all traditional Tarahumara customs such as "walking well", making tesgüino regularly, and keeping goats for the traditional *tonarí* festival, there are several areas of loyal group conformity: celebrating native fiestas, consuming tesgüino, and competing in marathons, although he customarily drops out *en route* because he becomes distracted by a *weja* of *tesgüino*. The Machiwi family still depends on the ranches for trading, while at the same time, they mingle with the *mestizos* (chabochi, non-Tarahumara). They enjoy new ways, frequently displaying for the first time attitudes beyond the sobriety of the Tarahumara: they attend dances in El Cimarrón, they participate in the same way in the Catholic liturgy in the Cathedral, their son Régulo studies in the Francisco I. Madero School, which is not an indigenous boarding school nor bilingual. The Machiwi family is in a state of flux from old to new ways. Some customs have gone by the wayside, although the sierra setting is a constant in their existence.

The relationship of the sierra setting to the action, the adherence to local dress, custom, dialects, and colloquial language all serve to identify the Machiwi characters as conservative, isolated, and proud, but existing in a changing world. Outsiders, such as the owner of the saw mill, Julián Rascón, represent the inevitable intrusions into the sacred

sierra. The relatively recent saw mill provides a job and income, but as a result, there are turpentine stains on his clothing, which Tomasa must take to the arroyo to scrub (27). The salary received is enough to provide the necessities, if Machiwi can manage to go a full week without missing work due to his *tesgüinada* tendencies, which are narrated in over half of the episodes. To that custom, he is faithful.

The harsh reality of sierra life for the Machiwi trio is evident in the one-room house they share, which serves as sleeping and cooking quarters. Firewood is needed for warmth and cooking. The bathroom business is handled outside on the other side of the rock fence (30). Water is carried up from the stream by bucket. Despite the difficult reality of life, when Machiwi finds himself with idle hands, he drifts away daydreaming now and then. This imaginary world of daydreaming creates a scene that can only be lived if imagined in one's mind. Sigmund Freud writes in "Creative Writers and Daydreaming" that as children play, they live in a fantasy world. As humans grow to adulthood, the human desire to alter the existing and often unsatisfactory or unpleasant world of reality is carried out during daydreams. "Mental activity is directed toward inventing a situation in which unsatisfied wishes will be fulfilled" (Freud 419).

Daydreams in the narrative create ironic contrasts between real life and the imagination that deepens the reader's understanding of a work's characters. In the story, "Los Misterios de la luna" (39-40). Machiwi is at home and he is silently gazing at the moon. One might consider that he is having romantic ideas when he or she hears that Francisco has remained quiet and distracted facing the moon. Then, the tale goes on to say that the victim (later revealed to be his wife) is struggling to discover the mysteries of the

dark side of the moon, metaphorically, she is trying to read her husband's thoughts. Machiwi looks out the window and remembers hearing a story about a girl and her cat from Régulo's class in fifth grade. He wonders, "What is on the other side of the moon?" He imagines himself flying across the center of the moon, watching Tomasa, his Tomasa, run through the canyon gathering plants. He sees a world in reverse: trees with roots pointing upward, roofs that are buried, being able to eat food from the store and paying later, thoughts so contrary as to begin the work week at noon on Saturday to finish early Monday morning. "Oh the things that occur to Francisco when he has nothing to do (40)!" His imaginary flight across the moon could be interpreted to be his fantasy of fulfillment of the wish to be free and to know more. When Machiwi snaps back to reality, he is suddenly aware that his wife has entered and started a fire. She wonders what he is up to with his black hair nicely combed. He should be cutting wood. He looks at her with a flirty grin, then Machiwi quickly exits with a yell, jumping over the fence as he leaves.

