

The Rain Gods' Rebellion

The Cultural Basis of a
Nahua Insurgency

James M. Taggart



university press of colorado

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Introduction

This book presents the cultural basis of an agrarian revolt that took place between 1977 and 1984 in a Mexican community of Nahuas and Mestizos in a remote part of the Sierra Norte de Puebla. By cultural basis is meant a tradition of storytelling through which Nahuas became radicalized, inspiring some among them to take political action to remedy their predicament. Usually agrarian revolts in Mexico develop with the benefit of political brokers with close ties to a community and experience outside of it. The brokers import, translate, and modify a political ideology to fit local conditions, sometimes with the help of peasant organizations that provide moral support and legal advice.¹ I shall argue that a Nahua rebellion in the Sierra Norte de Puebla was primarily, but not exclusively, a grassroots phenomenon that oral narrators anticipated and described in stories of rain gods' organizing and attacking, with bolts of lightning, the companion spirits of autocratic local leaders and unwanted non-Nahua settlers. The narrators of the rain god stories presented examples of behavior that violated deeply held values in Nahua culture.

The stories were fantasies of revenge that erupted in a rebellion late in 1977 when thirty to forty Nahuas in Huitzilán armed themselves, invaded two cattle pastures, and planted them with corn. The insurgency became known locally as the UCI, an acronym for Unión Campesina Independiente or Union of Independent Farmers. The Nahuas invited an UCI activist, with no prior ties to the community, to help them organize a group to protect themselves from their enemies and to recover land lost to Mestizos. The UCI activist encouraged the Nahuas to locate and invade intestate land, so the thirty to forty Nahuas seized two cattle pastures, which were the subject of a bitter dispute between the members of two elite Mestizo families. A bullet ended the life of the UCI activist within a year of the land invasion but the rebellion lasted until 1984, when the *Antorcha Campesina* (Torch of the Farmer), the military arm of the PRI party, drove out the UCI and took control of the local government.

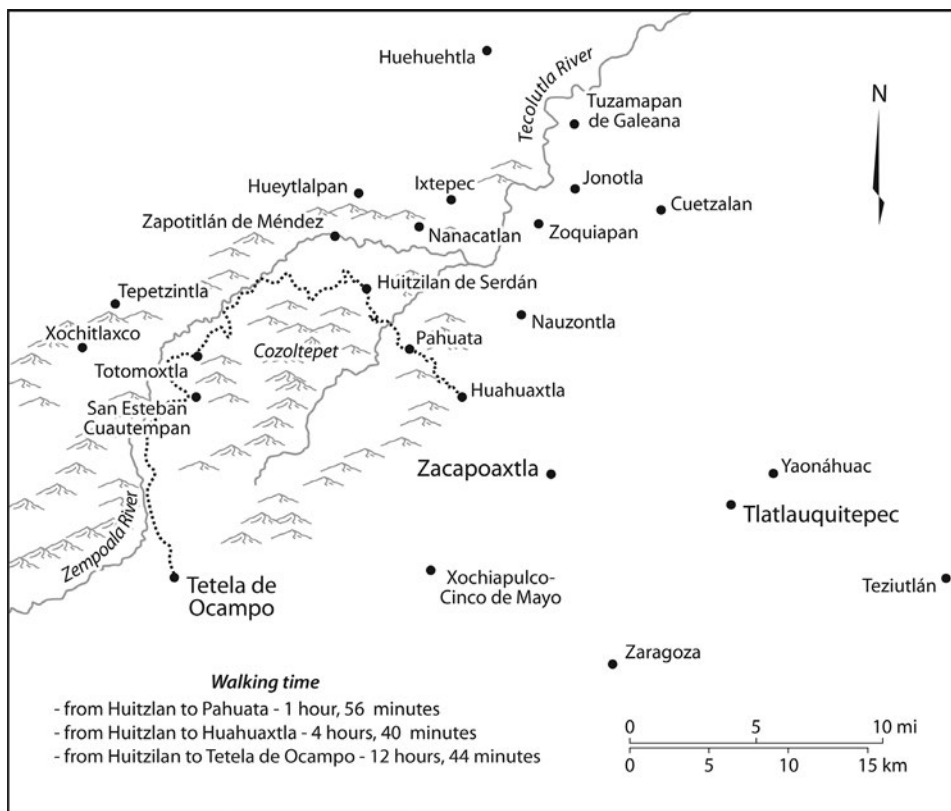


Figure 1.1. Map of the southern Sierra Norte de Puebla.

History of Rebellions

The UCI insurgency was one of many that have taken place in the northern sierra of Puebla. During the colonial period (1521–1821), there were at least six revitalization movements aimed at resisting the friars' efforts to convert Nahuas, Totonacs, Otomí, and Tepehuas to Christianity (Gruzinski 1989; Stresser-Péan 2012: 63–110). After Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, Nahuas in and around Cuetzalan attempted to drive out Spanish-speaking settlers, who had come into the sierra from the Mexican highlands in search of land to graze their cattle and grow sugarcane and coffee (Thomson 1991). The rain gods played a role in all of these movements.

Collective Memory

This study builds on Victoria Bricker's foundational work, in which she (1981:177–181) asserted that Maya rituals and stories are collective memories of former interethnic conflicts that have the potential of becoming another historical event. When using the term “collective memory,” I shall employ Paul Ricoeur's (2006: 119) definition of “a collection of traces left by events that have affected the course of history of the groups concerned, and that is accorded the power to place on stage these common memories.” He equated a collective memory with “the concept of ‘worlds of culture,’ understood in the sense of ‘concrete life-worlds in which the relatively or absolutely separate communities live their passive and active lives’” (118).

I aim to expand upon Bricker's argument by drawing on my long-term fieldwork in Huitzilán, which involved recording stories of the rain gods' rebellion and making observations of the context in Huitzilán before, during, and after the UCI insurgency of 1977–1984. Fieldwork took place in three stages: (1) between 1968 and 1975, prior to the land invasion in 1977; (2) in 1978, during the first months of the rebellion; and (3) between 2003 and 2012, after the insurrection had come to an end.

A Cultural Theory of Peasant Unrest

To organize the observations carried out during the three periods, I turned to James C. Scott's (1977a, 1977b, 1985, 1990, 2005) cultural theory of peasant unrest that uses observations like those that I made in Huitzilán. Scott (1977a: 5) argued for a change in the approach to peasant rebellion, declaring that “far too much scholarly labor has been expended on the precipitants of peasant rebellion and far too little on the shared values and goals which find expression through rebellion.” He (1977a: 20) recommended searching for those shared values in folktales, myths, rituals and other expressions of local culture. Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan (2005: 2) traces Scott's intellectual origins to the Manchester School that included Max Gluckman (1965: 259) and his work on “rituals of rebellion.” Gluckman meant by this term rituals that affirm commonly shared values by dramatizing the negative case of leaders who fall short of expectations. Rather than dividing a community, the rituals convey the illusion that “we are in fact united” but nevertheless have revolutionary potential.

Scott and other scholars (See Friedrich 1970, 1986; Schryer 1990) have demonstrated the value of taking local culture into consideration when trying to

understand insurgency, and their approach has gained support among contemporary scholars in different disciplines (See La Serna 2012; Johnson and Zellen 2014; Smith and Jones 2015), some of whom warn that a failure to take local expressions of discontent into account can lead to costly mistakes. Reconsidering the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, Smith and Jones (2015: 25) charge that attempting to access accurately “the nature of the enemy and the goals it sought, while recognizing the limits of political commitment, might have offered the United States a more realistic set of options about how to prosecute its war on South Vietnam, or, indeed, whether to prosecute it at all.” Johnson and Zellen (2014) express a similar view of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan.

Scott developed many of his insights into the culture of peasants through ethnographic research he carried out in 1978–1980 in a seventy-household Malaysian village he called Sedaka. He described Sedaka as “a rice-farming community in the main paddy growing area of Kedah” (Scott 1985: xvii). His interpretations of peasant culture in Sedaka are transferable to Huitzilán, which was, and to some extent still is, a corn-farming and coffee-raising community in the northern sierra of Puebla. The Nahuas in Huitzilán are a good fit for Scott’s observation that one who experiences humiliations and indignities as a result of being socially subordinate “may develop a personal fantasy of revenge and confrontation, but when the insult is but a variant of affronts suffered systematically by a whole race, class, or strata, then the fantasy can become a collective product” (1990: 9).

The examination of the rain god stories recorded during the three periods of fieldwork in Huitzilán revealed that when Nahuas had negative experiences, they repeated accounts of them in stories; some became myths, particularly when their experience was a synecdoche (part for the whole) for the experience of others. Stories of the rain gods’ rebellion fit William Bascom’s (1965: 5) definition of myth as a prose narrative of action regarded as fact, set in the remote or unspecified past, and involving non-human characters in a world different from the one narrators experience in their present.

One aim of this book is to identify the role that myths played in turning Nahua expressions of discontent into the rebellion of 1977–1984. Scott (1985: 341) was cautious about this point, noting that “there is no necessary relationship between the small and limited demands typical of a ‘reformist’ consciousness and the kinds of actions taken to achieve these demands.” In the recent history of eastern Mexico alone, Nahuas have reacted to their subordinate status in multiple and complex ways ranging from land invasions to religious pilgrimages. Nahua farmers in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, the Huasteca of Veracruz, and the Huasteca of Hidalgo have carried out small-(Sandstrom 1991: 89–90, 174–175)

and large-scale land invasions (Schryer 1990: 186–190, 194–195, 208–209), sometimes targeting land owned by other Nahuas as well as by Mestizos (Schryer 1990: 46–47).² Nahuas also organized with other groups ritual pilgrimages to the extinct volcano of Postectli in the Huasteca of Veracruz in response to Mestizos who treated them with “disrespect” and caused them to suffer “sickness, drought, and misfortune” (Sandstrom 2008: 178).

In the Sierra Norte de Puebla, the UCI land invasion in Huitzilán appears to be a secular response to Mestizo encroachment. However, a fuller examination of the Nahuas’ rituals and rain god stories revealed that it had a religious dimension. The stories and rituals derive from an ancient tradition that stems from what Johanna Broda (1971: 246) called a fertility cult that she traced to an early Pre-Hispanic cultural strata of cultivators in Central Mexico. I shall argue that the UCI rebellion was an indigenous phenomenon that developed out of the Nahuas’ frustrations in attempting to live according to the cooperative values of their corn-farming culture, which they shared in stories that are contemporary expressions of this cult.

Huitzilán’s Location in the Sierra Norte

In 1968 I chose Huitzilán de Serdán as a location for fieldwork because it had a large population of monolingual speakers of a Nahuatl language. My original aim was to describe a culture with deep roots in the Mesoamerican past. Huitzilán is located in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, a strategically located region of “eight thousand square kilometers of almost impenetrable mountains populated by Nahuatl, Totonac, and Otomí villages” (Brewster 2003: 2). The Sierra Norte lies along the most direct route from Mexico City to the Gulf Coast. However, the difficult terrain and the high level of precipitation make travel through the sierra difficult (Brewster 2003: 2–3). Rough dirt roads passable by car and truck did not reach Huitzilán until 1975; before then travel in and out of the village was by foot or horseback on steep and rugged dirt paths.

Guy Stresser-Péan (2012) distinguished between the northern and southern halves of the Sierra Norte. He (2012: 37) defined the northern half as made up of the Totonac, Nahuatl, and Otomí areas in “the northern half of the municipality of Huauchinango, the western end of the large municipality of Xicotepec” and extending “to the small municipalities of Naupan, Pahuatlán, and Chila-Honey in Puebla.” The northern half also includes “the western part of the Acaxochitlán municipality and part of Tenango de Doris, both in the state of Hidalgo.”

In the southern half are the commercial and political centers of Tlatlaquitepec, Zacapoaxtla, and Cuetzalan (Stresser-Péan 2012: 39, 52) [see map]. Huitzilán has cultural and economic ties to Zacapoaxtla but is in the political jurisdiction of Tetela de Ocampo. From Huitzilán in 1968, one walked or rode a horse sixteen kilometers to Huahuaxtla and then took a bus another thirteen kilometers to reach the commercial center of Zacapoaxtla. One walked or rode a horse forty-seven kilometers from Huitzilán to reach Tetela de Ocampo. The few Nahuas who went from Huitzilán to Cuetzalan traveled thirty-nine kilometers, at least half of which were on foot or by horseback.

Nahuas in Huitzilán speak the Nahuatl dialect of Nahuatl (Stresser-Péan 2012: 39), which Frances Karttunen (1992: xxi) defined as “a T-dialect” that closely resembles Nahuatl except that it does not have “the characteristic lateral release of TL.” Karttunen added that otherwise “it is not distant, at least lexically, from the Nahuatl described by Carochi.” Some linguists consider Nahuatl the older version of Nahuatl spoken by the Toltecs of ancient Tula near the Sierra Norte de Puebla.³

Many speakers of Nahuatl as well as Totonac in the southern Sierra Norte live in ethnically stratified communities created when Mestizos, called locally *gente de razón* (people of reason), settled in their villages in the late 1800s. Mestizos in Huitzilán make up about 10 percent of the population. Two hundred seventy-five respondents identified themselves as Mestizos and 2,373 said they were Nahuas in a census that Florentino Pérez and Nacho Ángel Hernández carried out in the main settlement of Huitzilán in 1969. At that time, many Mestizos referred to the Nahuas as the humble people or *gente humilde*, and some used the derogatory term *nacos*, short for Totonacs. Nahuas referred to themselves as Christians from Earth or *talticpac cristianos*, speakers of Nahuatl or *macehualmeh*, and sometimes the poor ones or *pobres*. Nahuas referred to the Mestizos as the rich ones or *ricos*, people of reason or *razón*, or, more often, *coyot*, the Nahuatl word for coyote and the character in the popular trickster tale “Rabbit and Coyote,” who tries to eat the rabbit.

In an effort to avoid reifying negative stereotypes when describing ethnic relations in Huitzilán, I shall refer to the people of reason (*gente de razón*) as Mestizos, the term that some members of elite families in Huitzilán told me that they prefer. I shall use the term Nahuas to refer to the native speakers of Nahuatl, also in accord with their preferences. A reader will find exceptions to the rule in the Nahuatl transcriptions of narratives and in my translations where I tried to find the most appropriate English word for the Nahuatl one used by the narrators.

Method

I constructed a picture of how Nahuas interpreted, in their stories, their experiences prior to, during, and after the UCI rebellion. Narrators defined an oral story as a lesson (*neixcuitil*) passed on from the ancestors, which I interpreted in four ways. One was to record, transcribe, and compare stories to discover how the Nahuas expressed their worldviews during each of the three stages of fieldwork. Some of the stories described experiences that “generated anger and collective action” (Scott 1985: 347). A second was to ask narrators to explain passages in their stories I could not understand. A third was to carry out interviews with Mestizos and Nahuas to discover their views of their community. A fourth was to make observations of community life and Nahua culture that provided the context for the stories I recorded, during all three stages of fieldwork.

Stages of Fieldwork

The first stage of fieldwork (1968–1975) began with a study of the developmental cycle of domestic groups from which I learned the Nahua value of cooperation in the extended family (Taggart 1972, 1975). The Nahuas I interviewed used the phrase “working as one” or *ce cosa tequiti* to refer to men in the domestic group pooling their harvest of corn and beans in a common granary for the use of all of the women according to need. In retrospect, the Nahuas, who rebelled in 1977, put into practice the value of working as one they had learned in their domestic groups. After invading the cattle pastures, they planted them with corn and divided the crop as if they were members of a large extended family.

In 1973, after learning and speaking Nahuatl with sufficient fluency, I turned to the study of oral narratives to probe deeper into domestic group culture. At that time, the Nahuas told many stories that grappled with domestic group internal dynamics. I also heard in 1975 the first of many rain god stories in which Nahuas imagined a rebellion against the hierarchical social structure of Huitzilán. I realized at that point that contemporary Nahuas had a revolutionary ideology with roots in the ancient figures of the rain gods. Some Nahuas are the human companions of rain gods and are variants of what Alfredo López Austin (1989: 61) has called the human-god or *hombre dios*.

The second stage of fieldwork took place during the 1977 and 1978 academic year, first in the monoethnic Nahua community of Santiago Yaonáhuac (1977) and then in Huitzilán (1978), where the UCI rebellion was in its early phase. My purpose was to discover how Nahuas in Huitzilán and Yaonáhuac described in

their stories their different degrees of subordination to Mestizos. I discovered that, compared with Nahuas in Huitzilan, those in the monoethnic community of Yaonáhuac enjoyed a great deal more access to land, passed more of their land to their daughters as well as sons, and did not have to deal on a daily basis with Mestizos living in their community and controlling their *municipio* government. The comparison between Yaonáhuac and Huitzilan revealed how ethnic hierarchy contributed to the radicalization of the Nahuas in Huitzilan. Early signs of radicalization were particularly evident in stories of the rain gods' rebellion that Nahuas in Huitzilan circulated before the UCI insurgency. Their stories during the first months of the UCI rebellion expressed how narrators were revitalized by the challenge the rebels now posed to the elite families in Huitzilan.

The third stage of fieldwork (2003–2012) took place in Huitzilan several years after the rebellion had come to an end. The Antorcha Campesina, whose members were Mestizos from outside the community, had taken over the town government, displacing the local Mestizo elite from their position as the politically dominant group. At that time, I recorded the Nahuas' accounts of the behavior of some local Mestizos who had tricked them out of their land and assaulted their women. A comparison of narratives recorded at this time with those heard earlier revealed how beliefs about rain gods, water-dwelling animals, and weather had changed as more Nahuas turned away from corn-farming and toward wage labor in and outside of Huitzilan. Nahua narrators also told "The Storm," a lesson from the ancestors on how to endure a frightening rainstorm that threatened to unleash a landslide. The ancestors' lesson is transferable to how to endure another rebellion by being alert and keeping one's fears in check.

Ethical Considerations

I faced ethical considerations while carrying out fieldwork in Huitzilan during and after the rebellion that affected my decision not to seek out and interview Nahuas who had joined the UCI when their rebellion was in full swing. Huitzilan went through a tense period in the fall of 1977, after Nahuas invited the UCI activist to come to Huitzilan and organize a group to protect them from their enemies and recover land lost to Mestizos. The UCI had just taken the risky step of posing a serious challenge to elite Mestizos and to some Nahuas. The Nahuas who had joined the UCI were extremely suspicious of those who were reluctant to join their movement. They kept apart from the rest of their community and put some Nahuas on a hit list. They did not welcome anyone from outside interviewing and exposing them to authorities in Puebla. Challenges continued after the rebellion when many in the UCI leadership were dead or had fled from the community, never to return.



Figure 1.2. Looking toward Ixtahuatalix from above Calyecapan.

I knew that some were in hiding in Huitzilán and that any attempt to seek them out would expose them to risks. The *Antorcha Campesina* had been ruling the community since 1984, and broadcast speeches over a loudspeaker denouncing the UCI and asserting that, were it not for the *Antorcha's* rule, the UCI would return and more blood would flow in the streets of Huitzilán. In this environment, I decided to keep a low profile and resort to indirect methods to reconstruct what had taken place in Huitzilán after I left in the spring of 1978.

The Narrators

All of the narrators who contributed rain god stories to this book were native speakers of Nahuatl. None had joined the UCI, and some were on the rebels' hit list because they were reluctant to take part in the land invasion. However, all the narrators knew someone, often a relative, who had participated in the insurgency. A few of the narrators were closely related to the local leaders of the rebellion and heard firsthand from them why they had joined the UCI. Most narrators were closely allied with the priest; they participated in the ritual life of their community; and they were among the more religiously involved citizens of Huitzilán. The Nahua narrators came from the two main population clusters. One is in the south and consists of the contiguous settlements of Ixtahuatalix, the *Colonia de la Concepción*, and Tenampulco (known as *Sección Quinta*). The other is in the north and consists primarily of Calyecapan (*Sección Tercera*).

Ixtahuatalix was an *ejido*, meaning land that was redistributed, following the Mexican Revolution, to communities and individuals but held by the federal government.⁴ In general, the families who lived on or near Ixtahuatalix had tiny *ejidos* for their house sites. They possessed very little other land, and lived by planting as much corn as they could on rented land and working for wages on the estates of the Mestizos in and near Huitzilán and on the Veracruz coast. Those who lived in Calyecapan were related by kinship to Domingo Hernández, one of the wealthiest Nahuas, who owned a considerable amount of land in Huitzilán, including a sugarcane field and press. Domingo Hernández sponsored many of the patron saint celebrations that took place in Huitzilán during the first period of fieldwork (1968–1975).

Creating a Written Record of an Oral Tradition

I recorded the narrators' stories in their homes, usually in the presence of other family members who participated in the storytelling process. I expressed an interest in all of the stories they told, not just ones having to do with the rain gods' rebellion. During the first two stages of fieldwork (1973–1975 and 1978), I transcribed all the narratives and corrected them with Nacho Ángel Hernández's help. Nacho Ángel Hernández was born in Calyecapan and provided invaluable help by teaching me his language and explaining his culture. By the third stage of fieldwork, I had become more proficient in the language and used better recording equipment, so I could transcribe the recordings on my own. Nacho continued to play an invaluable role explaining allusions in stories that Nahuas in Huitzilán understood but I, as an outsider, did not.

Summary of Results

Long-term fieldwork resulted in a partial written record of an oral tradition. Vansina (1985: 149, 160) defined the corpus of oral tradition as memories of memories "heard from somebody else" within a locality. A community corpus is not homogeneous; it differs from that of other localities, and memories heard from others change faster than personal memory (Vansina 1985: 150–162). The stories of rain gods that circulated in the oral tradition of the Nahuas in the southern Sierra Norte manifest these characteristics. The stories show considerable variation from one narrator to another, and those from Huitzilán are different from the ones I recorded from Nahuas in Santiago Yaonáhuac.

Only in Huitzilán did Nahuas tell stories of rain gods organizing to topple *municipio* presidents by killing their animal companion spirits. Nahuas in Yaonáhuac told stories about rain gods doing many things but not organizing to attack and kill the animal companion of a *municipio* president. I was first struck by this difference in 1977 when in Yaonáhuac recording numerous stories of rain gods, none of which sounded like the one I had heard in 1975 from Miguel Ahuata in Huitzilán. In Miguel's story of "The President and the Priest," the rain gods kill the animal companion spirit of a *municipio* president who practiced negative reciprocity. The President refuses to fulfill his obligation to provide the priest with a meal in reciprocity for performing a mass. Nahuas had explained on numerous occasions, during early fieldwork, that negative reciprocity was a threat to the unity of the extended family domestic group because it undermined the value of working as one. At that time the Nahuas were struggling to hold their extended families together because land for growing corn and beans was becoming expensive to rent.

In 1975, the Mestizo elite in Huitzilán was firmly in control of the local government and the UCI had not yet appeared in the Sierra Norte de Puebla. Miguel Ahuata had anticipated by two years the actual rebellion in which the Nahuas in the UCI put into practice the idea of a collective rebellion loosely resembling the one Miguel had described in his story. I suspect that Miguel Ahuata's 1975 narrative was a collective memory of earlier rebellions that had taken place in the southern Sierra Norte, such as Pala Agustín Dieguillo's insurgency in the Cuetzalan area following the French intervention (1862–1867) (Thomson 1991).

During the second period of fieldwork, when the UCI were tending to their first corn field on Talcuaco and Taltempan, de la Co Ayance, Nacho Angel Hernández, and Antonio Veracruz told other stories expanding on the themes in Miguel Ahuata's story. Their stories expressed more pointed critiques of local officials and unwelcome Mestizo settlers that I attribute to the narrators' feelings of revitalization as a result of the UCI rebellion. At about the same time, Miguel Fuentes told the story of "Malintzin" or Precious Mary, a virtuous woman whom the devil, who had changed into a crying infant and then a serpent, dragged into a bottomless pool. "Malintzin" is derived from accounts of the actual kidnapping of a Nahuá woman that inspired her husband to invite the UCI organizer to Huitzilán. "Malintzin" is the first of two examples of local expressions of discontent in narrative form playing a direct role in the UCI rebellion. The second example is an oral narrative, which is in the process of becoming a myth,

explaining why three Nahua men joined the UCI to recover a fourteen-hectare plot of land their grandfather had actually lost many years earlier to a Mestizo in an unfair and much criticized land transaction.