Another daydream occurs in "Las tablas de Julián (20-21)" when Machiwi is working at the saw mill owned by Julian Rascón. A stack of cut wood seems very large. Is there a truck that can carry that size? Where did they cut down trees like that? Is it a special shipment for the *gringos*? He gauged that the road would need to be widened on the highway to Creel in order to handle forty-eight tires and three trailers. When they get to Cuauhtémoc, it would be outside the city because otherwise, it would run into houses, schools, and anything else that hand the misfortune of being in the way. And when he arrives in Chihuahua, he will need two new red fire trucks and seven patrol cars to synchronize the traffic lights in order to open up traffic. In all the toll booth cabins, the

worker will have difficulty calculating the transit cost because he does not know whether to charge by the number of tires, or give a special price for each trailer, or charge according to the length of said trailer, or charge per board carried. The driver will be listening to a cassette of El Recodo and Los Villalobos, and he will not predict the incident in Juárez, because he does not know that place. Then the imaginary trip of Francisco ends with a hearty greeting from the owner himself. Machiwi comes down from his cloud and is back working.

Since Machiwi's habitual bipedal mode of travel is on tiny foot trails in the sierra, his imaginary world of driving a big rig out of the mountains into the city creates a scene of fantasy that can only be lived in Machiwi's mind, although in actuality, the Creel-Cauhtémoc-Chihuahua-Juárez route would be the correct progression of pueblos, if one were to leave the sierra and head northeast on the only paved road to market.

Machiwi is not the only character with a live imagination. Like his father, Régulo has had his moments with the ghosts and dwarves that he believes live outside in the wood pile and at the bottom of the rock fence. Although his parents tell him there are no hairy insects the size of a rat, nor is there a grinding sound at the bottom of the wood pile (64), children have a more developed imagination than adults. Régulo enjoys listening to his father's stories about the *ganokos* (giants) in the sierra. He is unlike many other Tarahumara children who have been sent away to guard the goats out to pasture; the family, in fact, does not even own goats. He is a privileged boy because he is encouraged to make reading and school a priority for his life's preparation.

Early in the episodes, Régulo was typically careless about caring for his animals, about carrying water to the house, and about his school supplies. When he began school, Régulo wasted his new school supplies and began a bad habit borrowing from classmates (42). He also could not sleep at night because a frog was croaking, so Machiwi insists that Tomasa, his Tomasa take care of the nuisance (70). As the episodes move along in a somewhat linear way in Régulo's development, we see a change in the boy's personal and cultural development. While Machiwi keeps on being tempted by his *tesgüinada* tirades and marathon misfires, and Tomasa, his Tomasa continues "mordiéndolo el cazón" (seething) at her husband's immaturity, the forward progress toward modernity in the Machiwi family will occur with Régulo and his future. Régulo is now reading rapidly and moving forward on his multiplication tables of eights and nines in a Mexican school. He is competing academically with *mestizos*, not just with other Tarahumaras. The ghosts that live in the wood pile outside no longer concern him (77). Régulo's sleep is no longer disturbed by the frogs croaking outside. He has adjusted to the serenade and now sleeps soundly to all the melodies of the frog chorus in the surrounding sierra at night. Régulo carries out his chores more responsibly without much prodding, including the care of his cat, Pata Peluda, and the dog, Simba.

The day that Régulo came home from school with his new books, Machiwi realized that even though he had not completed sixth grade, he was going to make sure that his son had a different life. His child would not be taunted by other *mestizo* children because of the way he dressed and the language he used. One important factor in his decision to guide his son toward a modern sierra experience was a memory he had from his own educational

background. He remembered the words of his teacher who encouraged him to read for pleasure and he reconsidered his attitude regarding her proposal. The episodes conclude with Machiwi living in the same flight pattern, but encouraging Régulo to take the road less traveled in the sierra: a new generation of literate Raramuris, which will forever alter the indigenous landscape of the native culture. Régulo will be the consumer of texts about, by, and for the Rarámuri, as well as a possible writer of texts as he faces modernity in the sierra.