After the rebellion collapsed, the Ángel Hernández brothers in Calyecapan told the new story of “The Man from Ayequal,” in which they revised their ideas about the relationship between *achane* (water dwellers) and rain gods, reducing their polarization in accord with changes in interethnic relations. Also new was their rendition of “The *Achane* of Apohpocayan,” which marked the end of the era in which the Ángel Hernández brothers worked as one by cultivating a common corn field to feed their families. They also told the story of “The Storm,” which summed up their horrific experiences during the UCI rebellion. “The Storm” is a lesson for how to live through a powerful tropical depression as well as a political upheaval.

Rebellions in the Sierra Norte

The UCI rebellion is the most recent of many insurgencies that speakers of indigenous languages have carried out in the Sierra Norte de Puebla. Stresser-Péan (2012: 63–78) found evidence from the colonial period (1521–1821) that Nahuas, Totonacs, and Otomí in northern part of the Sierra Norte, near Huachinango, Xicotepec, Tutotepec, and Matlatlán, were involved in at least six revitalization movements.¹ The leaders organized resistance to the friars who suppressed the autochthonous religion and attempted to convert the indigenous population to Christianity. Nahuas, Otomí, and others promoted an ancient religion focused on rain gods who were part of a fertility cult (Broda 1971; Stresser-Péan 2012: 63–78) that continues to be part of the Nahuas corn-farming-based culture.

One of the best described revitalization movements took place between 1766 and 1769 and involved the Otomí of Tutotepec. The Otomí had built a chapel on top of Mt. San Mateo or Cerro Azul (Blue Mountain), where the devout made offerings “to the spirits of lightning and rain” (Stresser-Péan 2012: 85). Their leader was known as Juan Diego, named after the Nahua who was said to have witnessed the Virgin of Guadalupe appear on a hill known as Tepeyac in the Valley of Mexico over two centuries earlier. The Otomí Juan Diego had a vision in which “the crucified Christ appeared before him to reveal the coming of great prodigies and a new age.” Christ predicted that God would descend to the top of Cerro Azul and bring an end to the world with a great flood (Stresser-Péan 2012: 84). The Otomí had hoped a flood would drive out the Spaniards, Creoles, and Mestizo settlers, who had come into the Sierra Norte from Central Mexico (82). Events came to a climax during Carnival in 1769, when Juan Diego celebrated “great festivities at the top of Cerro de San Matero [Cerro Azul]” (89). Several dozen Spaniards, Creoles, and Mestizos attacked the gathering and killed or captured the leaders and their lieutenants (90). At its peak, the uprising of 1769 involved participants from twenty-one communities (Stresser-Péan 2012: 87).

Insurgency movements with similar nativist aspirations occurred in the early 1800s in the southern Sierra Norte de Puebla where Nahuas resisted the influx of Mestizos, who had begun settling in the Cuetzalan area in the late 1700s. Thomson (1991: 210) noted that in 1807:

Indian leaders put up fierce resistance to granting formal political status to a barrio of non-Indian corn farmers who had established a settlement at the 'rancho of Xocoyolotopeque' during the Great Famine of 1785–86.

The migration of Mestizos into the Cuetzalan area nevertheless continued, and by the 1850s “a rapidly growing Indian population confronted an intensified influx of more ambitious and wealthy (compared with previous immigrants) *gente de razón* [Mestizos], who chose to settle in their midst rather than at a discreet distance” (Thomson 1991: 214). The Mestizos wanted land to raise their cattle, grow sugarcane for *aguardiente*, and grow coffee for export.

The Nahua leader of the resistance was Pala Agustín Dieguillo, who had “fought at the battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, when General Ignacio Zaragoza’s hastily assembled Liberal army defeated the French expeditionary force” (Thomson 1991: 205). On April 2, 1867, Pala Agustín Dieguillo participated in a second battle of Puebla, leading 100 Nahua soldiers from Cuetzalan, under the command of Juan N. Mendez and Juan Francisco Lucas, in a more definitive defeat of the French and Austrian soldiers that helped end the French intervention (Thomson 1991: 205). When Pala Agustín Dieguillo returned from the second battle of Puebla, he led the resistance against the new wave of Mestizos. Pala Agustín Dieguillo employed a dual strategy of “clientelism and collective action” to resist the efforts of Mestizos to apply the *Ley Lerdo* and acquire communal indigenous lands as private property (Thomson 1991: 207). The *Ley Lerdo* “prohibited corporations [that is, religious foundations and civic communities] from holding real property” (Simpson [1941] 1966: 273–274). Civic communities included indigenous villages that held land communally. The law became article 27 of the Constitution of 1857 (Simpson [1941] 1966: 275), and Guy P. C. Thomson (1991: 206) reports that Mestizos used it to gain rights to communal land in Nahua villages in and around Cuetzalan. Pala Agustín Dieguillo’s resistance movement grew into a protest of 200 men and increased to 400 by 1868. Thomson (1991: 207) described the movement’s nativist focus:

Pala Agustín and his followers organized an armed movement aimed at expelling non-Indians from their midst. This took the form of a three-year campaign of intimidation, commercial boycott, and the destruction of

Elite Mestizo Families of Huitzilan

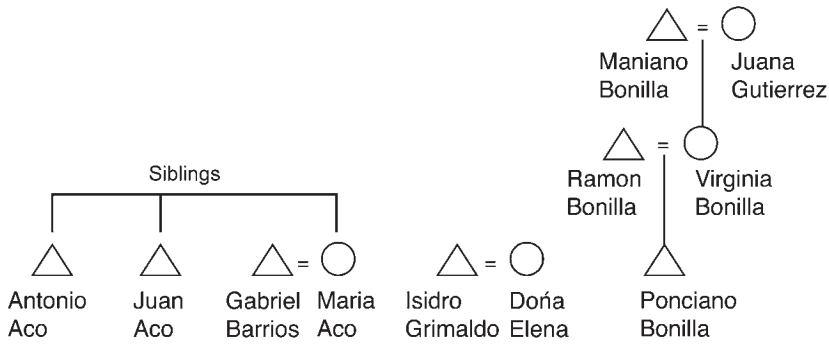


FIGURE 2.1. Kinship chart of elite families.

cattle pens and coffee plantations accompanied by military encirclement of Cuetzalán (*cabecera*), where most of the municipality's non-Indians resided.

The Cuetzalan movement may have helped set the stage for the land invasion that occurred in Huitzilan in 1977, just over one hundred years later. Pala Agustín Dieguillo's nativist movement may have driven some Mestizos from the Cuetzalan area and into Huitzilan, where they found Nahuas who spoke the same dialect of Nahuatl. One of the first was Juana Gutierrez, who came from San Antonio Rayón, near Cuetzalan, and settled in Huitzilan around 1880. She reputedly brought gold coins with her and used them to buy a great deal of land. She left many descendants, one of whom owns "a world of land," in the words of a Mestizo who was born and lived most of his life in Huitzilan. Juana Gutierrez's estate included the Talcuaco and Taltempan pastures that Nahuas invaded in the late fall of 1977 and early winter of 1978.

Juana Gutierrez was not the first Mestizo to acquire land in Huitzilan. A prominent Mestizo in Huitzilan provided, in an interview,² some of the historical background to the UCI rebellion. The interview began with a discussion of who owned the land that became the Ixtahuatalix *ejido*. What emerged is an account, from a native son, of Nahuas losing a great deal of their land prior to the arrival of Juana Gutierrez around 1880, and how and why the non-Nahuas Antonio Aco from Tetela and Ponciano Bonilla from Huitzilan acquired political power in Huitzilan. Ponciano Bonilla was the son of Ramón Bonilla, who had

come from Tetela de Ocampo, and Virginia Bonilla, who was born in Huitzilán to Juana Gutierrez.³ An important part of this interview is the narrator's description of the complex ties of kinship and friendship among Antonio Aco and Isidro Grimaldo; the *jefe político* of Tetela de Ocampo whose jurisdiction included Huitzilán; Juan N. Mendez, the general who, with Juan Francisco Lucas, led the Nahua brigade from Cuetzalan in the second battle of Puebla; and Gabriel Barrios, who became the *cacique* (political boss) of the Sierra Norte de Puebla after the Mexican Revolution.

These figures and their relationships are important because they explain the formation of an elite group of Mestizos who gained power to govern Huitzilán in the years leading up to the UCI rebellion.

At that time the land in the southern half of Huitzilán, including all that Antonio Aco's son later owned, all of what used to be the *ejido* of Ixtahuatalix, and all that is now section five, it all belonged to Juan N. Mendez and Grimaldo. Juan N. Mendez probably grabbed the land in the southern half of Huitzilán, only no one knows exactly what happened, but the results are that he had a lot of land here. They [Juan N. Mendez and Isidro Grimaldo] brought . . . Antonio [Aco] from Tetela to Huitzilán to administer the land Doña Elena [a close friend of Antonio Aco's sister and the daughter of Juan N. Mendez] had acquired with her marriage to Isidro Grimaldo. She did not just have land here. She also owned land on what is now a settlement called Santa Elena below Zongozotla [a Totonac community adjacent to Huitzilán]. The name Santa Elena was in honor of Elena Grimaldo.⁴

Huitzilán was on the margins of the struggles during the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917) and became part of the political dominion of Gabriel Barrios, who took over the Sierra Brigade after the death in 1917 of its former commander, the Nahuatl- or Nahuatl-speaking Juan Francisco Lucas. General Gabriel Barrios resided in the Tetela area and was the *cacique* or political leader of the Sierra Norte de Puebla until May 27, 1930. On that date, the Guerra y Marina (Mexican Secretary of Defense) transferred the general and his Serrano brigade to Mexico City after trade unions and agrarian reformers gained power, and openly criticized the general (Brewster 2003: 154–158).

The Mestizo finished his interview by explaining how Antonio Aco, along with Ponciano Bonilla, continued to hold power in Huitzilán once Gabriel Barrios became the *cacique* of Tetela de Ocampo in 1917. Kinship also played an important role in the alliance between Antonio Aco and Gabriel Barrios.

Antonio [Aco] had become the brother-in-law of General Barrios [when Antonio's sister, María, started living with the general]. He also took advantage of the general's political position to maintain or add to his hold on political power in Huitzilán. Antonio's brothers had less power probably because they were younger. In addition to Antonio [Aco], Ponciano Bonilla was also closely allied with General Barrios. Don Ponciano knew General Barrios, and so did the Aco brothers, all of whom had a certain amount of political power in the town because of their friendship with the general.⁵

Huitzilán *Ejid*os

The *ejido* land redistribution program provided some relief to the Nahuas in Huitzilán. Land distribution was "one of the major goals of the revolution" and was carried out "by *ejido* grants to individuals" and "to communities" (Wilkie 1971: xi). Lesley Byrd Simpson ([1941] 1966: 321) reports: "During the four effective years of his term [1936–1940], Cárdenas distributed more land to the peasants than had been distributed in all of the years since the beginning of the Revolution." According to documents I read in the Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios in Mexico City, "the citizens of Huitzilán filed a petition on December 13, 1943, to designate 335 hectares" as *ejidos*. The source of the land is unclear. According to the documents the land originally belonged to the *municipio*. However, the Mestizo declared in his interview that the *ejido*, which became Ixtahuatalix and consisted of twenty-seven hectares, was land once held by Juan N. Mendez and Isidro Grimaldo. The documents in the Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios specify that the *ejido* of Ixtahuatalix only bordered on land owned by María Elena Grimaldo to the east and land owned by Juana Gutierrez to the south. The other *ejidos* were La Cumbre, a parcel of five hectares at the northern end of the community; Escorial, a parcel of eight hectares to the east of Huitzilán; and the much larger *ejido* of Chachaloyán, a parcel of 295 hectares halfway between Huitzilán and the *junta auxiliar* of San Juan Totutla.⁶

At the very least, these four *ejidos* slowed the alienation of lands that Nahuas needed to grow their corn and build their houses, but many still had to rent land owned by Mestizos to grow their food. Only 35 percent of 450 Nahua married couples owned any land in fee simple tenure, according to the census on domestic group social composition and land ownership that Florentino Perez and Nacho Ángel Hernández carried out for me in 1969 (Taggart 1972: 147). Many

of the 35 percent owned only a house site and a small coffee orchard. The creation of the Chachaloyan *ejido* was an important resource for Nahuas seeking land to grow their corn and beans. However, the Nahuas in Huitzilán had to share the 295 hectares with the people of San Juan Totutla and the small settlement of Chachaloyán itself.

For the Nahuas in Huitzilán, the creation of the four *ejidos* fell short of Leslie Byrd Simpson's ([1941] 1966: 302) characterization of the government's intent for the *ejido* program as "nothing less than a complete restoration of land to the Indians." The expansion of the *ejido* program in the Sierra Norte de Puebla ran up against a number of obstacles. Marc Edelman (1980: 35) notes that for the Zacapoaxtla region in the southern Sierra Norte de Puebla, "Most of the largest haciendas in the region were divided and sold before they could be expropriated. For this reason there are few *ejidos* . . . in the area."

Moreover, the *ejido* program conflicted with other political priorities, particularly the need to feed workers who began to migrate to cities to work in factories with Mexico's "rapid post-1940 industrialization" (Edelman 1980: 29). With U.S. factories retooled for war, Mexico faced a scarcity of industrial goods from the north and turned to manufacturing them in its own factories (Edelman 1980: 29). To produce food for the factory workers, the Mexican state promoted industrial agriculture particularly in "the northwestern states of Sonora and Sinaloa and in the Bajío region" (Edelman 1980: 29). The turn away from agrarian reform and toward industrial agriculture meant that the people of Huitzilán would not see any more *ejidos* after the redistribution of 1943. Edelman (1980: 29–30) explains that the "smallholding regions of the country were viewed primarily as sources of inexpensive labor for both the urban sectors and for capitalist agriculture." Mexican industrial agriculture, however, was unable to "meet the nation's need for grains" and the Mexican state reoriented agrarian policy to "stimulate commercial production of basic foodstuffs by peasant smallholders" (30). Part of the motivation to make this shift was "a spreading agrarian crisis marked by land occupations and violent conflicts between peasants and landowners" (30).

Nahuas in the Huasteca of Hidalgo, north of the Sierra Norte, began carrying out land invasions in the late '60s. Frans J. Schryer (1990: 186–190, 194–195, 208–209) noted that President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz set the stage for the land occupation movement when he signed an order creating forty-nine *ejidos* in the district of Huejutla. The president's action created the expectation among peasants for the restoration of their ancestral community lands. It encouraged Nahuas to create "their own interpretation of history according to which a few rich

Nahua families and the *coyomeh* (Mestizos) had 'stolen' the land that rightfully belonged to all the *macehualli* (Nahuas)." The first invasions took place in 1968 in the villages of La Corrola and Tenexco with "legal advice and moral support" from the CCI or the Central Campesino Independiente (Central Organization of Independent Farmers). The local peasant leader, Felipe Naranjo, was a Mestizo who grew up in Tenexco and then worked cutting cane in the Huasteca of Veracruz, where he had exposure to the "ideas of left-wing agrarian politicians." Land invasions continued through the '70s under other leaders, such as Crisóstomos Arenas, who spoke fluent Nahuatl, had "a modern outlook" and was an "ideal political broker." By 1979 the movement reached a peak and could claim 23,171 hectares.

It is quite possible that the UCI emerged as an offshoot or copy of the organizations that operated in the Huasteca de Hidalgo that included the CCI and the CAM, the acronym for the Consejo Agrario Mexicano (Mexican Agrarian Council). Nahuas and Mestizos, who had worked on plantations on the Veracruz coast, had exposure to the ideas of peasant activists and perhaps even knew about the CCI and CAM. In February 1976, the UCI organized a demonstration of more than 10,000 farmers in Martínez de la Torre, the agricultural center of Veracruz (Beaucage 1994: 39). This was the destination of Nahuas from many parts of the Sierra Norte who migrated to the coastal plain in search of wage labor. Soon thereafter, the UCI appeared in the southern Sierra Norte and started organizing Nahuas and Totonacs to invade cattle pastures for which there was no clear title. Edelman (1980: 35) reports that an agrarian crisis broke out in the southern Sierra Norte when "landless members of the Acoaco *ejido* in Texocoyohuac, Zacapoaxtla, occupied the adjacent San Isidro Finca in 1976." The invasion followed years of "fruitless efforts" to obtain the *finca* (estate) by legal means. Edelman (1980: 35) cites reports that the owners of the *finca*, Gustavo Macip, who lived in the city of Puebla, and his brother, René Macip, who was the *municipio* president of Zacapoaxtla, or their agents, called in the army and the Federal Judicial Police to drive out the invaders.

The affiliation of the invaders of the San Isidro Finca may have been the UCI, which by 1977 had organized several land occupations in Cuetzalan and Zacapoaxtla. Eventually UCI organizers worked their way down the rough dirt road that extended partway from the Zacapoaxtla-Cuetzalan highway toward Huitzilán. The UCI began organizing land invasions where the road ended at that time in the small hamlet of Pahuata, from which they could enjoy a beautiful view of Huitzilán in a valley below. In late 1977, several Nahuas from Huitzilán went to Pahuata to ask the UCI leader, Felipe Reyes Herrera, to help



Figure 2.2. View of Huitzilán from Talcuaco in 2004.

them organize to defend themselves against a Nahuá strongman, Pedro Manzano. Some said Felipe Reyes Herrera came from Veracruz, others named Xochiapulco, and no one said he had any ties to Huitzilán. Pedro Manzano had threatened Luis Vino, one of the Nahuas who made the trip to Pahuata, over a romantic attachment the two men had developed with the same woman. Luis Vino lived above Talcuaco, and from the porch of his house one had a beautiful view down into the center of Huitzilán.

Talcuaco had been the object of a conflict between the descendants of Juana Gutiérrez and Juan Aco, the younger brother of Antonio Aco, whom Isidro Grimaldo, perhaps with the help of Juan N. Mendez, had brought from Tetela to administer the land in Huitzilán belonging to Grimaldo's widow, Doña Elena Mendez. Juana Gutiérrez did not leave a written will, so her descendants fought over her estate, which included the Talcuaco and Taltempan pastures. Antonio Aco's younger brother, Juan Aco, believed he had rights in Talcuaco because his daughter had a child with one of the descendants of Juana Gutiérrez. The UCI leader, Felipe Reyes Herrera, encouraged the Nahuas in Huitzilán to invade intestate land for which there was no clear title. He repeated the justification for this tactic by evoking the slogan attributed to Emiliano Zapata

that “land is for those who work it.” He denounced the elite by urging death to the “rich ones.”

On the surface, at least, the invasion of the Talcuaco and Taltempan pastures appeared to be a Nahua rebellion with a nativist focus aimed at reacquiring land lost to Mestizos in previous centuries. Nativism—the desire to expel non-indigenous outsiders (Wallace 1956: 278)—is a common thread running through all the rebellions that have taken place in the Sierra Norte de Puebla since colonial times. As will become apparent, however, Nahua nativism was a complicated phenomenon because of the ties of kinship, ritual kinship, and, in some cases, friendship between members of the two ethnic groups in Huitzilán. (See Chapter 7, “The Water in Ixtepec,” 1978).

Less clear is the role that cultural revitalization may have played, in part because the Mesoamerican antecedents in contemporary Nahua culture in the southern Sierra Norte are in dispute. Before the UCI land invasion in Huitzilán, Pierre Beaucage (1974: 112) carried out fieldwork in Zacapexpan and Atzalan, near the Acoaco *ejido* in Texocoyohuac, Zacapoaxtla, the site of the first land invasions in 1976 (Edelman 1980: 35). Beaucage concluded that the Nahuas in that area were proletarians who had worked for wages on the estates of wealthy landowners and merchants for many years. He dismissed the idea that there was much left of indigenous Nahua culture other than perhaps a few rituals and some aspects of kinship (Beaucage 1974: 112).

However, when the Nahuas in Huitzilán joined the UCI and invaded the cattle pastures of Talcuaco and Taltempan, he expressed surprise because they did not behave like proletarians:

On the one hand, they demonstrated that, yes, there is class conflict and not just an expression of traditional culture; on the other, there was also a challenge to Marxist theory because as semi-proletarians they did not demand better wages much less socialism: They wanted land! (Beaucage 1994: 40)

Beaucage (1999: 459, 465–468) came to the conclusion that Nahua culture is different than he had imagined. He examined narratives collected in the Cuetzalan area by the Taller de Tradición Oral (Oral Tradition Workshop) and two ethnographers (1999: 466) on how Nahuas in that part of the southern Sierra Norte remembered their history of political struggles. Beaucage (1999: 468) discovered that Nahuas identified San Miguel as a helpful intermediary in battles that took place during the French intervention (1862–1867) and the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917). It turned out that the Nahuas in Huitzilán regard San

Miguel as the alter ego of their rain gods, which is the subject of the next chapter. First, however, I shall present two views, one from a prominent Mestizo and the other from a Nahua, on how the UCI appeared in Huitzilán.

Two Views on the Origins of UCI Rebellion

The Mestizo and the Nahua both began their accounts with a contingent of Nahuas making the trip to the neighboring community of Pahuata and inviting an UCI organizer, Felipe Reyes Herrera, to come to the community and help them organize a group that would defend them from their enemy, a local Nahua named Pedro Manzano. Neither one mentioned a charismatic leader with ties to Huitzilán, and I did not see one when I resumed fieldwork within a month of Felipe Reyes Herrera's arrival in the community.

The Mestizo's Account

The Mestizo, who provided his view of the circumstances of Felipe Reyes Herrera's arrival in Huitzilán, is a relative of Antonio Aco, whom Isidro Grimaldo had brought from Tetela to administer the properties of Grimaldo's widow, Doña Elena. He attributed the appearance of Felipe Reyes Herrera to the Nahuas' dispute with Pedro Manzano and played down the UCI's agrarian aims by characterizing them as providing a justification for the group's existence.

Well, there was a person here who had a very bad reputation because he mistreated people. He threatened them—he and his gang—and that person was Pedro Manzano. Some people came to hate him, and among them were Vicente Peralta and Luis Vino because he had mistreated them. Vicente and Luis knew that there was a representative of the UCI, Felipe Reyes Herrera, in Pahuata [neighboring Huitzilán]. They went to Pahuata and said, 'Listen, we have a problem. There is a person who mistreats us, who is very bad with us. He must be eliminated. Right? It is necessary to get rid of him, and so we want to form a group to do it.' So then they started forming a group but the one they wanted to get rid of was very clever. What began as a project to get rid of a person turned into something more political. 'We're now a group. But to justify our existence, we need to invade a plot of land.' So then they were about thirty people, and they said, 'What land are we going to invade? What land would work for this purpose?' Well, there was a plot of land that Juan [Aco] had taken, using a lot of tricks because he was not an honorable person. He had grabbed this

plot of land [Talcuaco] with every trick in the book. Everyone knew about what he had done. 'What land are we going to invade? That plot of land.' So that is what they did.⁷

The Nabua's View

The Nahua spoke from the perspective of one who refused to join the UCI and feared reprisals from his brothers-in-law who had become members of the group. He offered a more complete picture of the history of the personal dispute that led the contingent of Nahuas to make the journey to Pahuata from Huitzilán. He provided more detail of the plan that the UCI organizer presented for alleviating the Nahuas' need for land on which to grow their corn. He began with a more detailed description of the background to the conflict between Pedro Manzano and Luis Vino.