The sierra writers, whether it be authors of sierra history or of creative works of fiction, contribute artistically in both the case of Humberto Quezada Prado with his rare depiction of a native Tarahumara as protagonist, as well as the writings of Erasmo Palma's autobiographical, historical, and creative writings that preserve many Rarámuri teachings and traditions. As efforts continue to increase literacy in the sierra, these texts will bring pride to the natives as they are revealed outside the sierra to be an important founding people of the Mexican nation, and as the literacy rate is improved, young people with good reading habits will be able to proceed to higher educational levels and an overall higher employment rate for the populace, in order to be more fully integrated in the mainstream political process. Hopefully these new native leaders will continue to preserve the valuable legacy that was established by their forefathers and later documented by sierra writers. These Tarahumara texts face-to-face with modernity will proudly hold a significant place alongside mestizo interests to negotiate a new day for Mexican policy and education.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In *The Folktale* (1946) by Stith Thompson, it is said that “of all groups outside our own Western civilization, none have been so thoroughly studied as the North American Indians (297).” He continues to say that beginning with the arrival of “white men in the days of the Discovery,” the encounter with natives stirred the curiosity of European newcomers to the Americas and stimulated annotation by Jesuits and others who recorded eastern seaboard Mayas, Aztec, Pueblo, eastern seaboard, and Southwest tribal traditions. The Jesuit Fathers recorded the history and customs of many tribes for documentation purposes, but were perhaps more interested in listening to such stories firstly to learn what kind of notions and beliefs they needed to preach against, but also because they were fantastic, New World tales (Thompson 297).

Stith Thompson points to an important pioneer in folktale study, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who began to make an extensive record of the life and legends of the Ojibwas of Wisconsin, taking advantage of his position as an Indian Agent during the 1830s. He was able to learn the language and live among the tribe for a fair amount of time, and influenced professionals and artists of his day. Many recordings and documentations were made in field studies, offering linguists and students of narrative style plenty of varied materials that seemed to mark North American Indian tales in several specific culture areas during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In his “Material Cultures of the North American American Indians”, Clark Wissler studied and drew distinctions around what he believed to be groupings of “Material Cultures of the North American Indians”. He chose to draw a line at the international border with Texas and Mexico. Each cultural area was grouped according to material goods and practices of different tribes. Criteria included shelter type, methods of acquiring food, transportation mode, dress, products, and weapons used.

1. Arctic area where the Eskimo cultural area extends from East Greenland to the northeast corner of Siberia. The culture is remarkable uniform, and they lived near coastal waters.
2. The Mackenzie group live along the Mackenzie River in Alberta and Saskatchewan.
3. Plateau Indians live from the eastern wall of the Rock Mountains to the Cascades on the west, and from British Columbia to Northern Nevada.
4. The North Pacific cultural area extends from the coast of southern Alaska southward to the California border. Their languages are not uniform, but their practices such as salmon fishing, giant cedar tree tales, and culture heroes persist in this region.
5. California has a well-defined aboriginal area of culture. The tribes are small, but with linguistic diversity, having important language family connections outside the California area.
6. The Plains is the most familiar culture to Anglo constituents with buffalo herds, elaborate feather dresses, beadwork and tipis. The Rocky Mountains

and eastern Nevada serve as the western frontier, southward is New Mexico and parts of Texas. Northern boundary is Canada.

7. The Woodlands.

a. Central Woodland. This geographic area covers a line east of the previous areas and south to Tennessee and North Carolina. This includes the Indians of the Great Lakes region.

b. Eastern Woodlands include the tribes of New England, the Maritime provinces and Quebec.

8. Iriquois are in the Lake Ontario region, especially of New York State.

9. Southeast is the least well studied and include the southern states east of the Mississippi. This group includes the Cherokee, Yuchi, and Choctaw, and were moved at an early time into the Indian Territory, thus studies had to be made in Oklahoma, away from their original home.