That Pedro Manzano, he was very big womanizer. . . . He had a relationship with that woman, the one who lived up there, Fulana⁸. . . . Then there was this kid [who was Fulana's lover] down there [in Ixtahuatlix] whom they called, they called him José [Pescado]. . . . They were hiring workers here in Zapotitlán to work the sugarcane press. They looked for a team, a team of workers and two women. That is when they hired Fulana, who was grinding tortilla dough for [the team that included José Pescado]. That made Pedro angry. So with that, according to what they say, Pedro went to José Pescado's house one night. Pedro called to José [making the sound of a bird], and [when José opened the door to his house], Pedro shot him and his mother. They were next to each other, and the bullet went straight through him and reached his mother. Pedro killed them both. . . . They took him to jail. [A rich person] got him out. He got him out. The person who got him out had a lot of money.

The deceased Luis Vino also talked to Fulana. . . . That made Pedro angry. One time I went to Luis's house—he was already an UCI by then—looking for some medicine. My wife said that Luis sold vitamins. 'Go see him.' 'I'll go see him.' I found him in his house. And I did not have a problem with him. They accepted me. They invited me to drink coffee. There we were, talking with Luis. That is when he told me. He said, 'I would not have joined up with them [the UCI]. I would not have gone in with them. But this [Pedro Manzano], wherever he sees me at any time, it is important that he shoot me. Wherever we run into each other, it is important that he shoot me. So then that is why I went in with the UCI so that he would

not shoot me.' That is the way it was. And it was because of that woman. Sometimes Pedro was stupid. He had his wife. Luis also had his wife. Why did they want another woman to fight over?

(Pedro tel, bueno, tel mujeriego catca. . . . Entonces quiapiya non, ne abco, non Fulana. . . . Entonces yetoya ce telPOCH ne tani, quiliaya, bueno quiliaya José. . . . Entonces quitrataroaya tequit nican Zapotitlán, de trapiche tequit. Entonces quintemoa ce grupo, ce grupo de tequitinini huan ome cihuameh. Entonces ompa cuicaya non Fulana, no ompa teciliaya. Entonces nin Petzin cualan. Entonces ca non, según quihtoya, ca non yaqueh ichan ca yobual. Quinalnotzato huan quimicti in telPOCH huan ninan. Toctamelahuetztoya,⁹ cihuat quiahcic tiro ninan. . . . Quinmicti. Yehha cuiaqueh carcel. Yeh quixitique. Quixti. Quiapiya tomin.¹⁰ Luis Vino catca no ica monotzaya non cihuat. Huan Petzin no quinonotzaya. Pues yehha ca non cualantiaya. Ce tiempo, nyahca ichan Luis, ipa UCIs ya, huan qitemocatoya pahiti. Entonces quiht[o]a nocihuauh, quihtoa qitemaca vitamina. 'Xa quittati.' 'Nyo niquittati pos.' Niahcic ichan. Como ahmo nicpiya problema ihuan. Pues nechceliqueh. Nechhuantiqueh cafen. Ompa timononotzah ihuan non Luis. Tons ompa non pehuac nechtapohuia. Quiht[o]a, 'Ahmo nicalaquizquia ca nin,' quiht[o]a. 'Ahmo nicalaquizquia. Pero nin tacat,' quiht[o]a, 'cada vez campa niquitta,' quiht[o]a, 'que importa que nechmaca,' quiht[o]a. 'Campa ticnamiqih, importa que nechmaca,' quiht[o]a. 'Entonces,' quiht[o]a, 'por eso nimocalaqui can nin,' quiht[o]a, 'para ahmo nechmacau,' quiht[o]a. Ca non. Huan ce por in non cibiuat.¹¹ Quemazah mimiquiloyot Petzin. Quiapiya nicihuauh. Ne no quiapiya nicihuauh. Para toni quinequih occe mocualantitozqueh?)¹²

The Nahua then turned to the UCI's agrarian aims that resulted in the land invasions of the Talcuaco and Taltempan cattle pastures.

According to the UCI, they came to divide up the land to help the poor. A lot of people gathered around them with that [message]. They thought they would really help them. *(Huallayah segun yehhan quixexeloquih tal, quinpalehuitih pobres. Can non miaqueh tacayot motoquiayah. Moliayah melaub quinpalehuitih.)¹³*

The narrator recalled the specific tactic that the UCI leader, Felipe Reyes Herrera suggested to the Nahuas.

After the meeting, they were emboldened to ask where there was an excess of land. There is a man who stood up [and told them] to look for who has

land that is called 'intestate,' that is, who has it now does not have [ownership] papers. (*Zatepa de junta quinyolchicaauhqueh ma tahtanqueh can sobra tal. Yetoya ce tacat aquin quechiliznequi*¹⁴ *quitemohuaya can quiipiya tal de non monotza, bueno ce tal quilia 'intestado' ca moquiipiya aconi axcan, ahmo quiipiya amat.*)¹⁵

Many Nahuas knew about the dispute between Juan Aco and the descendants of Juan Gutierrez over the ownership of the Talcuaco and Taltimpan cattle pastures. However, the Nahua declared that who had planted the land was more important than the twisted history of claims and counterclaims of land ownership. He noted that Juan Aco did not plant on Talcuaco and just took it for himself.¹⁶

The UCI organizer provided the Nahuas with some small arms, led torchlit parades down the main street of Huitzilán, and delivered speeches denouncing the *ricos* that alarmed the Mestizos, some of whom had close ties of blood kinship and ritual kinship with Nahuas. However, the cultural roots of the UCI rebellion are in the stories Nahuas told, before the UCI appeared in the Sierra Norte, of rain gods who organized to kill, with bolts of lightning, the animal companions or *achane* of badly acting *municipio* presidents and unwanted non-Nahua settlers. The narrators' description of the personage of the rain god reveals how, prior to the UCI rebellion, Nahuas positioned themselves relative to the Mestizos, the Church, and their ancestors as they resisted secular local authority, particularly in the figure of *municipio* president. Years prior to the UCI rebellion, the president served in the local government with the consent of Antonio Aco or Ponciano Bonilla, the governing arms of Isidro Grimaldo and Gabriel Barrios in Tetela de Ocampo. Antonio Aco and Ponciano Bonilla and members of their families continued to occupy positions of power following Barrios's transfer from Tetela de Ocampo to Mexico City.

In their struggle against secular authorities, Nahuas allied themselves with the priest while asserting their cultural autonomy by holding onto their theory of water and weather. According to their theory, rain gods bring the pluvial waters as rain, and the terrestrial water-dwelling animals (*achane*) bring water in springs. The rain gods probably derive from the ministers of Tlaloc, of the pluvial waters, and the terrestrial water-dwelling animals or *achane* originated from Chalchiutlicue. Tlaloc and Chalchiutlicue were central figures in Johanna Broda's (1971) reconstruction of the ancient fertility cult.

The Nahuas' accommodation with the Church has not been easy and has at times required dissimulation and disguise. One example of this emerged in the

different interpretations that Mestizos and Nahuas attached to the drama that impersonators of San Miguel regularly performed in Huitzilán during the first period of fieldwork (1968–1975). When performing the public ritual drama, the Nahuá impersonators of San Miguel do not reveal that they are enacting the story of the rain gods' rebellion against local, secular authorities.

San Miguel and the Rain Gods

During saint's day celebrations in Huitzilán, dancers portraying San Miguel acted out a morality play dramatizing the struggle between good and evil. It was January 5, 1969, the eve of the fiesta of Santos Reyes celebrating the three wise men's visit to the baby Jesus, when I first saw the San Miguel dancers. They were accompanying Domingo Hernández as he brought the Baby Jesus (*Niño de Jesús*) from his house in Calyecapan to the church in the center of town. Domingo was one of the few Nahuas of means in Huitzilán, and he sponsored most of the saint's day celebrations during the first period of my fieldwork in his community.

I waited to photograph the dancers performing their morality play until the following day, January 6, when the priest came from the neighboring town of Zapotitlán to celebrate Mass in Huitzilán. Following the Mass, four men dressed as angels, with wooden wings on their backs, lined up in the church atrium and faced off against the fifth dancer, dressed as the Chichimeco or devil. The men dressed as angels were impersonators of San Miguel, and they performed their drama without dialogue. So I asked Amando Bonilla, a Mestizo serving in his first year as a *fiscal*—the one who kept the keys to the church—to explain to me the meaning of their performance. Amando said that the devil claims he is the father of all, but the San Miguel dancers deny this claim and assert instead that they, not the devil, are the creators. The San Miguel dancers chased the devil and poked him in the back with their swords, shaped as wooden crosses. They concluded their drama when the impersonators of San Miguel ceremoniously slay the devil, dramatizing that, as Amando put it, the devil always loses in the end.¹

To obtain a fuller understanding of the San Miguel dancers' performance, I turned next to Amando's mother, Endalacia Bonilla, who played an important role in the religious life of her community. At the time, Endalacia was next in line to serve as president of the important committee of Guadalupanas that



FIGURE 3.1. San Miguel dancers performing a morality play in front of the church on January 6, 1969.



FIGURE 3.2. The Chichimeco during the patron saint's celebration in August 1969.



FIGURE 3.3. The San Miguel dancers performing during the patron saint's celebration in August 1969.

consults with the priest in the selection of *mayordomos* (sponsors) for saint's day celebrations.² Endalacia showed me a prayer book the priest from Zapotitlan, Ruben Escobar, had given her, and the book contained an invocation to St. Michael the Archangel. Below is my English translation of the invocation, followed by the Spanish original.

Invocation

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in the fight; be our protection against the devil's perversity and traps. May God demonstrate His power over him is our humble prayer. And you, Prince of the Celestial Art of Warfare, with the strength that God has conferred upon you, throw into the inferno Satan and the other evil spirits that go about the world causing the downfall of our souls. Amen.

Invocación

San Miguel Arcángel defiéndenos en la lucha; sé nuestro amparo contra la perversidad y las asechanzas del demonio. Que Dios manifieste sobre él su

*poder, es nuestro humilde ruego. Y tú, Príncipe de la milicia celestre, con la fuerza que Dios te ha conferido arroja al infierno, á sataná y á los otros espíritus malignos que vayan por el mundo para la perdición de las almas. Amen.*³

The statue of San Miguel Arcángel in the church shows him holding a scale in his right hand and a sword in his left, and his foot stomping on the devil. The interpretation of this image I heard from other Mestizos is as follows. The devil claimed to San Miguel that he had more power. San Miguel challenged the devil to weigh themselves. San Miguel weighed more than the devil. The two got into a fight, and San Miguel won because he was the more powerful.⁴

Nahuas' Interpretation

What surprised me later, after hearing about San Miguel from Amando, Endalacia, and other Mestizos, is that they did not know that Nahuas in their community associated the San Miguel dancers with the rain gods. They were unaware that Nahuas told stories about rain gods who inhabit the pluvial waters around Huitzilán⁵ and carry out rebellions to rid their community of bad *municipio* presidents and troublesome Mestizos. The Nahuas in Huitzilán, who associate San Miguel with the rain gods who carry out rebellions, may follow a tradition in the southern Sierra Norte de Puebla. As noted, Beaucage (1999: 468) reported that Nahuas in the Cuetzalan area named San Miguel as the agent who helped them during the French intervention (1862–1867) and the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917). Endalacia and Amando had learned Nahuatl as a second language and could have understood the Nahuas' stories, had they heard and paid attention to them. They did not seem to know about the testimony of Nahua witnesses, such as José de los Santos, who had seen the rain gods as small figures dressed in the costume of San Miguel dancers.⁶ José conveyed what he had seen to Nacho Ángel Hernández who passed it on to me.

“[José de los Santos] said he was working there [in the hot country], and it started to rain. And he saw them. Many bolts of lightning started flashing, and he saw [the rain gods] sitting on a telephone wire. They were beautiful just like in the photograph of the San Miguel dancers. They were beautiful young men. They were all dressed like the dancers.” (“*Quihtoa ompa tequitia huan pehuac cequin quiyahuit. Huan quinittac nohon. Pehuac tapepetani telcenca huan quittac tech in cable motaloqueh. Nohon telcualtzitzin quemeh oncac foto de San Migueles. Cualtzitzin telpochcameh. Nochi taquentoqueh mihtotiani.*”)⁷

The Rain God or *Quiyauhteot*

The Nahuatl word in Huitzilán for rain god is *quiyaubteot*, which is a combination of *quiyaubuit* (rain) and *teot*, which Karttunen (1992: 228) defined as god (*dios*). What Nahuas meant by this word reveals how they positioned themselves relative to their ancestors, the Church, and the Mestizos. The pre-Hispanic ancestral meaning of *teot* (Nahuatl spelling) was markedly different from the god (*dios*) that Bernardino de Sahagún described in his *Pláticas*, or first sermon to the Nahuas. Sahagún's god is the "deep well of all good things; He is the essence of love, compassion, and mercy. He sees all, knows all; He is altogether admirable." (Ricard [1966] 1982: 86–87).

James Maffie (2014: 21–22) defined the ancient Nahua meaning of *teotl* [Nahuatl spelling] as a "continually dynamic, vivifying, self-generating and self-regenerating sacred power, force or energy." Maffie (84) noted that the continuously dynamic quality of *teotl* fits the "fluidity of the Mesoamerican pantheon of spirits" that was a form of pantheism like that which Alan and Pamela Sandstrom (1986, 1991, 2008, forthcoming) described for the contemporary Nahuas in the Huasteca. In this world, *teotl* is amoral. Maffie (2014: 80) explains:

Teotl lacks intentional states (such as purposes, desires, and plans) along with such capacities as the ability to deliberate, punish, reward, believe, and make decisions. Teotl is not a god, deity, or legislative being who enacts laws of nature or laws of human conduct. In short, teotl is not anthropomorphic in any way.

The contemporary Nahuas in Huitzilán attach meanings to the word *teot* (Nahuatl spelling) that are between the ancient Nahuas' notion of *teotl* and Sahagún's Christian God, who is the embodiment of morality. Nahuas described what a rain god is by describing what it does, in accord with ancient Nahua metaphysics. Maffie (2014: 26) explains that for ancient Nahuas: "Essence follows from function. That is, what something *is* follows from *what* it does as well as *how* it does it." In interviews, which took place during the third stage of fieldwork (2003–2012), Nacho Ángel Hernández and Juan Hernández (no relation) described five things that a rain god does.

(1) *Brings Rain*

Nacho began by saying: "Well, our ancestors said that they had heard that [the rain gods] grabbed the water. They brought the water . . ." He added: "*Abuehueht* (Old Man of the Water) makes the water come [from the sea.] So then

Abuehueht releases that water so the rain gods can bring it [to us in Huitzilán as rain].” (“*Pos quihtoah huebcauh totahthuan te caquiliqih que yebhan no quicuitih in at. Yebhan non cualcuih in at . . .*”⁸ “*Quichihua Abuehueht ma hallehua in at. Entonces ma cuac can cabui in at para ne quiyauhteomeh pos cualcuih ya.*”⁹)

Nacho and Juan told stories of how *Abuehueht* ended up in the sea after the rain gods removed him from Mt. Cozolin, above Huitzilán, to prevent him from destroying the community with another flood. (See “*Abuehueht*” in Appendix.) A flood destroying a prior era of creation has antecedents in ancient Nahuatl culture, is widespread among contemporary Nahuas in Huitzilán and Yaonáhuac (Taggart 1979, 1983: 189–199), and also appears in the oral tradition of other Nahuas, as Anuschka van’t Hooft (2007: 140–154) revealed in her detailed work on contemporary water beliefs and stories in the Huasteca of Hidalgo.

(2) *Becomes Manifest*

Nacho and Juan identified bolts of lightning as the most visible manifestation of rain gods. Nacho explained that usually one cannot see them because: “They hide.” (“*Non ichtaca.*”)¹⁰ He explained: “They make themselves visible when it begins to cloud up, and rain does not come right away. So rain might come soon, one sees [a storm] begin with flashes of lightning.” (“*Mottaya cuando pehua tamixten huan abmo huitza quiyahuit. Para huallaz niman, motta pehuac tapetani.*”)¹¹ Some Nahuas in the sierra refer to a bolt of lightning as a glowing snake (*ticoat*), but Nacho explained that a rain god, as a bolt of lightning, “bends and twists as it runs through the sky [like a snake] but it is not a snake. It is fire.” (“*motaloa por cuecueloa yohua, pero abmo coat. Yeh in tit.*”)¹² Nacho acknowledged that a bolt of lightning burns what it strikes but he also made the point that a *quiyaubteot* is a force or power, which is in accord with scholars’ interpretations of the ancient Nahuas’ meaning of *teotl* (Maffie 2014: 21–23; Bassett 2015: 61–62).

Nahuas also reported that rain gods are manifest in other weather events, particularly thunder, clouds, and wind. In several stories appearing in subsequent chapters, narrators described rain gods making themselves heard when exploding as thunder. Nacho and his brothers associated a rain god with clouds by referring to it as a cloud serpent [*mixcoat* = *mixti* (cloud) + *coat* (serpent)]. (See Chapter 13.) Nacho occasionally referred to rain gods as wind (*ebecat*), which he described as a precursor to a rainstorm.¹³ He explained: “Well, the wind comes from the sea. First comes the wind and then, when there is a lot of wind, the rain comes soon thereafter. Within half an hour comes the wind and then one

sees clouds come.” (*“Bueno pos ehecat hualla tech in hueiat. Achto hualla in ehecat huan cuando telcenca huitza niman in quiyauhuit quichihua. Ce media hora huitza in ehecat huan quitta huitza in mixti.”*)¹⁴

(3) Deposits Jade Stones

A rain god, as a bolt of lightning, sometimes deposits an *ateot*, a jade or turquoise stone, which can make the one who finds it very wealthy. The notion that a *quiyauhteot* can provide an *ateot* is support for the hypothesis that rain gods are part of a contemporary fertility cult in Huitzilán. Nacho explained: “When a bolt of lightning strikes a pine tree it plants an *ateot*. It plants a turquoise stone . . . He who has an *ateot* does not have to suffer with work. An *ateot* is like a child who produces corn . . . According to some, Petzin Cruz has an *ateot* and a great deal of corn.” (*“Cuando quirayohuia ce ocot motaltoca ateot. Quitalia chalchihuit. . . .*¹⁵ *Aqui quiپیya chalchihuit abmo quihyohuia. . . .*¹⁶ *[In] teot quemeh conet mochihua tzinti. . . .*¹⁷ *Petzín Cruz según quiپیya nohon ateot huan quiپیya miac tzinti.*”¹⁸) The association the Nahuas in Huitzilán made between a *quiyauhteot* and an *ateot* (the turquoise stone) may derive from the ancient Nahuas’ association between fire and turquoise (Bassett 2015: 104). Earlier, Nacho had described lightning, one of the most visible forms of a rain god, as fire (*tít*).

(4) Shares a Companion Spirit

Some Nahuas in Huitzilán are the human companions of rain gods because they have what Nacho and his brothers called a *quiyauhteotonalle*. (See Chapter 11.) The word *quiyauhteotonalle* is a combination of *quiyahuit* (rain), *teot* (god), and *tonalle* or *tonal* (spirit companion). In ancient times, one’s personal *tonalle* corresponded to the day sign of one’s birth. The ancient calendar has fallen into disuse, but the Nahuas in Huitzilán continue to assert that all among them are born with a *tonalle* or *tonal* (Nahuatl spelling), an animal companion spirit such as a deer (*mazat*). The Nahuas in Huitzilán, as well as their ancient ancestors, asserted that “a *teotl* has a *tonalli*” (Nahuatl spelling) which confers a “prerogative”¹⁹ (Bassett 2015: 91–92, 116–121). A human who shares a *quiyauhteotonalle* has the prerogatives of a clairvoyant wise person (*tamatini*) who can communicate with and organize other rain gods to carry out a particular purpose. Nacho added another prerogative, which is that “he or she who has a *quiyauhteotonalle* is able to find money.” (*“Aqui quiپیya tonal quiyauhteotonalle hueli para cahciz tomin.”*)²⁰ So to be the human companion of a rain god is significant, but the Nahuas in Huitzilán did not distinguish linguistically between a rain god’s

human companion and a rain god simpliciter; they referred to both in stories and interviews as a *quiyauhteot*.

The Nahuas were discreet about who among them is a rain god's human companion even going to the point of denying that they continue to exist. For example, Nacho said:

“[Usually] we do not know who the rain gods are. Sometimes the person knows. And sometimes he or she does not know. Now there are no more of them. Before, yes, there were [some].” (*Abmo ticmatih aconimeh quiyauh-teomeh. . . . Quemazah hueliz yehha quimatic. Huan quemazah ahmo no quimati. Pos nez axcan ahmo acab oc. . . . Achto quemah oncaya.*)²¹

Occasionally Nahuas identified by name the rain gods' human companions who have lived in Huitzilán, most of whom are long deceased. An example is Petra, whom Nacho described in 2008 in the following way.

“There was a man, who died recently, about three months ago. He said that his deceased grandmother was a rain god. His deceased grandmother. She was called Petra.” (*Yetoya ce tacat, yequin pa miquic, yec quiyiya quemeh tres meses. Quibtoa ce ihueinan catca quiyauhteot catca. Iheuinan catca. Monotzaya Petra.*)²²

(5) Organizes Rebellions against Adversaries

Petra from Huitzilán organized the rain gods to attack an *achane* (terrestrial water-dwelling animal) that brought too much water that threatened the Totonac community of Ixtepec. The devil (*ahmo cualli*) had changed into the *achane* that brought the water. The people of Ixtepec appealed to Petra after the priest failed to remove the *achane*. (See “The Water in Ixtepec,” Chapter 9). An *achane* is usually a snake or lizard that lives in or near springs, pools, and rivers.²³ Nacho explained that the “animal (*achane*) is only visible when the water first appears” out of the ground (“*Ocuilin mottalia cuando at yequin neci*”).²⁴ Nacho described the origin of this notion and then elaborated:

“Well, our forefathers told us things so we could pass them on. They told us that there were animals called *achane*. And those animals are the ones that have the volition to bring water out of the ground. Even through the water is God's, which He gave us, it is that animal which makes the water appear. The *achane* is born with the water. The animal is born with water even though it is on land.” (*Buen techtapohuic non tiqubtoah tehhan porque*

*buehcauh totahthuan ibcon quihtoqueh. Que non ocuilin achane. Huan in achane pues yebha nitanemilil que yebha quimehuatitoc in at. Mazqui dios yeb iaxca ipa in at quitemaca pero entonces non ocuilin quinextiqui in at. Ca taquiti in at. Mazqui talhuapan pero ca taquiti in at.”*²⁵

The *tonal* or companion spirit of an *achane* is called a *coatonalle*, which is a combination of *coat* (serpent) and *tonalle* (spiritual companion). The word *coatonalle* lacks the word *teot*, placing it in a different category from a *quiyauh-teotonalle*. One difference between a Nahuatl who shares a *quiyauh-teotonalle* with a rain god and one who shares a *coatonalle* with an *achane* is the former’s prerogative of being a wise person (*tamatini*) who can predict the weather. Another is the latter’s vulnerability to the nefarious actions of the devil or *ahmo cualli* (evil) who can turn into (*mopata*) a *coatonalle* and the corresponding *achane*.²⁶

The *achane* as devil is a temporary state; some *achane* are in this state and some are not, and the association changes with the historical context in Huitzilán. In the first year of the UCI rebellion, Nahuatl told many stories of rain gods attacking and killing the *achane* as the *tonal* of the devil, who also changed into a troublesome Mestizo settler. However, during the third stage of fieldwork, long after the UCI rebellion had come to an end and troublesome non-Nahuatl no longer posed the same threat, Nahuatl told new stories in which they portrayed those who had a *coatonalle* as no longer associated with the devil. The *achane*’s human companions in these new stories acted with a mix of emotions between love (*tazohtaliz*) and envy (*nexicoliz*) as do many if not all ordinary Nahuatl. (See Chapter 11, “After the UCI.”)

The *Hombre-Dios*

Petra and the other rain gods’ human companions in Huitzilán resemble what López Austin (1989: 108, 121) called the *hombre-dios* (human-gods). López Austin (1989: 121) applied this term to ancient historical figures, such as Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl, who went through an apotheosis after he left the golden age city of Tollan (Bierhorst 1992; Nicholson 2001: 3–48). López Austin developed a theory of apotheosis according to which the ancient Nahuatl believed that all “humans receive ‘something’ divine inside of their body which transforms them mentally. . . .” This “‘something’ that all receive at the moment of birth is more intense in those who are human-gods. . . .” He (118–120) cited support in the ancient texts for the idea that the *hombre-dios* is the *ixiptla* of the god protector. Karttunen (1992: 115) defines *ixiptlayo-t* as the image, likeness, representation of another.

Maffie (2014: 47, 50–54) is skeptical of López Austin’s theory of apotheosis because it is based on the metaphysics of “constitutional dualism” that is not part of indigenous Nahua philosophy. Maffie (2014: 47) defines constitutional dualism as “the thesis that reality consists of *two essentially* and mutually exclusive *kinds of stuff*; for example, mind versus matter, soul versus body, or spiritual versus physical.” The distinction that López Austin made between the divine essence and the representation of another is an example. Molly H. Bassett (2015: 140) is not optimistic about resolving this controversy, noting that: “Even though the Aztecs perceived their world as highly animate, little evidence remains regarding exactly *how* they animated their *teixiptlahuan*.” The *teixiptlahuan* are local embodiments of the gods or *teotl* that would include López Austin’s *hombre-dios* and the Nahuas’ Petra, who had a *quiyauheteonalle*.²⁷

Nevertheless, several scholars have contended that the belief that some who have gone through an apotheosis and become a *hombre-dios* has played a role in Mexican history. David Carrasco (1982) made the case that the ancient Nahuas’ belief that Cortés was the god Quetzalcoatl returning after departing from Tollan prevented the Mexica of Tenochtitlán [the ethnic group of the Aztec capital] from mounting a strong defense against Cortés and his handful of soldiers. Believing Cortés was Quetzalcoatl, Moteuczoma became disoriented and despondent, as perhaps were many other leaders of the Mexica. Sergi Gruzinski (1989) described the activities of persons who claimed, after the Conquest, to be *hombres-dios*, and resisted the efforts of the friars to convert Nahuas and others to Christianity. As noted, at least one found his way from Central Mexico into the northern sierra of Puebla.

The belief that there are rain gods’ human companions is wide as well as historically deep. John Monaghan’s (1995: 347–353) description of the contemporary Mixtecs’ *tenuvi* or transforming humans is remarkably similar to the Nahuas’ accounts of rain gods’ human companions such as Petra. Monaghan (1995: 348) described the *tenuvi* as:

different from other humans in that instead of having a nuvi-like connection [sharing a co-essence] with some harmless or insignificant animal, like a deer or rabbit, the *tenuvi* have a nuvi-like connection with powerful animals, or with lightning bolts (*tajia*) and other rain-associated phenomena.²⁸

The Mixtec *tenuvi* are historical “figures” who defended indigenous communities “against hostile outsiders.” Monaghan brought up the example of the suspected *tenuvi* “Santiago Pérez of Yucuhiti, who founded the settlements of

Siniuvi and Teponaxtla by settling on the lands of the Esperón family in Yosotichi" (Monaghan 1995: 349).

The Humble Demeanor of Rain Gods

Stories of a rain god's human companions organizing rebellions could be threatening to priests as well as to those Mestizos who recognized their revolutionary potential. To avoid direct confrontations with religious and political authorities, Nahuatl narrators dissimulated the political meaning of their stories by describing the rain gods' human companions as unassuming, even humble beings who patiently wait for the right time to assert themselves into human affairs. To act with humility and patience also accords with Nahuatl values. Nahuas spoke contemptuously of those who "wanted to be big" (*huei nequi*) or "acted like big shots" (*huei chichua*), accusing them of acting out of envy and being out for themselves rather than willing to cooperate with others.

The humble demeanor of rain gods' human companions comes from a number of other sources. First, it has origins in the ancient culture hero, Nanahuatl, who became the Fifth Sun and was a man of humble comportment. Nanahuatl did penance with green water rushes, grass balls of aromatic seeds, and maguey spines he covered with his own blood. He adorned himself with paper things and did not hesitate to jump in the pyre and take the fire into the sky to become the sun. By contrast, Tecuciztecatl adorned himself with costly things and did his penance with quetzal feathers, balls of gold, and maguey and coral spines representing blood for self-sacrifice. However, he failed to jump into the pyre after four tries and became the moon (Sahagún 1953: 6–8; Paso y Troncoso 1903: 28; Taggart 1983: 97–101).

Second, Nahuas maintain a tacit agreement with priests to keep their rain gods in the background and identify themselves as Christians from earth or *talticpac cristianos* in return for relaxing the suppression of their indigenous religion. They realized that they could not continue resisting the efforts of the friars and secular clergy to convert them to Christianity while at the same time struggling to keep Mestizos out of their territory. The narrators whose stories appear in this book have shown their devotion to the Church by serving on religious committees, often with women from prominent Mestizo families who are related by kinship to Ponciano Bonilla, by assisting the priest in Mass, by leading the rosary, and by teaching catechism classes to children. They tell stories of rain gods organizing rebellions against secular authorities on behalf of or at the

behest of a priest. Moreover, Nahuas in Huitzilán do not hold public rituals for their rain gods but instead are the sponsors (*mayorodomos*) of elaborate of public rituals for Christian saints. The next chapter presents a story by Juan Hernández that spells out the negative consequence when his central character, a rain god's human companion, tries but fails to keep his identity a secret from his work companions, who decide to venerate him as if he were a saint for ending a drought.

“The Rain God,” 1975

Juan Hernández was thirty-eight when told the story of “The Rain God” in 1975. He lived with his wife and daughter on the *ejido* of the Colonia de la Concepción. He had no land other than his house site, and he supported himself in his younger years by migrating to Cuetzalan and, a few times, to Huehuetla, a Totonac community to the north of Huitzilán. Juan’s mother, Erminia, was the only woman I knew during my time in Huitzilán who had assumed the sponsorship of a saint during the patron saint’s day celebration in Huitzilán.

I had the vague sense that Juan Hernández considered himself to be a rain god’s human companion, although I could not confirm this impression. Juan made a passionate plea to regard the rain gods as on par with a Christian god; he described them as loving and moral beings. However, Juan did not want the members of his community to venerate the rain gods’ human companions as saints lest they become the targets of envy for their prerogatives. Juan’s concern with envy may be related to his personal history. During the UCI insurgency, some Nahuas in Huitzilán murdered his mother, Erminia, whom they feared for her extraordinary power; they suspected she was a blood-sucking witch. During the UCI rebellion, she entered into a drunken argument in a cantina with other Nahuas, one of whom was the *municipio* president. In the heat of the moment, she threatened the president, telling him he would not live to see the next sunrise. The next day Erminia was found dead, cut to pieces by machetes.

Juan Hernández’s Story

Juan Hernández’s story is about a man who is a rain god’s human companion (much like Petra), and thus a wise person (*tamatque*) who knows things about the weather that others do not. Juan, like many narrators (Ingold 2000: 361), grounded his story in actual experience. He began with a drought, perhaps like the one that took place in June 1969 when rain did not fall in Huitzilán for

twenty-five days. This was a bad time for a drought because Nahuas usually plant their corn in early June. Hoping to end the drought, Mestizos as well as Nahuas carried the images of San Juan and several other saints to the spring at Miacaco, where Endalacia performed a rosary.¹ Their ostensible purpose was to bring an end to the drought by showing the saints the low water level in the largest spring in the community.

Juan called his protagonist a *quiyauhteot*, by which he meant a human who has a *quiyauhtheonalle* and, thus, shares an essence with a rain god. He happens to be the member of a sugarcane-processing work group, and his fellow workers suspect the protagonist is a wise person who knows about the weather and they pester him to tell them when it will rain.

1. There was a man, long ago there was a very old man, a very old man, his hair was all white, his hair was all white, and he was a very old man.
2. And one day his companions said to him, they told him there was too much sun and it had not rained.
3. It had not rained for a long time.
4. All the water had dried up.
5. Everyone was very thirsty.
6. There was no water.
7. And his companions said to him, there were a lot of companions, and they asked him, "Now when is it going to rain?"
8. "Well, I do not know when it is going to rain," said the old man.
9. "I do not know when it will rain."
10. And one of the companions said, "No, you do know."
11. The old man said, "For God's sake, I do not know."
12. And he repeated, "I do not know when it is going to rain."
13. Only our god knows.
14. Only God knows.
15. I do not know."
16. And that old man was a rain god [*quiyauhteot*].
17. That old man was a rain god.
18. He knew how to listen to the sky for signs the rain will come.
19. He knew.
20. He just did not want to say he knew.
21. "I do not know," he declared.
22. "Only God knows.
23. But I do not know."

24. "No," said his companions.
25. "You do know.
26. But if it rains, some will thank you as if you were God," his companions declared.
27. "But why am I God?"
28. I do not know when it will rain.
29. If God gives you some rain, then all the better."
30. "No.
31. Tell us when it will rain."
32. "Oh God, but how can I tell you when I do not know."
33. And at that time the [water] animals were not making any noise.
34. And then, as the animals started to make noise, the companions asked the old man when it would rain.
35. "Well, I do not know because only God knows."
36. Then the animals started to make noise.
37. The sun was very strong, and there were no clouds anywhere.
38. The sun was strong, beautiful, and clean.
39. And again the frogs began to make noise.
40. They began to make noise.
41. The companions said, "Ah, the rain."
42. "I do not know if it will rain," said the old man.
43. "What are those frogs saying?" asked his companions.
44. "Well, they say it will rain," the companions insisted.
45. "The animals say it will rain."
46. "I do not know if it will rain," repeated the old man.
47. His companions said to him, "If they know it will rain, then you know it will rain.
48. That is why the animals make noise."
49. "And I," said the old man, "do not know if it will rain."
50. The animals in the water began to make noise.
51. There was no water [in most places].
52. But where there was water, the animals [began making noise].
53. They all made noise.
54. "But listen to the animals making noise, and as always there are no clouds.
55. If you want it to rain, even if there are no clouds," said the old man, "it will not be difficult.
56. The rain will come soon."
57. "Oh good, that is why you know when it will rain."

58. Well, the wind picked up in about an hour and a half.
59. The companions asked the old man, "Is it going to rain?"
60. If it rains, we shall invite you to have a drink.
61. We shall give you three turkeys all for yourself.
62. They will be yours alone to eat.
63. We shall be very grateful to you if it rains.
64. We shall hold a fiesta for you as if you were a saint.
65. We shall hold a dance for you and give you what you ask for.
66. Because it has been a month since it rained.
67. No one has any water.
68. Let's go.
69. If it rains, we shall hold a fiesta for you and we shall give you three turkeys.
70. For your very own.
71. Yes.
72. All for you alone."
73. And as for what happened, within half an hour, a windstorm blew up, wind started to blow and there was thunder.
74. And those companions said, they thought, "Well, right now it is going to rain."
75. There were no clouds at that time.
76. "Dear God, and it is going to rain right away," declared the companions.
77. "Well, you know," the companions insisted.
78. "I do not know if it is going to rain, but you [plural] know," said the old man to his companions.
79. "But we do not know," replied his companions.
80. "But you know more than we do," they added.
81. Yes, that old man did know because he was a rain god [*quiyaubteot*].
82. He knew when it would rain.
83. He just wanted to say he did not know.
84. But he really did know.
85. "All right, let it rain if it is really going to rain."
86. And at that moment they were working a sugarcane press.
87. When the rain began, it was a strong rain storm with a lot of wind that dampened the loaves of brown sugar.
88. Then the workers said to the old man, "Hurry up and help us cover up the loaves of brown sugar so they will not get wet."
89. And the old man replied, "Well, right now you want to punish me for allowing the loaves of brown sugar to get wet.
90. It was important that it rain.

91. You wanted [the rain] now.
92. Did you not see [the signs of rain in the] dawn sky?"
93. [There were signs] of a big rainstorm.
94. They stopped working.
95. They prepared a fiesta.
96. [They did what] they said they would do.
97. There were turkeys.
98. For him alone.
99. They gave him turkeys, for him alone, and they held a fiesta.
100. The next day there was a rainstorm, a big one.
101. And it was the old man who made it happen.
102. After it rained, they gave him the turkeys and they held a big dance.
103. And afterwards there they were.
104. Then one day those companions beat the little old man.
105. The companions, who all knew it would rain, struck the little old man.
106. After [the fiesta] they beat up the little old man.
107. And after they beat up the little old man, they removed one of his bones.
108. They removed a bone and dropped it on the ground.
109. The bone rotted.
110. After it rotted, the little old man walked with a cane.
111. And he walked around with a cane until he died because he fell ill with diarrhea.

1. *Pos catca ce tacat, pos catca ce tacat cimi tabtita, tabtita cimi, nochi iztac niitzonteco, nochi iztac niitzonteco huan cimi tabtita ya.*
2. *Huan occe tonal quilhuia cequin compañero, quilia, ne cimi telcenca in tonal hasta ahmo quiyauh oc.*
3. *Hasta ahmo quiyauh oc.*
4. *Nochi huayic in at.*
5. *Nochi tel tamicti².*
6. *Ahmo tei.*
7. *Huan quilia non companyeros, yetoyah miac companyeros, huan quiliab, "Bueno, quemanyan quiyahuiz?"*
8. *"Pos neh ahmo nicmati quemanyan quiyahuiz," quihtoa in tabtita.*
9. *"Neh ahmo nicmati quemanyan quiyahuiz."*
10. *Huan in compañero, "Ahmo, pero tehha ticmactoc."*
11. *Quilia, "Por Dios, ahmo nicmati."*
12. *Huan quilhuia, "Neh ahmo nicmati quemanyan quiyahuiz."*

13. *Solamente quimati todios.*
14. *Solamente quimactoc in Dios.*
15. *Nebha ahmo nicmati.*"
16. *Huan nohon tabtita catca quiyauhteot.*
17. *Catca quiyauhteot nohon tabtita.*
18. *Quimati para caquitziz abco para in huallaz quiyahuit.*
19. *Yebha quimactoc.*
20. *Zayoh ahmo quinequi quibtoz.*
21. *Quihtoa, "Neh ahmo nicmati.*
22. *Solamente Dios yeh quimati.*
23. *Pero nebha ahmo nicmati."*
24. *"Ahmo," quilhuia in compañero.*
25. *"Ta teh ticmactoc.*
26. *Pero pos como quiyahuiz cequin miac quitazohcamatic por tebha como za teh Dios."*
27. *"Pos que ye ni Dios?"*
28. *Huan ahmo nicmati quemanyan quiyahuiz.*
29. *Huan como Dios quitetayocoliz cequin quiyahuit para tebhan más mejor."*
30. *"Ahmo.*
31. *Xquihto quemanyan quiyahuiz."*
32. *"Ah Dios pero queniuh nimitziliti huan ahmo nicmati."*
33. *Huan catca ahmo tei tzahtzia nohon oculin.*
34. *Huan peuqueh cuando nohon quilique nohon tabtita ya quemanyan quiyahuiz.*
35. *"Pos nebha ahmo nicmati porque solamente Dios."*
36. *Pos peuqueh tzahtzi catca.*
37. *Cimi fuerte tonal hasta ahmo canah yetoya mixti.*
38. *Yetoya fuerte cualtzin ca chipauh ya.*
39. *Huan ceppa za peuqueh tzahtziz xe nen ranas.*
40. *Peuqueh tzahtzih.*
41. *Quihtoah nen companeros, "Ai quiyahuit ya."*
42. *"Nez ahmo nicmatic cox quiyahuiz ya."*
43. *"Para toni quihtoah non rana?"*
44. *Pos yeh quihtoah cox quiyahuiz.*
45. *Bueno quihtoah ocuiltzin que quiyahuiz."*
46. *"Neh ahmo nicmati quiyahuiz," quihtoah in tabtita.*
47. *Quitquilia nicompanyeros, quitquilia in companyeros, "Como ye³ quimac-toqueh ca quiyahuiz, pos ticmatiz ca quiyahuiz.*

48. *Por eso tzahtzi ocuilin.*"
49. "Huan nebha," *quihtoa in tabtita*, "ahmo nicmati cox quiyabuiz ya."
50. *Peuhqueh tzahtzih ocuilimeh ihcon tech in at.*
51. *Bueno, ahmo tei in at.*
52. *Pero ocuilin ompa yetoc campa oncac in at.*
53. *Nochi tzahtzi.*
54. "Pero xicaqui tzahtzi non ocuilin huan nochipa huan ahmo tei mixti."
55. "Pos como quinequi quiyabuiz, mazqui ahmo tei mixti," *quihtoa in tabtita*, "ahmo ohuib."
56. *Niman cequin huallaz.*"
57. "Ah bueno, por eso ticmatiz quemanyan quiyabuiz."
58. *Pos nohon quemeh de ce hora huan tahco, huan zayob pehuac ehecat nohon horas.*
59. *Quiliqueh, quilia*, "Cox quiyabuiz?"
60. *Como quiyahuazquia, mitzmacazqueh motrago.*
61. *Mitzmacazqueh quiera eyi huehuehxolomeh para teh moaxca.*
62. *Nochi mocelti ticuaz.*
63. *Hasta como quiyahuazquia, miac titazohcamati por tehha.*
64. *Timitzchuilizqueh baile, como ce santo yazquia.*
65. *Timitzchihuilizqueh ce baile hasta mazqui timitztayocolizqueh lo que den tiquihtoz.*
66. *Porque quichihuac de ce mezti catca den ahmo quiyahuia.*
67. *Pos nochi ahmo tei in at.*
68. *Ándale.*
69. *Como quiyahuizquia, timitzchihuilizca ce baile huan timitztayocolizquia eyi huehuehxomeh [huehuehxolomeh].*
70. *Teh moaxca.*
71. *Uh hu.*
72. *Nochi mocelti.*"
73. *Huan pos de lo que quichihuac adentro de tahco hora, huan pehuaco ce ehecat, pehuaco ce ehecat pero huan tatecuinic ce viaje.*
74. *Huan quihtoah non companyeros, quitmoliab*, "Pos yequintzin quiyahuiti."
75. *Pos cacta ahmo tei mixti.*
76. "Ay Dios, *huan yequintzin quiyahuiti.*"
77. "Pos namehhan nanquimactoqueh."
78. *Nebha ahmo nicmati cox quiyabuiz, pero namehhan nanquimactoqueh.*"
79. "Pero tehhan ahmo ticmatib," *quihtoah in companyeros.*
80. "Pero tehha tabta cachi más ticmatic."

81. *Quenabmo yeh quimatiz ne tahtita porque yebha quiyaubteot.*
82. *Yebha quimati quemanyan quiyahuiz.*
83. *Pos ma ya yeh quibtoa que abmo quimatiz.*
84. *Pero pos mero quimactoc yebha.*
85. *“Ándale, como de veras quiyahuiz, ma quiyahui.”*
86. *Huan catca tequitoya itech ce trapiche.*
87. *Pos cuando pehuac ma ya pehuac pero fuerte in quiyahuit huan ica ehecac hasta non panela nochi ayohuac.*
88. *Después quilia in tahtita, “Ándale xitechacompanyaro ma tictzacuacan in panela para abmo nochi ayohuati.”*
89. *Huan quitquilia, “Pos yequintzin nannequizqueh ma nechcobarroa ma quiyahui.*
90. *Ma importa ma quiyahui.*
91. *Axcan quemeh nannequizqueh.*
92. *Pos abmo tiquitta tanecic?”*
93. *Hasta telcenca in quiyahuit.*
94. *Abmo tequitiqueh.*
95. *Pos quichiuqueh in baile.*
96. *Lo que quiliqueh.*
97. *Oncaqueh huehuehxomeh.*
98. *Icelti.*
99. *Quimacaqueh huehuehxomeh icelti huan quichihuiliqueh ce baile.*
100. *Pero . . . imoztica ce tonal quiyahuit pero melauh quiyahuit.*
101. *Huan yebha za ma ya tahtita quichihuac.*
102. *Después de nobon quiyahuic huan quitayoquiliqueh nobon huehuehxomeh, huan melauh quichihuac in baile.*
103. *Huan después ihcon ma ya mocauhqueh.*
104. *Ihcon ce tonal quimacaqueh non companyeros tahtita.*
105. *Quimacaqueh aqui quimatih parejo in companyeros aqui quimati quiyahuiz.*
106. *Después quimacaqueh in tahtita.*
107. *Huan de quimacaqueh in tahtita, pos quiquixtiliqueh can ni omit nican.*
108. *Quiquixtiliqueh huan huetzic.*
109. *Palanic nican.*
110. *Axcan den palanic, quizac huan nemia ca bordon.*
111. *Huan de nemia ca bordon, pos ihcon hasta miquic pero zayoh porque quicuic chorrillo ya.⁴*

Interpretation

Line 1: Juan Hernández's first act of dissimulation was to set the action of his story in the distant past. His second act was to describe his protagonist as an old man with white hair, an unassuming figure who does not want to draw attention to himself, just like the rain god's human companions that other Nahuas described in interviews.

Lines 7–32: Juan presented the old man as a worker in a sugarcane-processing group and described his work companions as asking the protagonist when it will rain because they are tired of the drought and suspect he knows how to predict the weather because he is a wise person (*tamatque*). The old man denies he knows, his companions reject his denial, and the old man replies by insisting that only God knows. However, Juan notes that the old man does know "how to listen to the sky for signs the rain will come" (lines 18–19).⁵

The story takes a crucial turn when one of the companions says (line 26): "But if it rains, some will thank you as if you were God." The old man protests (line 27): "But why am I God?" If the old man were to agree to his companions' proposal, he would allow them to elevate him above others, giving the impression that he wants to be big (*buei nequi*) and act big (*buei chihua*). Lines 36–58: Juan describes the signs of approaching rain, which a rain god's human companion would easily recognize. One sign is frogs making noise that the companions suspect is a harbinger of rain despite the sun shining cleanly, with strength and brightness (line 38). The work companions are anxious to know what the *qui-yauh-teot* are going to do and are not content to wait and watch patiently.

Lines 60–72: The companions say that if it rains, they will give the old man drink (line 60), three turkeys for him alone to eat (lines 61–62), hold a fiesta for him as if he were a saint (line 64), and hold a dance for him (line 65) to show him their gratitude (line 63). This promise, when carried out, does not end well for the old man.

Lines 73–111: When the wind, thunder, and rain come, his companions hold the fiesta. Afterward some of them strike him, remove one of his bones, and leave him walking with a cane. The bone rots, and the old man dies of diarrhea, a water-related form of death that destines him to the luxuriously green and watery place of *talocan*⁶. The lesson is that by treating the old man as a saint, the work companions ironically turn him into a focus of their envy because they elevated him above them; so they set him on the road of aging and illness that ends with his death.

Dissimulation in Water Rituals

The reluctance of Juan's protagonist, the *quiyaubteot*, to allow his work companions to venerate him as a saint is part of a broader strategy of dissimulating a theory of water in which Nahuas give credit to the *quiyaubteot* for bringing water as rain and to the *achane* for making water appear from the earth in springs. Nahuas in Huitzilán extended this strategy to their rituals, in which they concealed their theory of water from Mestizos when expressing their gratitude for rain to make crops grow and for the water in springs that women fetch for household use.