10. Southwest area includes New Mexico and Arizona. In contrast to the Southeastern tribes, these groups remained in the native lands. The Pueblo tribes occupied permanent villages, and the Navajos and Apache, who were nomadic and did not occupy permanent lands. The Zuni and Hopi were among this cultural group (447-505).

Stith Thompson, followed Wissler's material culture divisions in organizing his notes for his *Tales of the North American Indians* (1973), as well as in the discussion of NAI folktales (1936, 300-301), a source for Alan Dundes' later folklore study. Others made slight adjustments in the divisions, but most studies agree that the NAI cultures can

be separated into two principles to classify the groups: a culture area and a language affiliation that do not overlap. Most tribes are identified by either or both.

Even though Thompson and Dundes chose to exclude NAI folklore south of the international border between Mexico and the United States of America, it is important to connect the dots between Tarahumara tales and the culture groups north of the border to compare topics of importance that are central to those cultures. While there are some features shared by many NAI groups, one that is the most characteristic is the popularity of trickster tales (Thompson 319). Like the California, Southwest, Plateau, and Plains groups, the Tarahumara texts list the Coyote as trickster extraordinaire. He has a variety of roles in all areas: Cultural hero, clever deceiver, or dimwit.

Another modern day linguist published his *Folklore in Context: Essays* (1982), an article that distinguishes among narrative prose genres. Dan Ben-Amos, Professor of Folklore and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Pennsylvania opines that folklore is defined as artistic communication shared within small groups. Folklore is indeed artistic as well aesthetic; it engages the senses. It is created out of the full sensual and intellectual involvement of its creators. He believes that a work of art is not just eye candy, but it expresses the innermost ideas of its author, a philosophy, and social power. Folklore is not a “low class” or primitive attempt at storytelling or fairy tales; it is a profound connection that brings people together and unifies them along lines of a shared sense of morality by passing down generations of thoughts, beliefs, and artifacts, while still connecting them to the humanity of all that lies beyond them when they are recorded and preserved (2-19).

The transcriptions of Tarahumara folktales that have been introduced in the present work were dictated by native authorities to bilingual or bi-cultural rural school teachers to preserve the texts for posterity, to promote literacy in the Sierra Madre area, and to educate regional school children so that they would feel a sense of pride in their own native heritage, customs and artifacts, much like Dan Ben-Amos' observations of the function of works of art such as folktales. The present study will disseminate the works to a wider academic audience. In addition, the categorizations of the narrative structure of the Tarahumara texts in Chapter four, that are patterned after the Alan Dundes' analysis of North American Indian texts in the United States, fulfills a former void in Hispanic Studies' recognition of the value that these Native American Tarahumara works have an equally complex system and should have a seat in an esteemed place of honor in Mexican history, culture, and literary studies.

The present work also reveals the cultural value of the active and passive rites of the Tarahumara society that permeate the actions of the human and animal characters in the native traditional tales. The historical customs of the ancients are still practiced on some level today in the sierra, and these traditions have carried over to a place of prominence in the sierra setting in the newer writings of modern day sierra writers. This study weaves the old and the new to create a tapestry of Tarahumara history and life that serves as a macrotext that presents the importance of this body of work as valuable in understanding what the Tarahumara choose to tell about themselves.

Native American folktales are prose narratives which are regarded by academia as tales of fiction. They are not considered to be history; however, they are often timeless,

and may include actual historical practices of a society, as in the tales of hunting norms of the Tarahumara society, widespread customs practiced for centuries, such as the centrality of corn and *tesgüino* in the Tarahumara diet, dances, and ceremonies, and beliefs about Onorúame and his connection with ancestors. A variety of sub-types of folktales can be distinguished as recounting the adventures of human or animal characters, trickster tales about the stereotypical sly fox who tries to deceive others, tall tales like the Ganoko giant, dilemma tales, formulistic tales, and moral tales or fables. The folktales, unlike myths, are not dogma and are not of a sacred nature. Many of the folktales analyzed in Chapter 4 of this work fit the trickster tales, formulistic tales, moral tales, as well as adventure tales with animal and human characters.

In “The Forms of Folklore”, Bascom writes that in the course of time, fewer and fewer members of a society may retain former belief systems, especially in a time of cultural change (7-8). Certain narratives that were formerly believed to be a *myth* (a remote tale of sacred content such as the belief that Onorúame was the Creator and that he continues to commune with the Tarahumara) or a *legend* (a less remote tale of secular content such as the belief that the Ganoko/Canó/Kanoko giant lived in the sierra or may return in López Batista, 1980) may lose credence.

The expansive sierra territory displays a wide variety of local traditions and their respective values in the sierra region, with the Rarámuri being one of the oldest aboriginal groups of North America (Irigoyen-Rascón *Tarahumara* 5). Doctor Irigoyen reminds the reader that the Tarahumaras are one of the best-preserved cultures in North America (Irigoyen-Rascón *Rarajípari* 14). How have they preserved their traditions, the active and

passive rites, in spite of the ruptures from exterior, stronger forces? Alfonso Paredes, from the University of Oklahoma, in collaboration with Fructuoso Irigoyen-Rascón, proposed a series of strategy points that may explain how the Tarahumara have conserved a great part of their culture from aboriginal times to the present twenty-first century.

Paredes and Irigoyen propose that the systems of social cohesion have adapted to the environment and must continue to be actively conserved, because it is from those systems that the norms of social, as well as individual behavior proceed. The authentic gentile Tarahumaras take seriously the command to pass down generationally the mandates from “Our Mother” and “Our Father”. The enactment of said active rites such as fiesta and dancing are such manifestations of the societal practices that are upheld from pueblo to pueblo across the sierra.

A second longevity principal that Paredes suggests is that the Tarahumara have promoted individual and group aptitudes and good physical condition to be primordial elements for group survival. The foot-racing tradition, called *rarajípame*, require different types of runners: those of great endurance, those who assist the runners, the expert kickers, and others with great speed (14). Each runner has a particular aptitude that contributes to group success.

Paredes’ third principle marks the importance of discipline that the Tarahumaras have used to moderate population control, and a fourth reason offers that the Tarahumaras have protected such a large part of their native culture and are frugal in the conservation of natural resources as a result of their ancestors’ promise to Tata Dios to care for the earth. Fifthly, the Tarahumara have made good use of available abundant supplies of

herbal natural products, such as *peyote* to help joint pain (Irigoyen *Tarahumara* 201) and *juanita*, an herb recommended for its analgesic and antispasmodic properties in the care of stomach ailments and indigestión (202) from the sierra and barrancas in the defense against illness in the sierra. At the rural medical clinics which the author and her group staffs bi-annually, many natives who come for treatment are familiar with the medicinal purpose of most plants in the fields and forests around their native villages. In fact, one clinic in Samachique had an announcement board in the small lobby with a sample of the plant beside its described medicinal purpose. It is not uncommon for a woman to drag a branch with her from one place to the next because she does not have the needed medicinal plant near her home.

Finally, the sixth element that has extended the Tarahumaras' longevity in the sierra is that since the unsuccessful early violent conflicts with the Jesuits proved to be non-productive, they have adopted non-violent social strategies to defend themselves against foreign intrusion. More recently, the Tierra Native Progress Report 2014-15, a newsletter of a California-based indigenous rights program that collaborates with sierra community development projects and eco-cultural conservation programs and projects, reports that it supported a Caravan for Justice in the sierra to meet with Senators, institutional heads, and Supreme Court Justices in Mexico City on matters relating to land and water rights issues between the indigenous and mestizos in the sierra. Loggers and ranchers are threatening the indigenous for land ownership, and TransCanada is working to construct a pipeline, all in the name of progress, which the author has observed as large blue PCV pipes stacked along the road from Fort Stockton, Texas to the railroad cars

lumbering the tracks in Chihuahua City as recently as October 2016. The land grabbers are threatening to relocate the Tarahumara in order to develop lands for tourism and other commercial use, even defying court orders to relinquish the territories.