The most public rituals for the rain gods are the morality plays that Nahua impersonators of San Miguel enact during saint's day celebrations. The Nahua impersonators of San Miguel do not accompany their dance with dialogue that might reveal that they interpret the drama as rain gods attacking the *achane* animal companions of secular authorities. Nahuas in Huitzilán are also discreet about the existence of a mountain-top shrine dedicated to the rain gods on Cozoltepet and the place where Ahuehuetl once made his home, until the rain gods removed him so that he would not destroy Huitzilán with a heavy rainstorm and mudslides. Stresser-Péan (2012: 131) wrote that Cozoltepetl (Nahuatl spelling of Crevices Mountain) "is still the object of veneration among the Totonacs and Nahuas of the region." Citing Bernardo García Martínez, he adds:

This mountain is probably the one Fray Juan de Torquemada (1977–1983: 202–204) climbed with so much difficulty at the end of the sixteenth century. There he found a sort of conical stone slab, about eighty centimeters high, covered with a cape (*tilma*) and surrounded by offerings. This may have been the idol of the mountain itself.

Few Nahuas in Huitzilán openly talked about this shrine, but an exception was Manuel Castillo, a Huitzilán Nahua whom Nacho and I interviewed in 2007. Manuel described the shrine on top of Cozoltepet [Nahuatl spelling] in the following way:

Manuel: "They take those [offerings] up there, they make a meal, it is our house. And that is our house, and they stick corn to the walls and the badgers do not eat it."

Nacho: "The badgers do not eat it."

Manuel: "They do not eat it. And there is a clay jar. And because [the shrine] is there, they placed the vessel [clay jar] for incense, [and] that

vessel is there. And up there where one reaches the summit, they put rockets on top and they also spread incense."

Nacho: "On the summit of Cozolin."

Manuel: "Because that is the only place where the corn is very clean. Now as for joking [disrespectful] words, they are on the ground [below the summit]."

(Manuel: "*Eso den cosas⁷ quicuih ahco, quichibuah in tacual, yetoc techanti. Huan yetoc ce techanti, huan ompa ya quichihua quizalohyetoqueh tzinti huan ahmo quicua pezoh.*")

Nacho: "*Ahmo quicua pezoh.*"

Manuel: "*Ahmo quicua. Huan ompa yetoc in comit. Huan quemeh ne yetoc, quitalia popochti, ompa yetoc ne caxit. Ompa ihcon ahco campa mero pahuitzi ya, no quitaliti cohete ne ahco huan no tapopoxhuiya.*"

Nacho: "*En la cumbre de Cozolin.*"

Manuel: "*Porque ompa zayoh yec chipahua in tahtol. Axcan den camayot, talixco yetoc.*")⁸

Like their counterparts in many other Mexican villages,⁹ Nahuas in Huitzilan perform rituals giving thanks for the water in springs on May 3, the day of Santa Cruz, when neighbors gather to clean and adorn springs with flowers and crosses, paint the cement structures, and shoot off rockets.¹⁰

However, they deny that they are showing their devotion to the *achane* for bringing the water. Nacho acknowledged that the purpose of these rituals is to show thanks because "water is our life. It is what gives us life. Without water, we would die." ("*Ait ye in tonemiliz. Ye techmacnemiliz. Como ahmo in at, timiquih.*")¹¹ He added, however, that one adorns a spring to thank God for the water, not the *achane* who originally made it bubble up from under the earth:

"One does not place the flowers [at the spring] for them [the *achane*]. One places them for our God. One gives God thanks because the water has not dried up. One always wants water because during the month of May it is really hot." ("*Ahmo non, ahmo non yehha quitalia. Quitalia yeh in todios. Quitazohcamatilia por in at quinequi ma [macamo] huaqui. Quinequiya ma nochipa onca porque in tiempo mayo melauh ca tatotonia.*")¹²



FIGURE 4.1. Neighbors from Itxtahuatalix cleaning the spring of Miacaco on May 3, 1969.

The History of Dissimulation

As noted earlier, the Nahuas of today in Huitzilán have carried out a difficult balancing act, cultivating a relationship with the Church while attempting to maintain their cultural autonomy. This strategy was necessary because they could not oppose their spiritual conversion and the incursion of Mestizos into their territory at the same time. Occasionally Nahuas have benefited directly from this arrangement when the priests have taken their side in conflicts with secular authorities. Just recently, the first priest to reside in Huitzilán was an adherent of liberation theology who advocated for the Nahuas' human rights.

The history of accommodation with the Church has allowed the Nahuas in Huitzilán to retain some aspects of the ancestors' meaning of *teot*, as in *qui-yauh-teot*, while adopting the Christian notion of a loving and moral god. Louise Burkhart (1989) explained that in the sixteenth century, the friars' strategy of translating Christian concepts into Nahuatl allowed the Nahuas to hold onto the connotative meanings of words like *teot* while accepting some aspects of the Christian god. However, the pressures to conform to the beliefs of the Church are relentless, and Nahuas like Nacho, who are devoted to the Catholic Church

in Huitzilán, are caught between the beliefs of their ancestors and those of the priests with whom they often have close relationships. To preserve their cultural autonomy, some Nahuas in Huitzilán practice what Scott (1990: 18–19) calls the "politics of disguise" to shield their religious practices and beliefs from the scrutiny of priests as well as from Mestizos.

To get a measure of where the Nahuas stand today relative to the Church and their ancestors, I asked Nacho, his brother Miguel Ángel Hernández, and Juan Hernández to compare their rain gods with the Christian god and saints. Their responses varied depending on how strongly they identified themselves as members of the Catholic Church in Huitzilán. Nacho and Miguel are strong Catholics who take their religion seriously, and at first they assigned a greater role in providing water to God and the Virgin of Guadalupe than to the rain gods. Miguel declared that the Bible says that God brings the rain.¹³ He asserted that the Virgin of Guadalupe makes rain possible because of her strength by saying: "The Virgin of Guadalupe has the force." (*"Tonantzin quiipiya chicahualiz."*)¹⁴ He explained that it is crucial that rain fall around December 12,¹⁵ the Virgin of Guadalupe's day in the Church's calendar, in order to have a good crop of winter corn. Miguel is not alone in holding these views because the Nahuas in the Huasteca of Veracruz also regard the Virgin of Guadalupe, or *Tonantzin*, as a water spirit who sends rain (Sandstrom 1991: 247). There is a difference, of course, between the Miguel's idea of the Virgin of Guadalupe and that of the Church. As will become apparent below, the brothers eventually expressed their belief in the Nahuas' theory of water and weather.

Nacho offered a nuanced perspective on changes in beliefs about the *quiyauh-teot*, water, and weather. He said: "A long time ago, [the rain gods] did the work of gods but now, later on, we no longer say that they still do it. . . . Of course we say they are gods who are God's helpers. . . . For that reason they say that they bring the water. Before the rain comes it begins with lightning. There is lightning so that the rain comes. . . ." Nacho distinguished the ancestors' views of *Abuehueht* from his own. Earlier he had identified *Abuehueht* as the being who scoops up the water from the sea that rain gods to bring to land as rain: "Our ancestors called him the god of water. But for my part, I do not know. . . . Bu the is not God. He is not like God." (*"Bueno huebcauh, quidioschihuaya pero tehhan nin zatepan abmo tiquiliah chihua oc. . . . Claro que dios ma tiquihtoh ca in dios itaquehual. . . . Por eso quibtoa que yebhan cualcuitih in quiyauhuit. Antes de hualla in quiyauhuit pehua tapetantoc ya. Pehua tapetani para huitza yeh in quiyahuit. . . ."*)¹⁶ "Totahthuan quitoayah [*Abuehueht*] in dios den at. Pero para no parte, abmo nicmati. . . . Pero abmo Dios.¹⁷ Ahmo quemeh Dios."¹⁸

As our discussion continued, Nacho expressed views more similar to those of Juan Hernández. Juan and Nacho agreed that *Abuehueht* plays an important role in providing water for their community. In an interview that took place in 2010, Nacho said that he and his brothers can hear sounds of *Abuehueht*'s presence: "We occasionally hear the sound of someone slapping water with the palm of a hand around June, July but that someone is slapping the water of the sea. It is *Abuehueht*." ("*Ticactinemi quemazah cocomotza in at tech in junio, julio pero cocomotza in mar. Entonces yeh in Abuehueht.*")¹⁹

Nacho and Juan both associated *Abuehueht* with John the Baptist, whose saint's day is June 24, near the beginning of the rainy season.²⁰ They assigned the name Juanito (Little John) to *Abuehueht* in their versions of the Spanish folktale "John the Bear." They described the origins of *Abuehueht* as the son of a human mother and a monkey, using the Nahuatl word for monkey (*ozomahitli*), which sounds like the Spanish word for bear (*oso*) (Taggart 1997: 46–70, 248–295). Juan Hernández added that *Abuehueht* ended up living on top of Cozoltepet to get away from his abusive father, who beat him (Taggart 1997: 65).

Juan Hernández made a forceful argument that a rain god is on par with the Christian god after telling a second version of his story about how the rain gods removed *Abuehueht* from Cozolin and took him to the sea. It was Juan's argument that persuaded me to translate *quiyauhteot* as rain god rather than rain spirit. As mentioned, he considered *Abuehueht* to be a rain god, in contrast to Nacho who declared he was an *achane*.²¹ I present in full what Juan Hernández said about the *quiyauhteot* that was so convincing. He began with the rain gods helping the people of Huitzilán by removing *Abuehueht* from Cozoltepet:

"It is possible that [the other rain gods removed him from Cozolin] so that we shall not perish in a flood. [*Abuehueht*] is there by the sea, where there is a lot of water. There he went also to become like a god. Because it is as if he were God. He knows when it will rain. And it is as if he were the seed of water. . . . The rain gods also love us because they are also like gods. That is so because it is as if the rain gods were the seed of water [they provide us] so that we might have something to plant and something to eat. They know everything. They know everything. They are like gods." ("*Hueli ca chiuhqueh para ahmo techpoloti ca in at. Porque ne campa yetoc in mar, huei in at yetoc. Ompa yazquia mochihuato no como dios pos. Porque yeh mah Dios. Yehba no quimati quemanyan quiyahuiz. Huan mah ya semilla de at. . . .*"²² *No techtazohta porque quiyauhteomeh como no diosmeh yazquia. Porque pos, casi quiyauhteomeh semilla de at para tehhan tehza tictotazqueh para*

titacuazqueh pos. Nochi quimatih no yebhan. Nochi quimatih no yebhan. Yetoqueh quemeh diosmeh yazquia pos.")²³

I interpreted Juan Hernández's story and his comment as making an appeal for the importance of rain gods by placing them on par with the Christian god, but in a separate category. This was his way of pushing back against the Church and Mestizos, a few of whom had heard of *Ahuehueht* but dismissed him as a silly character of Nahuatl folklore. I wrestled for a long time about whether to translate *quiyauhteot* as rain spirit or rain god. Rain spirit has the advantage of drawing attention to the Nahuatl pre-Hispanic past and would be in accord with the ancient Nahuatl concept of *teot* as an amoral force. However, the *quiyauhteot* in the stories of the rain gods' rebellion that appear in the following chapters are moral beings who punish the *municipio* presidents and non-Nahuatl settlers who act in immoral ways. One moral principle that carries weight for many Nahuatl in the Sierra Norte and elsewhere (Sandstrom 1991; Good 2004a; Maffie 2014: 355) is reciprocity. The following chapter presents the first story I recorded in Huitzilán of the rain gods' rebellion, and it describes the rain gods organizing and striking the animal companion spirit of a *municipio* president who practiced negative reciprocity.

“The President and the Priest,” 1975

“The President and the Priest” is the first story of the rain gods’ rebellion that I recorded in Huitzilán. The narrator was Miguel Ahuata de los Santos, who told it into my tape recorder in the summer of 1975, before the 1976 invasion of the San Isidro Finca in Zacapoaxtla (Edelman 1980: 35) and prior to the appearance, in late 1977, of the UCI activist Felipe Reyes Herrera in Huitzilán. Miguel Ahuata lived on the *ejido* of Tenampulco, which is part of Ixtahuatalix. He was sixty-four years old when he told his story, married, and living with his children and his grandchildren. He owned a small plot of land in Pajaco, a locality in Huitzilán where he was born. He rented land to grow corn for his family granary within the *municipio* of Huitzilán.

Miguel Ahuata told his story when he was an ally of the Church, in contrast to Andrés Mixcoatl (Gruzinski 1989) and other Nahuas in the colonial period who had opposed the efforts of the friars and secular clergy to convert them to Christianity. When I got to know him in 1970, he was involved with his neighbor, Luis Quintero, in a project to rebuild the chapel of the Virgin de la Concepción. Miguel Ahuata and Luis Quintero had gone to the neighboring community of Zapotitlán to ask the priest to name a commission to repair the chapel roof.¹

The chapel is located on a site where the Virgin is said to have appeared many years earlier. The chapel roof had collapsed, and many Nahuas and some Mestizos, in the neighborhood of Ixtahuatalix, wanted to repair it. The importance of the chapel is evident in the organization of the *posadas*, the reenactments of the pregnant Mary and Joseph asking for lodging in the days before Christ’s birth. There are two *mayordomos* who sponsor the *posadas*: One is connected to the image of baby Jesus in the main church in the center of town; the other sponsors the image of baby Jesus that was in the chapel of the Concepción before the roof collapsed.

In telling "The President and the Priest," Miguel Ahuata presented his interpretation of the morality play the San Miguel dancers performed on important saint's day celebrations in Huitzilán. Miguel told how the rain god's human companion organizes other rain gods into groups of twelve men and twelve women to attack and kill the animal companion spirit of the *municipio* president because of his negative reciprocity. The president refuses to fulfill his obligation to provide the priest with a meal in return for having given a Mass. Miguel Ahuata's story reveals that Nahuas in 1975 could be "radical at the level of ideology" (Scott 1985: 331) prior to taking radical action. The radical ideology in Miguel's story is the rain gods organizing to topple an offending *municipio* president. The radical action began two years later when, at the end of 1977, Felipe Reyes Herrera came into Huitzilán and encouraged the Nahuas to organize and invade two interstate cattle pastures.

Below are the English translation and the Nahuat original of Miguel Ahuata's story followed by an explanation of how it incorporates themes that were important at the time of his narration (1975). One theme is the negative reciprocity that was and continues to be an important issue for the Nahuas in Huitzilán.

1. Once there were a *municipio* president and a priest.
2. The priest said Mass, and the president thought, "Now I have to think about when the priest will eat.
3. I have to give the order now for when he will eat."
4. The priest said Mass and waited.
5. He was hungry and impatient.
6. It was late in the afternoon, and no one gave the order.
7. So the priest got angry.
8. "I am angry because he is not going to give the order for me to eat right away.
9. It is afternoon, and he has not given the word so I might eat.
10. Well now, where did the president go?
11. So this is what he does; he goes away?!"
12. The priest thought, "Well now, I shall look for him."
13. Again, the next day he said Mass.
14. He was impatient.
15. No one called him to eat.
16. And there was a man who listened to the Mass
17. He stood at the door of the church.
18. He did not approach the altar.

19. He was just there passing by.
20. He listened.
21. The priest began his sermon.
22. He explained why he was impatient.
23. The president had not issued the order for him to eat.
24. And the priest was very hungry and he was still waiting for the president to give the order for him to eat.
25. The priest decided, "Well, I think I shall look for him and find out where he is."
26. He started to look for him.
27. "Now," he thought, "again tomorrow I shall give Mass and again they will ask me why I am looking for him."
28. And again the next day that man went to the door of the church and listened to the Mass.
29. He stood outside the door of the church.
30. He did not go up to the altar.
31. He stood outside the door listening.
32. He went there and stood outside.
33. The priest said Mass.
34. The priest hoped that someone might make him his lunch after he finished saying the Mass.
35. But the president did not call him to eat.
36. It got to be afternoon.
37. The priest was hungry.
38. He started his sermon.
39. He looked for the president and did not find him.
40. Who knows where he is?
41. He looked for him in heaven.
42. He looked for him in the sea.
43. He looked for him on earth.
44. He looked for him in hell, and the president did not appear anywhere.
45. And the man who listened to Mass . . . it was as if he were a fool.
46. There he was standing outside the door of the church.
47. He was listening.
48. And he waited for the priest to finish the Mass.
49. He had stood there the entire day before.
50. And there was no one else standing there.

51. He stayed back with the *fiscales* waiting to talk to the priest.
52. He waited for everyone to leave.
53. And then he told the *fiscales*, "It seems that the priest is unhappy."
54. "Yes, you heard?"
55. "Yes, I heard.
56. He said he did not know where the president is.
57. That is what he said."
58. "And perhaps," the *fiscal* said to him, "you know where the president is?"
59. "Well, I know, but the priest does not know.
60. And he is not far," the fool told them.
61. "You will know a little while later [tomorrow] afternoon," the fool told the *fiscales*.
62. The fool left.
63. Again the next day the priest said Mass.
64. The *fiscales* told the priest what the fool had told them.
65. The priest finished Mass.
66. A *fiscal* told the priest, "There is a friend over there.
67. He heard what you said yesterday.
68. You mentioned you were hurting."
69. The priest said, "Yes!
70. Where is he?"
71. "He is over there."
72. He is standing over there by the door of the church.
73. "There he is again," the *fiscal* told the priest.
74. "And he will tell [all of] you where the president is.
75. He says he knows all the places where you have looked for him.
76. And you have not found him anywhere.
77. And he knows where he is."
78. The priest felt a little better because the *fiscales* told him the fool knew where the president is.
79. The priest went into a clearing in the forest and entered a room where he questioned the fool.
80. He said, "Well, you heard me say I am very unhappy."
81. "Yes, I was listening at the door of the church."
82. "Do you really know what I was complaining about, and do you know where the president is?"
83. "Well, perhaps yes, I know.

84. And I shall tell you everything," the fool said to the priest.
85. "It is true that I looked everywhere he might be and I did not find him anywhere," said the priest.
86. The fool said to him, "Well, he is not far away.
87. He is nearby."
88. The fool only told the priest that the president was close by but he did not tell him where he was.
89. "Well, help me now because you know where to look."
90. "Fine," the fool said to the priest.
91. The priest said, "Come again [to the church] tomorrow."
92. That is what the priest told him, and then the fool left.
93. And the next day the fool was again at the door of the church.
94. The Mass was over, and again the *fiscales* asked the fool.
95. Again they asked him.
96. He also spoke to them again.
97. "Do you really do know where the president is?"
98. The priest did not know if the fool really knew.
99. "I know.
100. He is not far away.
101. He is nearby."
102. Again the fool told the priest the president was nearby but he did not say exactly where he was.
103. And the fool said to him, "You will look everywhere, and he is not far away."
104. The priest asked him, "And how does one go about finding him?"
105. "You go in.
106. You grab him.
107. It can be done but one needs a lot of companions," said the fool.
108. "And so what are we going to do?" asked the priest.
109. The fool told him, "Well now, I shall look for some men, twelve of them, and twelve women."
110. "Yes."
111. "And all of those women will be the first to go in to see where he is."
112. Well, they went in.
113. They all went inside [the body of the president's animal companion].
114. "If they survive, those twelve women will be his."
115. All of the women went inside to stay.
116. After the twelve men went inside, the fool was left as the thirteenth.
117. The fool said, "I am the next one to go in after them."

118. So he set out.
119. He set out, but the president was not far away.
120. The president had some water on top of a mountain.
121. And the president was in the water.
122. He was sitting in a pool that was also a well [spring].
123. He was sitting alone.
124. And there he was.
125. He was not far away.
126. The women lightning bolts went into the pool and became trapped inside the president's body.
127. The president was waiting for them.
128. The women finished, and the men started.
129. All twelve men came to their end leaving the fool who knew where the president was.
130. He saw that they all had remained inside [the body of the president].
131. Only the fool could get them out.
132. He went in, he got them out.
133. He brought the others with him.
134. They all saw the animal in the water.
135. They left the animal alone in the pool of water.
136. They abandoned that animal.
137. It was a big snake.
138. It had twelve mouths.
139. They kept watch on him.
140. They were the lightning bolts [*rayos*].
141. They were the lightning bolts.
142. They call those people rain gods [*quiyauhteomeh*].
143. That is who the twelve men were.
144. They said that they went inside of that animal.
145. And that is how they did it, and just one of them would get the others out.
146. Then they removed the animal and took it to the church.
147. There it perished.
148. Then the priest left the church.
149. The priest looked for the president in the afternoon.
150. The president had not spoken to the women who washed his clothes.
151. The *fiscales* also tried to speak to him.
152. They looked for him.

153. And the fool knew [the president] had died.
 154. And the priest wanted to open up the president's house because he wanted something to eat.
 155. It was afternoon already.
 156. The priest had not eaten lunch.
 157. "Good, now some men should open up his house.
 158. He is still sleeping."
 159. They forced the door open.
 160. They removed the padlocks and the screw eyes [hinges].
 161. That is how they removed the door.
 162. They opened the house.
 163. They found the president lying in his bed.
 164. That is the end of the story.

1. *Yetoya ce presidente huan cura.*
2. *Cura quichihua in misa huan presidente quinemili, "Axcan nicnemiliz por hora tacuaz in cura."*
3. *Quinemili yeh presidente, "Axcan," quitmolía, "neh nicnahuatiz toni hora tacuaz."*
4. *Quichihuac in misa, ompa quichiya.*
5. *Mayana huan tacemati.*
6. *Hasta más tiotac, abmo quinahuatia.*
7. *Entonces cualantoc cura.*
8. *"Icuin nicualanic ya pos abmo niman quinahuati ma nitacua.*
9. *Tiotac huan abmo quinahuatia ma nitacua.*
10. *Pos axcan bueno, toni yazque ne?*
11. *Ihcon ne chihuilía o queniuh yazque?"*
12. *Quitmolía, "Pos axcan nictemoz."*
13. *Ceppa imoztah ceppa quichihuac misa.*
14. *Tacemati.*
15. *Abmo quínotza ma tacuati.*
16. *Huan tacat zayoh misa caqui.*
17. *Zayoh puerta.*
18. *Abmo abci campa altal.*
19. *Zayoh panotoc yetoc.*
20. *Zayoh ta cactoc.*
21. *Entonces cura pehuac quichihua sermon.*

22. *Quihtoa ya ca ica tacematic ya.*
23. *Abmo niman quinahuatia ma tacuati.*
24. *Huan ma telmayantoc huan todavia moch[i]ya para quinahuatizqueh ma tacuati.*
25. *Quinemilia, "Pos axcan nictemilitoc nictemoti a ver can nemiz."*
26. *Pehuac quitemoa ya.*
27. *"Axcan," quitmolia, "moztah ceppa nicchihuaz misa huan ceppa nechilizqueh porque axcan nictemoti."*
28. *Huan imozticah ceppa yahque nobon tacat misa caqui.*
29. *Ceppa pehuac calteno yetoc.*
30. *Yeh ahmo yohui altal.*
31. *Yeh ompa ne calteno motaliti ca cactoc.*
32. *Zayoh ehco huan ompa motalia.*
33. *Cura quichihuac misa.*
34. *Ma tami huan quichihuac ni almasal.*
35. *Huan ahmo quinotza ma tacuati ya.*
36. *Hasta tiotac ya.*
37. *Mayana.*
38. *Entonces pehuac quichihua sermon.*
39. *Quitomotoc ya huan ahmo canah quiabci.*
40. *Ait can yetoz?*
41. *Yahque quitemo elhuia.*
42. *Quitemo itech in at.*
43. *Quitemo talticpac.*
44. *Quitemo mictan huan ahmo canah nezic.*
45. *Huan non tacat . . . mah ya tonto.*
46. *Nepa yetoc calteno.*
47. *Ta cactoc.*
48. *Huan yeh ma tamic quichihua misa.*
49. *Ompa ihcatoc yetoc nochi yalhua.*
50. *Huan ahmo aqui.*
51. *Zayoh yebha za mocauque ihuan fiscales ma quinchiyac ma quinonotzazquia.*
52. *Pehuac quichiya nochi yahqueh.*
53. *Huan quinemiliah nen fiscales, "Neci que moyolcocoa señor cura."*
54. *"Quemah, xun ticayic?"*
55. *"Quemah, nicayic."*
56. *Quihtotoya ahmo quimati ca yetoc in presidente.*

57. *Melaub ihcon quihtoa.*"
58. "Huan no yazque [yezquia]," *quitquilia*, "ticmatoc?"
59. "Pos de repente nicmatoc pero yehha ahmo quimati ca yetoz.
60. *Huan ahmo huebca yetoc*," *quitquilia*.
61. "Motamatizqueh ce rato tiotac," *quitquilia*, *quilia in fiscales*.
62. *Non tonto yahque*.
63. *Ceppa moztah mochihuac in misa*.
64. *Quitapoqueh [quitapohuiqueh] in cura non fiscales*.
65. *Tamic in misa*.
66. *Quilia in cura non fiscal*, "Ompa yetoc ce amigo.
67. *Quicaic yalbua tiquihito*.
68. *Tictenatoya*² [*Tictenehuatoya*] *mitzyolcocoa*."
69. *Quilia*, "Quemah!"
70. *Ca yetoc?*"
71. "Ompon yetoc."
72. *Huan ceppa ombon yetoc*.
73. "Ceppa," *quilia*, "ompon yetoc.
74. *Huan ne namechili*.
75. *Pos quihtoa ca quimactoc ca nochi tinemi tictemoa*.
76. *Huan no ahmo canah ticahcic*.
77. *Huan yeh hueliz quimatoc can yetoc*."
78. *Hasta tepitzin cualli mocabua in cura porque quiliqueh quimatoc can yetoc*.
79. *Calaquito ne cuauhiteic huan ce cuarto ompa tahtoltitoc*.
80. *Quilia*, "Pos tinechcaic nimoyolcocoa tehha cimi."
81. "Quemah, nicatoya ompon."
82. "Melaub ticmatoc nobon den tictenatoya, ticmatoc can yetoc?"
83. "Pos acha hueliz quemah nicmatoc."
84. "Huan melaub nochi niquihito," *quitquilia*, *telia in cura*.
85. "Melaub nochi nictemo can nemizquia huan ahmo canah nicahcic."
86. *Quilia*, "Pos ahmo huebca yetoz.
87. *Ompon cerca yetoc*."
88. *Zayoh quili ca cerca yetoz por [pero] ahmo quili can*.
89. "Pos axcan nechpalehui huan ticmatoc temocan."
90. "Pos cualli yazque," *quitquilia*.
91. "Tihuitza," *quitquilia*, "moztah ceppa."
92. *Ihcon quili huan yahque ya*.
93. *Huan moztah ompa ceppa yetoque*.
94. *Tamic misa huan ceppa pehuac motahtoltia*.