In addition to the loss of territories, another type of cultural loss is documented in a 2012 report that uses traditional texts to contribute to a Mexican national effort by the Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas in a 2012 publication entitled *México. Lenguas indígenas nacionales en riesgo de desaparición/Mexico. National Indigenous Languages at Risk of Disappearing*. <http://www.inali.gob.mx/comunicados/283-mexico-lenguas-indigenas-nacionales-en-riesgo-de-desaparicion-variantes-lingueisticas-por-grado-de-riesgo-inali-2012>

In the 2012 study, the presentation of language and population statistics lead to advocating for language preservation of many Mexican indigenous languages in the report. An impressive set of figures sets the tone for the relevance of these Tarahumara texts in the twenty-first century: Approximately ninety-seven percent of the world speaks around two hundred and fifty languages, which make up only four percent of all the available languages in the world. Inversely, only three percent of the speakers of the world speak five thousand seven hundred remaining languages. It is predicted that by the end of the twentieth century more than five thousand world languages will disappear due to native learners leaving their first language because they find it more expedient to speak a dominant language.

The loss of a language is a loss of humanity since ways of thinking, identity, and an aspect of world diversity is lost. The Mexican government has maintained a census of

the number of speakers of each language in Mexico since 1895, and in 2010 there were sixty-eight language groups in Mexico (INALI 2003). There are two groups of native speakers: those who see the value in maintaining native languages, and those who value progress as leaving the old behind and learning to speak a language of prestige and education. In Mexico, the movement from a rural life to a city life often results in native language loss. Those who remain in dispersed locations, such as in the Sierra Madres, often maintain their group identity as well as their local dialect/language.

A section of the report is “México. Lenguas indígenas nacionales en riesgo de desaparición: variantes lingüísticas por grado de riesgo, INALI, 2012.” Mexico. National Indigenous Languages at Risk of Disappearing: Linguistic Variants by Level of Risk.” The 2010 Census showed 85,018 speakers of Tarahumara in the country. There are four levels of risk explained in the one hundred and thirty-two page report. Level one is the highest risk with less than 1,000 total speakers, and Level two includes variants with 1,000+ speakers with 10% or more native speakers between 5-14 years. Level three shows a medium risk of loss if local speakers number 20-50, if the total number of speakers is 1,000 or less and native speakers between 5-14 years are more than 25%+ of the total. Level four is classified as not immediate. There is not a present danger for immediate language Rarámuri loss in most of the variants except for the Cumbres, which shows deterioration to a medium level of language loss risk as seen below. (Table 2)

Even though in the twenty-first century the Tarahumaras are experiencing threats of loss of their land holdings and a bit of risk for language loss, the two photographs to follow (Figure 16) show that at least the mode of dress has not changed for fiestas during

Carl Lumholtz's adventures, between 1890-1896, in Mexico and in a century later in modern Mexico, in 2008. Despite the European Conquest, the introduction of the railroad CHEPE across the sierra in 1961, the rupture of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), and now with the intrusion of la Gran Visión, still many aspects of the Tarahumara way of life have remained static and probably will never be altered.

Dialect Variant	Level of Risk	Pueblos with 30%+ dialect variant speakers	Native speakers ages 5-14 yrs
Western	4	244	31.43%
Southern	4	107	33.55%
Central	4	733	33.32%
Northern	4	213	30.62%
Cumbres	3	1	37.59%

Table 2. Tarahumara Language Risk Chart.



Figure 16. Tarahumara photos. (L) Photo from Carl Lumholtz Collection 1890-1896. (R) Photo from National Geographic, November 2008.

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