95. *Ceppa quitaholtia.*
96. *Ceppa quinoztoc.*
97. *"Siempre melaub ticmatoc ca yetoc in presidente?"*
98. *Porque yeh ahmo quimatoc cuenta in cura cox melaub quimati.*
99. *"Neh nicmati.*
100. *Ahmo huehca yetoque.*
101. *Pos cerca."*
102. *Ceppa quilia cerca pero ahmo quilia can mero yetoc.*
103. *Huan quilia, "Huan nochi tictemoz," quilia, "huan ahmo huehca yetoya."*
104. *Quilia, "Huan queniuh ce quichihuaz?"*
105. *"Teh ximocalaqui.*
106. *Teh xquitzqui.*
107. *Hueliz pero ca miac compañeros."*
108. *"Huan quenin ticchihuazqueh?"*
109. *Quilia, "Pos axcan niqintemoz in tacab, mahtactionomesh, huan mahtactionomesh cihuameh."*
110. *"Ah quemah."*
111. *"Huan nohon cihuameh yebhan nochi titayocanozqueh para tiquinittazqueh quenin mocahuaz."*
112. *Pos que yebhan yazqueh.*
113. *Nochi ihtic calaquitihueh.*
114. *"Como taxicoz, nen mahtactionomesh cihuameh achto yeh iaxca."*
115. *Pero nochi ihticcalaquitihueh.*
116. *Zatepan ta ca mahtactionomesh huan [i]ca yehha mahtactioneyi.*
117. *Quitquilia, "Neh zatepan nyaz."*
118. *Pehuac ihcon.*
119. *Yahqueh pero ahmo huehca yetoya.*
120. *Para ahco ce loma quiapiya ce at.*
121. *Huan itech in at yetoya in presidente.*
122. *Quiapiya nohon laguna ce poza motali oc.*
123. *Zayoh icelti motalia.*
124. *Huan ihcon yetoya ompon.*
125. *Ompon ahmo huehca.*
126. *Huan non achto calaqueh cihuameh, nochi mocahuatoh ihtic.*
127. *Huan que yeh quinchixtoc . . .*
128. *Tanqueh cihuameh huan peuqueh in tacab.*
129. *Nochi tanqueh ya mahtactionome huan zayoh quiapiya non tacat den non quimatoya.*

130. *Zayoh quinonitztoc ya nochi mocahuatoh.*
131. *Zayoh yeh panoltiquizaz³.*
132. *Zayoh yeh quicalacti, panoltiquiza.*
133. *Quincuitiquih⁴ ceppa za.*
134. *Nochi ca in at quittatoh.*
135. *Zayoh icelti mocauh non oculin.*
136. *Quicaub quit non oculin.*
137. *Ce coat huei.*
138. *Quipiya mahtactionome iteno.*
139. *Quixtiqueh⁵ vaya non tac.*
140. *Non rayos.*
141. *Ca in rayos.*
142. *Nohon tacab yehhan quilia quiyauhteot.*
143. *Yeh non tacab, mahtactionomeh.*
144. *Yehhan non quihtoa calaquitih ibtic non oculin.*
145. *Huan ihcon quiquichihqueh [quichihqueh] huan zayoh ce ihcon quichihuazquia.*
146. *Entonces quixtiqueh huan cuiaqueh non oculin tiopan.*
147. *Ompa poliuhui.*
148. *Entonces quitzque nen cura.*
149. *Quitemoa in presidente tiotac.*
150. *Ai ahmo quinozta nen tapaqueh.*
151. *Pero no yehhan mochihuac ya.*
152. *Quitemoa.*
153. *Huan yeh quimatoc que miquic ya.*
154. *Huan quitemohuaya ma tatapo ya porque tacuaznequi ya.*
155. *Tiotac ya.*
156. *Ahmo almazalao.*
157. *“Bueno, axcan cequin in tacab ma tatapotih.*
158. *Cochtoc.*
159. *Quitapotoh ca fuerza.*
160. *Quiquixtih candados huan non armellas.*
161. *Te zayoh ihcon quiquixtih.*
162. *Tapotoh.*
163. *Cabciqueh tech cama presidente.*
164. *Ompa tamic.⁶*

Interpretation

Lines 1–12: Miguel Ahuata describes the *municipio* president's negative reciprocity that offends the priest, and, by extension, the Nahuas. The president refuses to provide the priest with a meal in reciprocation for saying Mass. The president is nowhere to be seen, and the priest waits, he grows hungry, he becomes impatient and he decides to look for the president. He is driven by hunger.

In Huitzilán, the responsibility for feeding the priest as well as paying for the Mass itself actually fell to the Guadalupanas and the Carmelitas, committees of Mestizo women and sometimes Nahuá men who performed a number of important functions. The Guadalupanas were the most important committee because they consulted with the priest over who would serve as sponsors (*mayordomos*) for the upcoming saint's day celebration.⁷ Concepción Bonilla, a lineal descendant of Juana Gutierrez and relative of Ponciano Bonilla, was a member of the Carmelitas, and she often provided the priest with a sumptuous meal after Mass, usually consisting of red rice, turkey or chicken mole, beans, and fresh handmade tortillas.

When referring to the president's refusal to feed the priest for saying Mass, Miguel Ahuata may have had in mind conflicts that arose a few years earlier, which I shall mention following a brief discussion of the main elements of the story.

Lines 13–26: The next day the president engages in negative reciprocity again but now there is a man who stands at the door of the church and listens to the Mass. Miguel Ahuata will gradually identify this man as a rain god (*quiyauh-teotl*), by which he means a rain god's human companion. (See line 142).

Lines 28–62: There is another Mass and no meal, and now the priest is so desperate that he looks for the president in heaven, in the sea, on earth, and in the land of the dead. The man listening to the mass behaves like the rain god's human companion in Juan Hernández's story of "The Rain God" in the previous chapter. He does not want to draw attention to himself; he does not enter the church; he is shy and seems like a fool (*tonto*); he stays back with the *fiscales* (church officials) at the door of the church; he waits for everyone to leave; and then he remarks to the *fiscales* that the priest seems unhappy. Eventually he reveals to the *fiscales* that he knows where the president is.

As mentioned, reluctance to draw attention to oneself is a form of dissimulation in front of priests who, in the past, have suppressed the Nahuas' belief in rain gods. The rain god in Miguel Ahuata's story waits to reveal himself after the

priest, driven by hunger, is desperate to find the president who has the obligation of providing him with a meal. The alliance between the hungry, suffering priest and the rain god's human companion is like that between the priest and the Nahuas in Huitzilán; they provide each other with a measure of support.⁸

Lines 63–146: The *fiscales* tell the priest that there is someone who knows where the president is and they direct him to enter a room in a house in a clearing in the forest, where he meets the fool. The priest asks the fool to help him find the president. The fool offers to look for twelve men and twelve women—all rain gods—who will go in after the president, who is sitting in a spring. Miguel identifies the men and women as lightning bolts (*rayos*, line 140) and rain gods (*quiyauhteomeh*, the plural of *quiyauhteot*, line 142). The president is in the form of his animal companion spirit (*tonal*), which is a serpent with twelve mouths, an unmistakable description of an *achane* or terrestrial water dweller. Miguel Ahuata is one of many narrators in Huitzilán who identified an *achane* as the animal companion or *tonal* of a bad-acting *municipio* president. The twelve male rain gods and the twelve female ones go into the body of the *achane*, and the fool, who is the thirteenth male rain god, gets them out.

Lines 146–164: The rain gods take the serpent to the church, where it dies, and the priest looks for the president. He finds him dead in his bed because, of course, the fate of one's companion spirit is the same as the fate of the person to whom the spirit corresponds. By striking and killing the *achane*, the rain gods kill the president himself. Miguel Ahuata identifies the president as a wealthy Mestizo by revealing that he has the money to pay a woman to wash his clothes (line 150).

Miguel Ahuata used numerology to express the social predicament of the Nahuas in Huitzilán and the challenges they face to change it. He described the rain gods organizing themselves into two groups of twelve to attack one serpent with twelve mouths. The rain gods, like the Nahuas, have numerical superiority, and the serpent with twelve mouths is like the Mestizos, who were relatively few in number but with the capacity to devour (*quicua*) or dominate the Nahuas. When Miguel Ahuata told his story in 1975, there were ten times the number of Nahuas compared with Mestizos living in Huitzilán (Taggart 1975: 33). However, Miguel Ahuata's story is a lesson that numerical superiority is not necessarily sufficient to change the balance of power. The two groups of twelve rain gods were not sufficient to kill the hydra-headed serpent; it took a rain god's human companion to do the job. Miguel Ahuata makes the point that it is necessary to have a good leader to carry out a successful rebellion.

The Immediate Context

There are a number of behaviors that Miguel Ahuata might have had in mind when he told his story about the *municipio* president who refused to provide the priest with a meal. All involve exercising power. Seemingly insignificant behaviors might seem like minor acts of disrespect, but they reminded the Nahuas of their subordinate status. For example, the *municipio* president used to give a dinner, as if he were a *mayordomo*, to take up a collection for the *castillo* or fireworks display for the patron saint celebration.⁹ *Municipio* presidents in Huitzilán were either Mestizos or Nahuas who did the bidding of elite families. When Miguel Ahuata told his story in 1975, Antonio Aco's son, Adolfo Aco, was *municipio* president of Huitzilán. Nahua *mayordomos*, who provided the beautiful but expensive adornments in honor of saints, complained that Adolfo did not reciprocate by hosting dinners to collect money for the *castillo*. Perhaps equally important, Adolfo Aco did not look for dance groups to participate in the patron saint celebration in August. The dance groups that regularly performed in Huitzilán included the San Migueles, the Quetzales, as well as "los pilatos," "los españoles," "los torreadores," and "los boladores."¹⁰ Despite the *municipio* president's failure to recruit them, the San Miguel and Quetzal dancers organized themselves anyway, and appeared on many ceremonial occasions during the calendar year in 1969, when I took detailed field notes on all public rituals that took place in Huitzilán. The two dance groups performed from Santos Reyes on January 6¹¹ to the patron saint's celebration in honor of the Virgen de la Asunción, whose day in the Catholic calendar is August 14.¹² Nahuas explained that when the president fails to "look for" dancers, the job falls to the *tayecanqueh* or head of the dance groups. For the San Migueles, the *tayecanqueh* was the dancer who performed the role of the devil.¹³ The Nahuas made sure that the San Miguel dancers perform on important ritual occasions because of their link to the rain gods in their community.

Nahua *mayordomos* compared Adolfo Aco unfavorably with Ponciano Bonilla, a former *municipio* president whom they praised because he took his responsibilities toward the Nahua *mayordomos* and ritual dancers more seriously.¹⁴ As noted, Ponciano and Antonio Aco were the political representatives of the *jefe político*, Isidro Grimaldo, and, later, the *cacique*, Gabriel Barrios in Tetela, who had charge of the Sierra Norte de Puebla following the Mexican Revolution. Adolfo Aco explained to me that he did not host meals to collect money for the *castillo* because he was occupied with two community projects: the construction

of a basketball court and the renovation of the municipal palace. Both projects required a lot of community or *faena* labor that the *municipio* president can command from the Nahuas and poor Mestizos without payment.¹⁵ In Huitzilán, as in many other places, members of the community are required to donate their labor for community projects. The projects Adolfo Aco initiated did not appeal to the Nahuas because the vast majority of basketball players at that time were Mestizos, and the *municipio* palace was the seat of that group's political power.

Digging Deeper

While some Nahuas found Adolfo Aco's lack of reciprocity to *mayordomos* who had contributed their resources to saint's day celebrations very annoying, I do not think that Adolfo's refusal to hold a dinner to collect money for the *castillo* fully explains the meaning of Miguel Ahuata's story. Despite their complaints, Adolfo had a relatively amicable relationship with many Nahuas. He hired many of them to work in his coffee-producing enterprise and drank and joked with them. Some Nahuas complained that he had many children with Nahua women, but when the rebellion broke out two years after Miguel told his story, the UCI did not make Adolfo Aco the focus of their vendettas. He reputedly provided the UCI with ammunition in the hopes that they would help him by carrying out a vendetta against his own Mestizo family.

The Meanings of Negative Reciprocity

There are deeper cultural reasons for fantasizing about killing the animal companion spirit of a president who fails to provide a priest with a meal. One is the meaning that Nahuas attach to reciprocity, which was a basic part of ancient as well as contemporary Nahua ethics and morality. (See Good 2004a). Maffie (2014: 355–356) traced reciprocity in Nahua morality to the ancient concept of *nepantlah* or *nepantah* [Nahuatl spelling]. *Nepantlah*, he noted, conveyed “a sense of abundant reciprocity or mutuality; or more precisely, reciprocity or mutuality that consists of a dynamic condition of being, abundantly middle, betwixt and between, or centered.” Among the Nahuas in Huitzilán, *nepantah* refers to noon, the midway point in the diurnal rotation between the waxing and waning sun. The Nahuas' use of *nepantah* is consistent with Maffie's understanding that to be in a state of centeredness is desirable and to fall out that state is undesirable.¹⁶ The midpoint in the sun's diurnal rotation is desirable, just as

is living in a state of balanced reciprocity in the mutual exchange of labor in a marriage, a family, or a community.

Nahuas in Huitzilán have their own way of expressing centeredness by linking work, love, and food. They frequently described the marital relationship as *tequipanoa* or joining in work.¹⁷ The word *tequi* means "to work," and *nepanoa* had social and emotional meaning, such as in the word *nenepantlazo[h]talo*, which Molina ([1571] 1966: 417) defined as "to love each other" (Maffie 2014: 356). The related word *nepantlazohtlalia* means "to create bonds of friendship between people." And *nenepanoa* is "to get married or join hands" (Maffie 2014: 356).

Nacho defined love (*tazohtaliz*) as a feeling arising out of cooperation in any form of work.

"If you work well with another person, one loves that person because he or she is doing what I would do but cannot do alone." ("*Cual centequitih, no quitazohta, porque yeh quichiutoc de nen chihuazquia ahmo nihueli.*")¹⁸

The verb "to work" (*tequi*) has a very broad range of meanings and can include any form of human activity from planting a *milpa* (corn and bean field) and chopping wood to having sex. The broadest interpretation of Nacho's remark is that those who work together eat, and those who do not work together will starve or struggle to eat. Men and women produced and prepared their meals in a labor-intensive process that required the labor of both members of a married couple. The feeling of love in a married couple or in any relationship changes depending on how well the partners carry out their tasks. Love is a feeling of well-being or centeredness, which can wane when the partners carry out their tasks poorly and wax when they do them well.

In the Nahuas' theory of emotions, envy is what gets in the way of working together and creating a feeling of love. Nacho described envy (*nexicol*) as a feeling like hunger.

"Envy is like hunger. One wants something that someone else has. . . . It is like anger. It is bitter, really bitter. One is suffering with something bitter because one does not have what one wants. It is very bitter to realize someone might scold us or be angry with you. You will eat something bitter that makes you suffer because no one loves you." ("*Non no como yezquia non mayana nohon nexicol. Yeh quinequi ma no qui piya . . . Huan nexicolot pos cualayot. Chichic vaya chichic. Chichiccamictoc porque ahmo quitztani. Ten chichiya por cuando cuaticmatiquitocan techahhuatitoqueh o techtabuelizitoqueh. En lugar titacuaz ten tichichicamiqui porque ahmo mitztazohta.*")¹⁹

Hunger is a common concern in Huitzilán, and Nahuas, like others in the world (Lutz 1988), express gratitude and love for those who have fed them and kept them alive, particularly during difficult times, and provided them with a sense of well-being. Their term for gratitude, *tazohcamatiliz-*—a combination of *tazoh* (love), the infix *-ca-*, and *matiliz*, a verbal noun meaning “knowledge of”—conveys this idea. The Nahua Gabriela recalled how she suffered as a child with hunger when her father left her mother for another woman. Gabriela was grateful to her mother for struggling to keep her children alive by earning one liter of corn a day selling food and fodder in a neighboring community. Gabriela expressed anger toward her father, who ceased to work with her mother (*tequipanoa*) and consequently no longer filled the family granary with corn he grew on his *milpa* or corn plot. A half-liter (*chavo*) of corn to make a few tortillas for her family’s evening meal and another half-liter for the morning meal were not enough for a woman and several children. Gabriela summed up what it was like to live without a father’s love: “If you do not have your coffee and tortillas, you’ll be hungry.” (*De ahmo ticpiyaz café huan taxcal, pos ta quiapiya mayana.*)²⁰

Learning the Taste of Love and Envy

Nahuas associate in infancy the emotions of love and envy with the flavors of sweetness (*tzopec*) and bitterness (*chichic*). A child begins to make the association when weaned around the sixth month of a mother’s next pregnancy. While there is considerable variation in practice, Nahua women said they weaned their nursing children at about that time by rubbing a bitter herb (*chichicixihuit*) on their nipples to discourage a child from continuing to nurse on the mother’s sweet milk. They said that the mother’s milk now belongs to the child who is in the womb. A weaned child experiences an abrupt transition that involves ceasing to nurse on a mother’s sweet milk, tasting the bitter herb she rubs on her nipples, and moving over to the sleeping mat of the father. The Nahuas attribute sibling rivalry to the envy an older sibling directs toward the younger one who took his or her place at the mother’s breast. Some consider fighting among brothers to be a most glaring form of disrespect because it is a threat to the cooperative relations upon which the welfare of the members of an extended family domestic group depend. A breakdown in those relations can mean hunger.

Food and Love

The relationship between food and love emerged in interviews that I carried out with Nacho and several others Nahuas during the third period of field-work. Nacho explained how he felt love when he received food from his now deceased mother:

"[I knew she loved me] because she was waiting for me with my tortillas. She begged me to eat. If I arrived, she'd bend down to say, "Eat while they're hot." I knew she loved me." (*"Porque nechchichixtoya ica notaxcal. Nechtatequihuiltitoya ma nitacua o ahmo. Como niehoc ya, pos abuetzi, 'Xitacua, mazo totonia.' Nicmatic nechtazobta.*")²¹

When the relationship of *tequipanoa* works well in a marriage, the wife is motivated to show love to her husband by preparing his meal in gratitude for his working on his *milpa* to fill the family granary with corn. The widow Teresa explained how a good marriage works as she recalled her deceased husband:

"Dawn breaks, and one sees him go to work in the fields, and with that a man and wife feel love for each other. The wife is free to wait for her husband with his coffee and make his tortillas for him to dip into his sauce." (*"Taneci imottayohui ton imotta yohui ca non que ma motazobtaqueh. Que no libre quichixtoc ca nicafen huan nitaxcal tapaloco, quichihuilia.*")²²

Intentionality (*Tequiuh*)

Nacho explained that one will be inclined to feel love or envy depending on whether one's heart is straight or crooked, which determines one's intentionality (*tequiuh*). If one is born with or develops a straight heart, then he or she will be inclined to feel love (*tazohtaliz*) and work well with others. If one has a twisted heart, she or he will be inclined to feel envy (*nexicoliz*) and will not work well with others and, therefore, will not feel love. The Nahuas, like other autochthonous groups in Mexico (Groark 2008), live in a state of social opacity and must divine, through dreams and by careful observations of behavior, whether the hearts of others are straight or crooked.

The Nahua discourse on love and envy promotes cooperative work relations within the domestic group and discourages going out on one's own. Nahuas told many stories about envy as a destructive emotion, including tales about the

envious dead who return to the land of the living and kill children and adults with envy sickness (*nexicolcolcoliz*). Nahuas said that envious people practice witchcraft themselves or contract witches to carry out acts of witchcraft against those who are the targets of their envy. Envy was so despised that the Nahuas refused to admit that they ever felt it.²³

Compadrazgo Rituals

During the third period of fieldwork (2003–2012) after the UCI rebellion had ended, Nacho offered his interpretation of the meaning of the reciprocal exchanges that take place during *compadrazgo* rituals. Our interview took place on March 17, 2004, after he had described his horrific experiences during the UCI rebellion that ended in the massacre of his wife and several of her sisters and a brother (Taggart 2007). Nacho spoke as he looked at the photographs of *compadrazgo* rituals I had taken during the first stage of fieldwork in 1968 and 1969. He aimed to explain how his community could heal after splintering during the rebellion.

Nacho described the reciprocal exchange that took place after observing the wedding banquet during the *compadrazgo* rituals for marriage. As Nacho looked at the pictures of the banquet I had taken many years earlier, he singled out the breaking of the fast during which *comadres* of the marital couple exchanged their food with one another.

“When they eat, first the *comadre* begins. She takes a tortilla and she gives one to everyone [sitting around the banquet]. She gives one to all of her companions. It is just a simple tortilla. It does not have any meat. Afterward, once she has given everyone one, then they begin to eat. Then they exchange their meat. The *comadre* gives to her *compadre* and the other *comadre* gives to her *compadre*. Or they exchange with their godchildren to convey that each one has a big love. This is very clean because what one will eat, I shall eat. And they will eat what I shall eat. This moment is very beautiful.” (*Cuando tacua, primero pehuaz de comadre. Quicuiiz ce taxcal, huan nochi quimacaz ce ce. Nochi nicompañeros ce ce quimaca Iuhqui oc. Ahmo qui piya nacat. Zatepan, una vez quitamic ce ce, entonces peuhqueh mocuiliayah para tacuah ya. Entonces pehuah motapaltiliayah ninacauh. De comadre, quimacaya nicompadre, huan occe te comadre quimaca nicompadre. O itocay quitapaltiliaya ihcon para quihtoznequi qui piya ce . . . ne tazohaliz telcenca huei ya. Telcenca chipahuac porque yeh quicuaiz lo que*



FIGURE 5.1. Wedding banquet.



FIGURE 5.2. Exchanging *xochicozcat* and *xochicuahuit*.



FIGURE 5.3. Man wearing a *xochicozcat* and holding a *xochicuahuit*.



FIGURE 5.4. A *xochicozcat* display.

ten nicuazquia. Huan de yeh quicuazquia, pues neh nicuaz. Entonces ye non telcualtzin.")²⁴

He expanded on the meaning of reciprocity when explaining the exchange of *xochicozcat*, a long flower-and-bread necklace worn by all of the primary participants in marriage and baptism rituals

"Each one puts on a *xochicozcat*. [It is a necklace that] has flowers and bread. . . . The flower necklace fastens us together. We see the necklace as making a wheel. We call it a wheel of flowers. Why? Because [it means] our god is circling around us. . . . And we are inside [the circle]. Inside is where we are. When one of our *compadres* places that flower [necklace] on our necks, it means that we are fastened [together] so that we shall not forget [each other]. May the human goodness between us never end. May we never become disconnected from each other. May we not play with our love. May beautiful thoughts watch over us. May we never forget this love. May we not drift apart. May we not criticize each other. May we not mistreat each other. May we not get angry with each other. Because with this flower [necklace]—How shall I put it?—we shall be connected to our godparents." ("*Quechcuiltia xochicozcat. Quipiya xochit huan quipiya pan. . . . Xochicozcat te tzicoa. Tiquitztoqueh xochicozcat ce rueda quichiutoc. Temaca cuenta que ne rueda huan xochit. Que ye? Porque todios techyahualotoc. . . . Huan tehhan tiyetoqueh taihtic. Taihtic yetoqueh . . . Cuando ce tocompadre tiquechcuiltia ne xochit, que no quihtoznequi timotzicoah ihuan para abmo queman techilcabua,*²⁵ *ma abmo queman tami ne cualtacayot.*²⁶ *Ma abmo [macamo] queman timobuehuelocan. Ma [maca] nechipatomotazohtacan. Ma techpihpiyacan cualtzin tanemilil. Ma . . . abmo queman quelcabua ne nin tazobtaliz . . . [Ma] abmo para timobuehuelozqueh.*²⁷ *[Ma] abmo para timihihtozqueh.*²⁸ *[Ma] abmo para timomaltratarozqueh. [Ma] abmo para timocualantizqueh. Porque non xochit—Que niquihtoz?—tiyetzicozqueh ne topadrino.*")²⁹

The meaning that Nacho attached to the reciprocal exchange of the *xochicozcat* as a "wheel of flowers" is reminiscent of the significance of the gift of a necklace that Molly H. Bassett (2015: 35) found in the ancient Nahuatl texts. She wrote: "A necklace serves as the conventional sign of declarations of peace." She was referring to the necklaces among the gifts that Moteuczoma gave to Cortés. Nacho added Christian imagery when he emphasized goodness, a quality that the friars associated with their god and that was absent in the ancient

Nahuas' notion of *teotl*. Nacho described how being inside the necklace is to be surrounded by God, fastened to others, enjoying human goodness, respecting the love that one shares with others, never drifting apart from others, avoiding slandering and mistreating others, and getting angry with others.

To engage in negative reciprocity, by refusing to feed the priest in reciprocity for giving Mass, is to create estrangement from others, forget others, criticize others, mistreat others, and get angry with others, all of which are states of being that Nahuas try to avoid, as difficult as that might be. From this perspective, Nahuas in Huitzilán are justified in taking action to prevent negative reciprocity and promote positive reciprocity, including feeding the priest and enacting wedding rituals involving the exchange of *xochicozcat*.

At the time Miguel Ahuata told this story, he did not have any reason to believe that Nahuas in his community, despite their greater numbers, would be able to punish *municipio* presidents who practiced negative reciprocity. The *municipio* president is a symbol of Mestizos who have taken Nahua land and given little in return. The Nahuas in Huitzilán would have to wait until the UCI appeared in the Sierra Norte de Puebla. The following three chapters present stories by narrators who expressed their feelings of revitalization during the first months of the UCI rebellion that began with the invasion of the Talcuaco and Taltempan cattle pastures.

“The President of Hueytlalpan,” 1978

In the early and heady days of the UCI rebellion, de la Co Ayance told another version of the rain gods’ rebellion that expressed harsher criticisms of the *municipio* president. As he narrated his story from his home, one could see the Nahuas in the UCI, dressed in their sparkling white shirts and pants, against the deep green of their young corn field on Talcuaco. De la Co Ayance’s criticisms arose from actual bad experiences that some Nahuas have had with some Mestizo *municipio* presidents.

“De la Co” or de la Cruz Ayance was seventy when he told me his story. He lived with his wife and family in the Colonia de la Concepción that was adjacent to the Ixtahuatalix *ejido*. He rented land to grow corn in Tacaloco on the hillside bounding Huitzilán on the east. He had often migrated to work on plantations around Martínez de la Torre on the Veracruz coast below Teziutlán. He also worked in Huapalecan, a community in the *municipio* of Xochitlán de Romero Rubio, to the east of Huitzilán.

During the third period of fieldwork, a Mestizo, a member of a prominent family, expressed his high opinion of de la Co Ayance, whose son coincidentally had recently become the *municipio* president of Huitzilán. The Mestizo admired de la Co for learning how to read and write and voicing thoughtful opinions about his community. Like Miguel Ahuata, de la Co Ayance was a Nahua man who had invested a lot in the religious life of Huitzilán. He had recently served as president of the powerful Guadalupana committee.¹ Then he, along with several others living on or near the Ixtahuatalix *ejido*, converted to one of a number of Protestant sects as Huitzilán began to splinter just before the outbreak of the UCI rebellion.

De la Co's Story

De la Co Ayance, like Miguel Ahuata, began his story with a quarrel between the *municipio* president and the priest. Both narrators described the rain gods supporting the priest by seeking out and destroying the president's *tonal*, which de la Co described as an *achane* appearing as a lizard. De la Co Ayance described the rain gods killing the lizard and thus killing the president himself in human form. However, de la Co Ayance cast his story a little differently by setting the action in the neighboring Totonac community of Hueytlalpan, which is north of Huitzilán, to dissimulate his harsher criticisms of the president and autocratic rule in his own community. Other Nahuas who told this story added the detail that the Hueytlalpan president was not only an autocrat but also took orders from Spain. Below are the English and Nahuatl versions of his story followed by commentary on how de la Co Ayance's story incorporates what was taking place in Huitzilán around the time of his narration.

1. There was a man, he used to be the president of Hueytlalpan, a village around here.
2. And he was very excessive.
3. He did crazy things to the town.
4. He would lock people up for nothing.
5. He was excessive.
6. And he would even lock up the priest.
7. Even if the priest had not done anything.
8. The priest would hold Mass before notifying the president.
9. So then the president would lock him up.
10. He would put him in jail.
11. And that was because the president was prone to anger.
12. For a long time the president behaved this way because he was prone to anger.
13. Then the priest said, "And now what shall we do with this president?"
14. He locks us up a lot.
15. He makes us do a lot of work.
16. He treats us like children.
17. Now let us look for twelve rain gods, and I am going to say Mass," said the priest.
18. "I am going to say Mass, and we are going to look for those twelve rain gods so that they will look for the president."
19. So that is what the rain gods did.

20. And they looked for the president.
21. They looked for him in the canyons.
22. They looked for him in the water.
23. They looked for him in the wind.
24. Where did he go?
25. Where would they find him?
26. He is nowhere.
27. No one can find him.
28. Those rain gods went far away, even to the sea.
29. They went everywhere.
30. They did not find him.
31. So they went again.
32. They looked for him again.
33. Again they went to the sea.
34. He was nowhere.
35. And again, one day, they went to the sea.
36. They did not find him.
37. They returned.
38. They were on their way back.
39. And they came across a hummingbird sitting in the road.
40. There the hummingbird was sitting.
41. It asked, "Where are you going?"
42. "Well we," they said, "are going nowhere.
43. We are just going for a walk."
44. "That is not true.
45. I know what you are looking for."
46. "We are not looking for anything," they said to the hummingbird.
47. "We are just going for a walk.
48. And do you really know what we are looking for?"
49. "I sure do.
50. I know.
51. I know what you are looking for.
52. You are looking for that man.
53. And you have not found him."
54. "Do you know where he is?" the rain gods asked.
55. The hummingbird replied, "I know.
56. I know where he is."

57. "Good, if you know where he is, then tell us."
58. "Well, if you want, let us go find him."
59. Let us go see him.
60. I shall show you where he is."
61. So then they turned around, and the hummingbird took them.
62. They arrived again at the sea.
63. The hummingbird said, "He sits over there."
64. He is in the middle of the sea.
65. He comes up onto a sand island.
66. A place where there is no water.
67. And he comes out when the sun comes out.
68. The sun comes out, and then he appears over there.
69. He warms himself a little when there is sun.
70. He does it for just one hour.
71. He does it for just one hour and yes, again he goes away."
72. The hummingbird added, "Well, that is where he is."
73. But right now, he is gone.
74. It has passed the hour.
75. He has already come and gone.
76. You come tomorrow.
77. You come tomorrow and you will be sure to find him.
78. He comes for the sun."
79. The rain gods thought, "Well, good."
80. Let us go," they said, "and we shall come tomorrow."
81. They went, they went home.
82. They did not make a sound.
83. They went back quietly and saw he was really there.
84. He was a big lizard.
85. He was huge.
86. They thought, "Well, there he is."
87. Now let us go into his body.
88. Let us go in through his mouth.
89. They made claps of thunder.
90. That is how it was.
91. One after the other, one after the other, and one after the other went in.
92. They all went in through his mouth.
93. Eleven in all went in.

94. Eleven went in.
95. And they could not break that animal into pieces.
96. They could not split him open.
97. And they realized that only one of them was left.
98. "What do I do now, and I am the only one left?"
99. And now it is my turn for me to go in through his mouth, and then he will not break apart and we shall be stuck inside.
100. Now I am going to enter through his anus."
101. So then he went in through his anus.
102. He went in through his anus.
103. He went in.
104. He made a clap of thunder inside of his body and split him open.
105. With the clap of thunder all of his eleven companions were thrown out of his body.
106. Yes.
107. They were all inside.
108. He thought, "Well, now what shall I do?"
109. Right now I am going to revive my companions."
110. He began blowing into their ears.
111. He blew into the ears of all of them.
112. So he blew into the ears of all of them.
113. Until he revived all of them.
114. He revived them.
115. "Now yes," they said.
116. "Let us go.
117. We did what we did because he made us sad."
118. Yes.
119. They arrived back home.
120. Well, that president was sleeping in his house until he burned.
121. He was burned in his bed.
122. The force with which they struck him there also reached him where he was burned.
123. His body and animal companion were both burned.
124. So then they began to see he was already dead.
125. They were happy.
126. The priest was ready for them to hold a dance [fiesta].
127. They held a fiesta.
128. They got drunk.

129. They danced.
 130. They were happy because the president had died.
 131. And that is the end of the story.
-
1. *Ce tacat, catca persidente de nican Hueytlalpan.*
 2. *Huan cimi loco catca.*
 3. *Cimi tebza quichihuiltiaya in pueblo.*
 4. *Tebza quinzacuaya.*
 5. *Loco.*
 6. *Huan ihcon cura no quinzacuaya.*
 7. *Como yehba ahmo yeh canah cura quichihuaz tebza.*
 8. *Quichihuaz misa achto huan ahmo yehba quinahuatia nen presidente.*
 9. *Entonces quitzacua.*
 10. *Calaquia bote.*
 11. *Huan ihcon ta cualanti.*
 12. *Huebcahuac yeh ihcon quichihua que ta cualanti ihcon.*
 13. *Tonse quihtoa cura, "Huan axcan toni ticchihuilizqueh ne presidente?"*
 14. *Cimi techzacua.*
 15. *Miac chihualiz ma ticchihuacan.*
 16. *Techpiya quemeh tipilhuan.*
 17. *Axcan ma tictemocah mahtactionomeh quiyauhteomeh huan nehba nicchihuati misa," telia in cura.*
 18. *"Nehba nicchihuati misa huan tiquintemotih nobon mahtactionomeh quiyauhteomeh para tictemotih can yetoz."*
 19. *Tonse ihcon quichiuqueh.*
 20. *Huan quitemoah.*
 21. *Quitemoah tech cuauhyoh.*
 22. *Quitemoah tech in at.*
 23. *Quitemoah tech in ehecat.*
 24. *Can yahqui?*
 25. *Can quiahcizqueh ihcon?*
 26. *Ahmo canah cachi.*
 27. *Ahmo quiahci.*
 28. *Non quiyauhteomeh yahqueh ya hasta huebca yahqueh ya, hasta campa mar.*
 29. *Nemitoh nochi.*
 30. *Pos ahmo quiahcib.*
 31. *Ihcon ceppa yohueh.*
 32. *Ceppa quitemotih.*

33. *Ceppa yobueh tech in mar.*
34. *Nochi nenqueh.²*
35. *Huan ceppa ce tonal, yahqueh tech in ne mar.*
36. *Ahmo quiahci ihcon.*
37. *Moquepqueh ya.*
38. *Huan que huitzeh ya.*
39. *Huan quiahciqui ce huitziqui tocotzyetoc itech obti.*
40. *Ompa tocotzyetoc ce huitziqui.*
41. *Quilia, "Can nanyahcah?"*
42. *"Pos tehhan," quilia ne, "ahmo canah.*
43. *Tehhan zayoh ihcon tipaxalobuah."*
44. *"Ahmo melaub.*
45. *Nehha nicmati ca toni nanquitemoah."*
46. *"Ahmo tei tictemoah," quilia ne.*
47. *"Tehhan ihcon tipaxalobuah.*
48. *Huan xe ticmati toni tictemoah?"*
49. *"Quenamo.*
50. *Neh nicmatoc.*
51. *Nicmatoc toni quitemoah.*
52. *Nanquitemoah nohon ne tacat.*
53. *Huan ahmo nanquiahcibh."*
54. *"Xe ticmatoc," quilia, "ca yetoc?"*
55. *Quilia, "Neh nicmatoc.*
56. *Neh nicmatoc ca yetoc."*
57. *"Bueno, como ticmatoc ca yetoc, xitechnextili."*
58. *"Pos, como nanquinequib, tyobueh.*
59. *Tyobueh tiquittatih.*
60. *Tinamechnextiliti [Ninamechnextiliti] campa yetoc."*
61. *Tonse moquepqueh huan ceppa quincebuiac nohon huitziqui.*
62. *Ahciqueh campa occeppa in mar.*
63. *Quilia, "Ompa ya ne motalia.*
64. *Yetoc tahtaco de mar.*
65. *Panhuetztoc nochi atexal³.*
66. *Ihcon ahmo tei in at.*
67. *Huan ompa huitza cuando quizaqui tonal.*
68. *Quizaqui tonal huan ompa huitza ya.*
69. *Ompa mototonia tepitzin ca nen tonal.*
70. *Zayoh ce hora quichibua.*

71. *Zayoh ce hora quichihua huan quemah, occeppa yohui.*"
72. *Quilia, "Pos ompa ya ne," quilia.*
73. *"Pero yequintzin yahqui ya.*
74. *Yequintzin panoc ya in hora.*
75. *Huallaca ya huan yahqui ya.*
76. *Hasta moztah nanhuitzeh.*
77. *Moztah nanhuitzeh huan seguramente nanquiabciquihueh ya.*
78. *Quiabciquih tonal."*
79. *Quitmolía, "Pos bueno.*
80. *Tyohueh ya," quilia, "huan moztah tihuitzeh."*
81. *Yahqueh, ihcon yohueh.*
82. *Abmo caquizti.⁴*
83. *Yohueh ihcon ic[h]taca cuando quittah melauh ompa yetoc ya.*
84. *Ce huei alagarto.*
85. *Telcenca huei.*
86. *Quitmolía, "Pos ne yetoc ya.*
87. *Axcán nican ticalaquizqueh.*
88. *Tyohueh iteno ticalaquitih."*
89. *Nochi ceppa za tatatzinic.*
90. *Ihcoza.*
91. *Ce huan ce, ce huan ce, huan ce yohui.*
92. *Nochi iteno calaqueh.*
93. *Hasta mahtactionce yahquih.*
94. *Mahtactionce yahquih.*
95. *Huan abmo tapanih⁵ nen ocuulin.*
96. *Abmo quixtapanah.⁶*
97. *Pos quitmolía ayoc⁷ ce mocaub.*
98. *"Toni nicchihua huan zayoh nocelti?*
99. *Huan den hora ceppa iteno nicalaquiti, entonces abmo tapanaz huan ompa timocabuah.*
100. *Axcán neh nicalaquiti in cuitco.⁸*
101. *Tonce yahqui.*
102. *Nican cuitco quicalaquito.*
103. *Caliquito.*
104. *Ompa tatatzinic ihctic ya pero ceppa za ixtapanac.*
105. *Ompa nochi icuin motamotqueh⁹ nicompañeros de mahtactionce.*
106. *Quemah.*
107. *Ompa actoyah nochi.*

108. *Quitmolía, "Pos axcan toni nicchihua?*
 109. *Axcan yequintzin niyoliti."*
 110. *Pehuac nochi quinpítza ihcon tech ni nacaz.*
 111. *Nochi quinpítza.*
 112. *Nochi ihcon quinpítza.*
 113. *Hasta quinyoliti nochi.*
 114. *Quinyoliti.*
 115. *"Axcan quemah," quilia.*
 116. *"Tyohueh ya.*
 117. *Ticchiuqueh ya den techyolcoctoya."*¹⁰
 118. *Quemah.*
 119. *Ompa ehoqueh.*
 120. *Pos ne presidente campa cochtóya ichan, hasta no tatak campa ne yetóya.*
 121. *No tatak tech nicama.*
 122. *Ehoc in fuerza de nepa quimacaqueh nican no ehoc tech nicama.*
 123. *No tatak.*
 124. *Tonse peuqueh ne quittacah miquic ya.*
 125. *Pos cuelittah ya.*
 126. *Pos ya in cura para quichiuqueh ce baile.*
 127. *Quichiuqueh ilhuit.*
 128. *Tabuanah.*
 129. *Mihtotiqueh.*
 130. *Cuelittah ya porque miquic ya in presidente.*
 131. *Huan tamic in cuento.*¹¹

Interpretation

De la Co Ayance's story captures how his community had changed from the time, three years earlier, when Miguel Ahuata told his story of "The President and Priest." In 1978, the UCI rebellion was in its early stage. One way de la Co expressed the presence of the UCI was in the numerology that is important to Nahuas who told stories of this type. De la Co reduced the number of rain gods it took to kill the president's animal companion spirit from two groups of twelve plus one in Miguel Ahuata's story to one group of eleven plus one. The twelfth, rather than the twenty-fifth rain god killed the lizard. The lizard, moreover, has only one mouth, expressing how the Mestizos posed a diminished threat to the

Nahuas now that those in the UCI were challenging their power. To devour (-*cua*) is a common Nahuatl expression for subjugating another person or group.

At about this time, Adolfo Aco, the last Mestizo from Huitzilán to serve as *municipio* president, abandoned his office and ordered a Nahuatl councilman to take his place. He knew what he was doing because shortly thereafter Nahuas in the UCI shot and killed the new president, ostensibly for working for the elite families in Huitzilán. The UCI were posing a serious threat to the position of those families in word as well as deed. They were broadcasting speeches threatening death to the *ricos* and repeating the slogan "land is for those who work it," attributed to Emiliano Zapata. The UCI carried out torchlit marches through the middle of the town, painting the whitewashed houses of wealthier Mestizo families with slogans like "Death to the rich" and "Long live the UCI."

Each narrator described the behavior of the story's characters in particular ways in accord with what had been taking place in Huitzilán just prior to the time of narration. Miguel Ahuata had criticized the president for behaving with negative reciprocity, alluding to a long history of Mestizos coming into Huitzilán and coveting and taking the Nahuas' land, making it difficult for them to produce the corn they needed.

By contrast, de la Co Ayance criticized the president for being autocratic, and he attributed his behavior to a bad personality. He described the president as crazy (line 2) because he locked people up for nothing (line 4), such as when he jailed the priest for holding Mass before notifying the president (lines 6, 8-9). He described the president as prone to anger (line 11) and making people do a lot of work (*faena*, line 15). Perhaps most important, de la Co Ayance said that the president "has treated us like children" (line 16).

De la Co Ayance could have had a number of presidents in mind. His description of the president particularly fits some Nahuas' accounts of their experience with a Mestizo I shall call Porfirio, who was serving as *municipio* president in 1973 and 1974, just before the formation of the UCI. Porfirio was related by kinship to Ponciano Bonilla. I do not know if de la Co Ayance had a run-in with Porfirio, but other Nahuas who lived in the same neighborhood did, and they described Porfirio as behaving like an autocratic president, as in de la Co Ayance's story.

One example is the account that my *compadre*, "Juan," shared with me about the problem he had with Porfirio in 1973. Juan's son, whom I shall call "José," had married "Maria," who was about fifteen years old in 1973. At the time José began living with Maria around 1972, Porfirio sent Ramirez, a Nahuatl serving as

councilman of education (*regidor de educación*), to inform José that María had not completed her primary school education and should return to school. Juan pointed out that she had not been going to school for a year prior to living with José because she was caring for her mother and grandfather. Her father had died.

Juan said that if all is well, one should go to school, but if not, one is compelled to remain home. Porfirio accused José of taking advantage of María because she had no father. Porfirio told Juan that José had committed a great sin and had to pay a 350-peso fine in cash or work it off in the *municipio* palace. At that time, a Nahua man earned about twenty pesos for one day's work. Juan objected because José would lose too many days, leaving his family with nothing to eat. Juan told Porfirio that José and María were *ce ceco*, meaning they lived in a separate domestic group and ate from their own granary and purse rather than from those of his parents. Juan told Porfirio he wanted to speak to José about the matter. José went to see Porfirio, whom he found to be a very intimidating figure. Porfirio threatened to kick him, and so Juan and José made the long and arduous journey by foot to Tetela de Ocampo, the former district capital, to register their complaint. According to Juan, the Tetela official heard them and said that if Ramirez wanted to play around with fines or *multas*, he would show him what a *multa* really was. He gave Juan a letter addressed to Manuel Bonilla, the Agente de Ministerio Público, who is the local official handing serious offenses, demanding that Ramirez come to Tetela. Juan delivered the letter, and Ramirez said he could not make the journey because of illness. He resigned shortly thereafter, and there the matter died.¹²

There are many aspects to this complicated case. One is that Nahuas at that time frequently married off their daughters right after their first menstruation, which often occurred during their primary school years. Another is that several Mestizos as well as Nahuas I knew well considered Porfirio to be a corrupt *municipio* president who stole from the treasury. He was not the only one to do so, but he was one of the worst. A close relative of Porfirio declared that he grabbed the Escorial *ejido* for himself when serving on the *ejido* committee. When Juan handed him the letter from the officials in Tetela, Ramirez took the blame for Porfirio's behavior, and it is no coincidence that Ramirez was a Nahua.

Juan's story is an example of the vulnerability of the Nahuas to an autocratic *municipio* president. It also reveals the obstacles a Nahua faces when he wishes to make an accusation against a Mestizo by registering a complaint with the Agente de Ministerio Público (prosecutor) in Huitzilán. A Nahua could file an accusation with the *municipio* authorities against another Nahua but not against

a Mestizo. Manuel Bonilla, the Agente de Ministerio Público at the time, and Porfirio were both Mestizos related to Juana Gutierrez. Had Manuel confronted Porfirio over his treatment of José, he might have started another feud among Juana's descendants, who were already divided over who owned the Talcuaco and Taltempan pastures. Porfirio was usually armed, had a temper, and pulled a gun on his own nephew after a bout of heavy drinking in a local *cantina*. To defend themselves, Juan and his son had to walk forty-seven kilometers from Huitzilán to Tetela de Ocampo, a journey that took about thirteen hours¹³ in 1973. There was no road from Huitzilán to Tetela that was passable by car, truck, or bus at that time.

Indignities and Humiliations

Stories like this one of suffering indignities and humiliations under the rule of autocrats like Porfirio had become collective memories (Halbwachs 1992) in Nahua culture in Huitzilán during the first stage of fieldwork between 1968 and 1975. What took place in Huitzilán is a special case of a much broader trend among those who are members of the subordinate group in systems of domination. Scott (1990: 7) wrote: "The practices of domination and exploitation typically generate the insults and slights to human dignity that in turn foster a hidden transcript of indignation." Scott draws on (1990: 109) "reactant theory," which "begins with the premise that there is a human desire for freedom and autonomy that, when threatened by the use of force, leads to a reaction of opposition." He notes (1990: 111–112) that "Resistance, then, originates not simply from material appropriation but from the pattern of personal humiliations that characterize that exploitation." Extrapolating from Scott's (1990: 119) theory, humiliations, particularly those that violate the Nahuas' values of conduct, drove Miguel Ahuata and de la Co Ayance to nurse their fantasies of revenge in stories about the rain gods' rebellion.

Some of the most high-minded declarations of morality emerged in the religious life of Huitzilán, beginning with the morality play that the San Miguel dancers performed on saint's day celebrations. Mestizos as well as the Nahuas interpreted that play as the triumph of good over evil, although members of the two groups interpreted what is good and what is evil differently. The members of both groups also expressed their expectations for social conduct in ceremonies of ritual kinship or *compadrazgo* (Chapter 5), a relationship of respect that sometimes connects families across ethnic lines in Huitzilán.

Nahuas and Mestizos have the opportunity to express their common values of love and respect when they contract *compadrazgo* of marriage and exchange flower necklaces (*xochicozcat*), break the wedding fast, and perform the dance of four (*nanahuin*) with the flower tree adornment (*xochicuahuit*). The *compadrazgo* rituals are part of what Scott (1990: 2) calls the “*public transcript*” as a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate.” During the first period of fieldwork, Nahuas chose Mestizo couples to be their *compadres* of marriage and the baptism of their children in approximate proportion to the relative number of couples in each ethnic group in Huitzilán’s population. In 1973, Nacho and I carried out a survey of Nahuas’ *compadrazgo* choices, and we found that Nahuas chose Mestizo couples 10.7 percent of the time when Mestizo couples made up 7.6 percent of the total number of couples in the community.

Joint participation in *compadrazgo* rituals did not necessarily mean, however, that Nahuas and Mestizos placed the same importance on the reciprocal exchange of flower necklaces, the breaking of the wedding fast, and the dance of four. Nahuas appear to place more hopes on *compadrazgo* because they have more riding on improved interethnic relations than do the Mestizos. Miguel Ahuata’s story in the preceding chapter and de la Co Ayance’s story in this one are thinly veiled expressions of indignities that they and other Nahuas experienced in their interaction with the Mestizos, who did not live up to the behavioral expectations Nahuas expressed in the *compadrazgo* rituals.

Religious and Secular Authority

In de la Co Ayance’s story, as in the one by Miguel Ahuata in the previous chapter, the rain gods rid a community of bad-acting *municipio* presidents who mistreat priests by starving them or jailing them for not asking the president for permission to give a Mass. As mentioned earlier, the rain gods’ support of religious authority is part of the Nahuas’ strategy of accommodation with the Church in their struggle against non-Nahuas who have moved into their communities. However, there is more involved in the rain gods’ support of religious authority and rebelling against secular authority in the person of the *municipio* president.

Nacho, speaking on behalf of his brothers, explained that the Hueytlalpan president behaved as an autocrat because he was taking orders from Spain. This statement accords with a long history of Nahuas in Huitzilán living under the

rule of outsiders since at least the time of Juan Francisco Lucas, Juan N. Mendez, Isidro Grimaldo, and, later, Gabriel Barrios. They governed Huitzilán through Antonio Aco, who came from Tetela, and Ponciano Bonilla, who was born in Huitzilán and the grandson of Juana Guitierrez, the first non-Nahua settler who came from San Antonio Rayón, near Cuetzalan.

Nacho interpreted the story of "The President of Hueytlalpan" as expressing outside rule in the following way:

"They say that every day the [Hueytlalpan] president picked up many orders from Spain. They say the [orders] arrived every day in the wind. Every day the sun would rise, and he would pick up those orders from Spain." (*Quihtoa moztah nohon presidente, quihtoa moztah quemeh axcan, huan para cuantzin, quicuiti miac tanahuatil de España. Quihtoa quit moztah ehcotoc moztah. Moztah taneci huan quicuiti non tanahuatil de España.*)¹⁴

Nacho explained that taking orders from Spain made the president feel and act like a big shot.

"He did not get along with people. He did not work well with others as president. He was known to be a big shot. That is what it was. . . . The people of the town would go to sleep, and in the morning the president would have his orders from Spain. Whatever those orders from Spain were, he acted like a big shot. That is why he felt so big." (*Mal quihuicatoya. Ahmo tequitia cualli quemeh presidente. Quimachia telcenca huei. Ye ca non . . . axcan cochitih para cuantzin quiipiya tanahuitil¹⁵ de España. Uh hu. Según cualcui tanahuitil de España. Tel huei chihuac. Por eso machilia telcenca huei.*)¹⁶

Acting like a big shot really got under the skin of many Nahuas. To act big is to be self-assertive, which runs counter to the Nahua values of cooperation. Many Mestizos displayed their feeling of superiority by calling themselves "people of reason," and they guarded their class privileges relative to the Nahuas. One of the most obvious was the Mestizos' double standard, according to which a Mestizo man could have sex with a Nahua woman but a Nahua man could not have sex with a Mestizo woman. Nahuas criticized anyone, including and especially other Nahuas, who tries to dominate them. Referring to the Nahuas in the UCI who had put him on a hit list, Nacho explained that anyone who tries to dominate others by force can expect sooner or later to fall from their lofty position. In 2004, he brought up the end of the UCI as an example:

“They felt [big] because they had guns. They were big shots. They did what they wanted but the day came when [their enemies] also shot them. Their [enemies] who shot them were far more numerous.” (“*Momachiliaya porque quiipiyah tepoz. Tel hueihuei. Quichibuah ta yebhan quinequih pero ehco tonal, quinmacah no. Quinmacah mas canachi miaqueh.*”)¹⁷

Nacho was referring to the Antorcha Campesina that drove the UCI out of Huitzilán during the late fall of 1983 and established themselves in the *municipio* government in March 1984.

The next chapter will present another version of the rain gods’ rebellion that involved Petra, the Nahua woman met earlier who had a *quiyauhteotonalle* and was a rain god’s human companion. She organized the rain gods to remove the threat of too much water that appeared in the Totonac community of Ixtepec. In this story, the threat of being inundated by too much water is equated with too many Mestizos settling in the indigenous communities of the Sierra Norte.

“The Water in Ixtepec,” 1978

In 1978, Nacho Angel Hernández told the story of “The Water in Ixtepec,” which begins with the appearance of a spring in a Totonac community on top of a steep ridge that lacks easy access to water. An *achane* had brought the water to Ixtepec and provided relief to women who had the backbreaking task of descending the ridge and climbing back up using a tumpline to carry earthen jars filled with water for household use. The people of Ixtepec initially welcomed the water but then realized that it was a threat. They traveled to Huitzilán to summon the help of Petra, a rain god’s human companion, who organized other rain gods to strike the *achane* with bolts of lightning and drive it out of the community. The story becomes more complicated when the narrator tells how the devil or *ahmo cualli* changed (*mopatac*) first into the *achane* that brought the water and then into a Mestizo who wanted to settle in Huitzilán after the rain gods drove him out of Ixtepec.

This story expresses the narrator’s nativism, which is no surprise because the desire to expel at least some of the foreign invaders from indigenous territory is part of all of the insurgencies that have taken place in the Sierra Norte de Puebla (Chapter 2). Unlike participants in insurgencies during the colonial period, Nacho expressed no desire to rid his community of the Catholic religion. As noted earlier, he is the member of a strong Catholic family; his father served as president of the important Guadalupana committee.¹ When I met Nacho in 1968, he regularly led the rosary at the *posadas*, at the nine nights of prayer (*novenas*) following a funeral, at betrothal and wedding ceremonies and on many other occasions. He traveled with the priest to assist in the Mass in communities near Huitzilán. He sang in the church choir and taught catechism classes to children in the church in Huitzilán.

Nacho was known for his ability to straighten the hearts of those who suffered from envy. During the third period of fieldwork, we had many conversations about envy sickness (*nexicolocoliz*). From our conversations, I realized that



FIGURE 7.1. Nacho standing to the right of the organist.

the driving emotion of Nacho's nativism was his intuitive sense that the Mestizo settlers coveted or envied Nahua land and women. He brought up the case of Juan Aco, who coveted a plot of land owned by Nacho's friend Martín Degante, a Nahua from Huitzilán of very humble origins who became a priest [Martín is standing second to the left of the organist in photo]. Martín owned a piece of land surrounded by other land owned by Juan Aco, who pestered Martín to sell it to him. Juan spoke to Martín himself, and then sent his wife, son, and daughter to talk to the priest. Juan became angry when Martín refused to oblige him.² Nacho was reluctant to come right out and say that Juan Aco had a crooked heart. Juan Aco gave the appearance of having an envious intentionality, which Nacho defined as wanting "something someone else has."³

Nacho was one of the survivors of the UCI rebellion who had lost the most. His wife, Victoria Bonilla, along with her sisters and a brother, died in a massacre just as the rebellion was imploding. Nacho was lucky to survive this violent period in Huitzilán's history with the aid of his wife who, while she was alive, aggressively defended him against members of the UCI. That included her own brothers, who had put Nacho on a hit list. Victoria had the support of her father, who also had joined the UCI but who, nevertheless, defended his son-in-law

against the wishes of his own sons. When Nacho told his story in 1978, Nacho was thirty years old, Victoria was still alive, and they lived on the locality known as Talcez, midway between the neighborhoods of Calyecapan in the north and Ixtahuatalix in the south. Interested readers can find an account of Nacho's life during the rebellion and the circumstances under which Victoria perished in the massacre in *Remembering Victoria: A Tragic Nahuatl Love Story* (Taggart, 2007). What follows are the English and Nahuatl versions of Nacho's story of "The Water in Ixtepec" and an explanation of how and why he expressed his nativist sentiments.

1. The ancestors said the day came when water appeared in Ixtepec.
2. They said that a village was on the top of a ridge where there was no water.
3. They said that some water appeared at the foot of the church.
4. They said that the people liked the water; they liked it.
5. They saw it as a beautiful thing.
6. And that is how it was.
7. The water started to grow [and] grow.
8. It became a small spring, it was getting bigger, and the water was a beautiful thing.
9. They said the people liked it.
10. They drank the water as it continued to rise.
11. And they said there was more of it.
12. Afterward they warned children not to get near the water.
13. A child who got too close went to stay.
14. A chicken or a pig, which got too close, went to stay.
15. Then they said not even big people should get too close.
16. If one went to stay, the water would swallow one up.
17. A big animal was in the water.
18. Yes, they say those in Ixtepec wondered, they wondered, "What shall we do now that this animal is here?"
19. The water is really not a good thing."
20. The water began to ooze up the walls of the church.
21. They all saw the water ooze out even from the upper part of the walls.
22. The people wondered [and] wondered, "And now what shall we do?"
23. They decided, "Well, let's go over there to Huitzilán.
24. We know of someone who is one of the wise persons."
25. So then they decided to see a woman who lived right above here [Calyecapan].
26. They said to her, "We would like you to help us.

27. We want to remove this animal but we cannot do it ourselves.”
28. They had implored a priest to do something to remove it.
29. Because they believed an animal was in the water.
30. The water was not a good thing.
31. Perhaps the priest could do something [but he could not].
32. From there they decided to come see this person in Huitzilán, a woman.
33. “Well, we want you to help us remove [the animal in water],” they said to that woman, who perhaps was a wise person [*tac tamatqueh*].
34. And perhaps she was one of the lightning bolts [*ticoameh*].
35. They say that long ago there were those who knew things others did not know.
36. That old woman said to them, “Well of course, let’s go.
37. But,” she said, “we must look for twelve girls who are still young, and twelve boys, and twelve lads who are grown and twelve girls who are grown, and twelve old men and twelve old women.
38. Let’s go,” she said to them, “let us go strike the animal [and] coil ourselves around it to remove it so as not leave it there.”
39. So they really did look for those winds [*ehcameh*] and gathered all of them together.
40. Then they went to see the animal.
41. They say that they began with a big rainstorm and thunder.
42. They started to coil themselves around the big [animal] here in Ixtepec.
43. Some of the lightning bolts [*ticoameh*] went into the water and began striking the animal.
44. They struck [the animal].
45. They went to wait where it was smoking.
46. They said it was smoking where the animal ran through the water until it passed by Tetela.
47. Then some waited for it [in Tetela] while others coiled themselves around it in the water right there in Ixtepec.
48. They struck it [with bolts of lightning] and claps of thunder.
49. They say the lightning bolts went into the water until they chased the animal away.
50. Then some kept watch until the moment they saw the animal come out of the water, and then they struck it down.
51. So then they killed that animal.
52. But there are those who say that they did not kill it.

53. And one day, they say, no one knows for sure, but they say that one day one of the workers had gone down below to work in the hot country and had come upon a *coyot* [on the worker's way back from Ixtepec to Huitzilán].
54. They say that the *coyot* was headed down [from Tetela, through Huitzilán and toward Zapotitlán and Ixtepec] and asked the worker, "You, where have you been?"
55. The worker replied, "I went to work down below [to the north]."
56. And you," the worker asked the *coyot*, "where are you headed?"
57. "I am going, I am going," the *coyot* said, "to return home because I am from Ixtepec but they would not let me stay there."
58. They ran me out of there," he said to the worker.
59. "They did not want me there."
60. That is why I am traveling.
61. But now, even though they chased me away, those people of Ixtepec are mine.
62. That is why," he said to the worker, "they are mine."
63. They may have chased me away but I shall pull them when I want them, I shall pull them [down into the land of the dead]."
64. And that is how it was.
65. But while that happened, they say just recently, no one knows [for sure], something happened [in Huitzilán].
66. First of all, they say that a *coyot* came here.
67. He was well-dressed.
68. He asked permission of the *municipio* president.
69. He said to the president, "I have come to ask you the favor of giving me permission to live here."
70. The *municipio* president did not know the stranger.
71. The president did not ask this one, "Where are you from?"
72. Where is your home?"
73. They say that the president did not ask him anything.
74. Only that the president trusted him as if he were a countryman.
75. The president said to the stranger, "Well, of course."
76. Put your house wherever you want."
77. The stranger said to the president, "Well, over there is a place where I would like to put my house."
78. The president said to him, "Well, build your house wherever you would like."
79. That is when they say they were lost.
80. About two weeks, a month passed.

81. No one realized who had come.
82. That is when they saw water bubbling up.
83. But first the man came asking the president for permission.
84. Then afterwards, they say the president realized what had happened.
85. The president said, "Well, he came but I did not know who he was."
86. Yes.
87. He did not even know who had asked him for permission [to build his house in Huitzilán].
88. And there it ended.

1. *Quihtoa yetoya ce tonal cuando Ixtepec monextica non ce at.*
2. *Quihtoa que ompa talcuatipa[n]yetoqueh⁴ huan ahmo tei in at.*
3. *Entonces quihtoa monexti ce at itzinta de tiopan.*
4. *Quihtoa non pueblo cuelittaya, cuelitta in at.*
5. *Pos cualtzin quitztoc.*
6. *Huan ihcon.*
7. *Pehuac quit mozcaltia, mozcaltia nohon at.*
8. *Mochihua amel conet ihcon, mozcaltitoc, huan cualtzin at.*
9. *Quihtoa mohuelitta.*
10. *Tai non at huan ihcon cachi, cachi mozcaltitoc.*
11. *Huan ompa cachi ompa huei chihuac quit.*
12. *Zatepan quihtoa ahmo para motoquiaya quiera conemeh.*
13. *Yohui ce pilli mocahuati.*
14. *Yohue non piotzitzin o pitzomeh, pos mocahuati.*
15. *Entonces iuhqui⁵ mazqui hueihuei quihtoa ahmo motoquiaya.*
16. *Pos como ce [cequin] mocahuati quintoloa non at.*
17. *Ompa yetoya bueno huei ocuilin.*
18. *Ompa quemah nohon Ixtepec quihtoa pos monemilia, monemilia, "Pos quenin ticchihuazqueh huan axcan nin ocuilin, nin yetoc?"*
19. *Ahmo melaub cualli in at."*
20. *Pehuac hasta itech tiopanahco nochi ta[i]xicaya⁶ ica in at.*
21. *Nochi quitta [i]xicaya hasta ahco yetoya in at.*
22. *Monemilia, monemilia, "Huan yequintzin quen tichihuatih?"*
23. *Molia, "Pos tyohueh," quitmolía, "nepa Hutzilan," quitmolía.*
24. *"Ticmatoqueh yetoc ce, yetoqueh ompa aquin quimati."*
25. *Tonces quinemiliqueh quittato ce cibuat⁷, nican ahco yetoya.*
26. *Quitquilia, "Axcan, tehhan ticnequiah titechpalehuiti," quitquilia.*

27. "Ticnequih tiquixtih nin oculin huan ahmo tihuelih."
28. Bueno huan primero quit ipa quitahtautiquih⁸ quit ce sarcedote ma quichihua para ma calaquiza.
29. Porque quitmolía in oculin actoc⁹.
30. Ahmo melaub at cualli.
31. Bueno tac non sarcedote quichihuac ya.
32. Tonses de ompa nohon motanemilitizqueh huan quittaco nohon nican cayot de nin Huitzilán, ce cihuat.
33. Quilia, "Pos ta tehhan ticnequiyah titechpalebuiti ma tiquixtican," telia nohon cihuat, tac tamatqueh¹⁰ [tamatqui] no.
34. Huan tac yebha ma ya ticoameh.
35. Quihtoa huehcauh quimatia de nohon.
36. Entonces quitelia nohon lamatzin, "Pos que ye ahmo, tyazqueh.
37. Pero xiquintemocan," quilia, "mahtactiomeh ichpocameh den conemeh oc, huan mahtactiomeh telpocameh, huan mahtactiomeh," quitelia, "den tel-poch mahciqueh huan mahtactiomeh ichpochmeh mahciqueh, huan mahtactiomeh huehuehtqueh," quitelia, "huan mahtactiomeh lamatzitzin.
38. Tyazqueh," quitquilia, "timaqueh tyazqueh para cuando ticueicuzqueh [tiquihcuzqueh],"¹¹ quitelia, "tiquixtitih," quitelia, "ahmo ticahuazqueh."
39. Tons melaub quintemoqueh nohon ebecameh huan quimaxitiqueh¹² [quim[a]ahcitiqueh].
40. Tons yahqueh quittatoh ya.
41. Quihtoa pehuac ce huei quiyahuit huan cequin tatatzinilot¹³.
42. Peuqueh nican Ixtepec huei cuique [quihcuiqueh]¹⁴.
43. Ta calaqueh cequin ompa ca in ticoameh peuqueh quimacah.
44. Quimacah.
45. Hasta tonses cequin quit hasta ne cualchatoh [hualchiyatoh]¹⁵ ne popocaya.
46. Quilia, popocaya non campa ompa tzicuintoc de ne huallactoc tac hasta Tetela hualpanotoc, quihtoa, non at.
47. Tonces ompa quichyatoh mientras cequin quihcuiqueh hasta mero Ixtepec campa yetoc in at.
48. Ihcon quimacac huan quitatatzinabuia.
49. Calaqueh quit acalibtic hasta quitocaqueh hasta ompa ne quizato quihtoa.
50. Entonces cequin ompa quipihpixtoqueh cuando hora ompa quittaqueh quizaco huan ompa quimacaqueh.
51. Entonces ompa quimictiqueh non oculin.
52. Huan de ompa nohon cequin quihtoa ahmo quimictiqueh.

53. *Huan ce tonal, quihtoa ahmo ce ca quimati cox melauh, pero quihtoa que ce tonal quinamico nepa tani ce tetequitiliqueh yabcah para tani huan quinamic ce coyot.*
54. *Quit ompa ne temohua ne coyot huan quitquilia non coyot, quitabtoltilia nohon, "Teh," quiliqueh, "can tyahca?"*
55. *Telia non tequitique, "Neh nyahca nitequitito para tani.*
56. *Huan tehba," quitquilia, "can tyo?"*
57. *"Neh nyo, neh nyo," quitelia, "nimoquepa ne nochan," quitquilia, "porque niyetoya Ixtepec," quitquilia, "pero ahmo nechcauh ompa niyeto.*
58. *Ompa," quitelia, "nechtocaqueh," quitelia.*
59. *"Ahmo quinequi ma ompa niyeto.*
60. *Ca non," quitelia, "neh nyo.*
61. *Pero axcan," quitelia, "ahmo por non nechtocha, nen ixtepecos nochi noaxcabuan.*
62. *Que non," quitelia, "noaxcabuan.*
63. *Mas nechtocha," quitelia, "pero cuac nicnequi niquintilanaz, niquintilanaz."*
64. *Huan ihcon nohon.*
65. *Huan pero chi ca¹⁶ nohon panoc, quihtoa yequin nican, pos ahmo quimatia ton chiuhqueh.*
66. *Primero quihtoa nican hualla ce coyot.*
67. *Bueno, cualli taquentoc.*
68. *Ihuan presidente municipal quitabtanicico permiso.*
69. *Quitquilia, "Neh nibualla," quitquilia, "xa xicchibua favor ma nimo-chanti nican."*
70. *Pos ahmo quixmatic.*
71. *Ahmo quitabtolti, "Can ticayot?" nin . . .*
72. *"Tehba ca mochan?"*
73. *Quit niyoh¹⁷ tei quitabtolti.*
74. *Sino que yeh ta cuatamatic¹⁸ [cuaquimatic] como no yazqui ichancauh¹⁹.*
75. *Quitquilia, "Pos que ye ahmo.*
76. *Can ticuellita," quitquilia, "xiquetza mochan."*
77. *Quitquilia, "Pos ompocuin nicueliztoc," quitquilia, "nicnequi nimochantiz."*
78. *Quitquilia, "Pos xiquetza," quitquilia, "ta ticueliztoc, xicchibua mochan."*
79. *Tonse quit quipoloqueh.*
80. *Quichibua como caxtol tonal, ce mezti.*
81. *Niyoh momaca cuenta aconi huallaca.*
82. *Tonces cuac quittac quit meya²⁰ in at.*
83. *Pero primero quitabtanicico permiso.*

84. *Tonse zatepan quit momac cuenta nohon presidente.*
 85. *Quitelia, "Pos yeh nohon huallaca," quitelia, "pos ahmo nicmati aconi."*
 86. *Quemah.*
 87. *Niyoh quimati aconi non quitahtanilico permiso.*
 88. *Huan ompa tamic.*²¹

Interpretation

Nacho's story has three episodes: (1) the appearance of the water in Ixtepec and the alarmed response; (2) the recruitment of the rain gods to get rid of the *achane* that is source of the water; (3) chasing the *achane* to Tetela and the appearance of the devil as a *coyot* in Huitzilán. Nacho described numerous parallels between the way the people of Ixtepec first responded to the water and the way the people of Huitzilán greeted the first Mestizo settlers. The people of Ixtepec, a community on the top of a ridge, welcomed the water because they did not have an easily accessible source of water in their community. They saw the water as "a beautiful thing" (line 5) because it saved them hours of hard work hauling water from a source below the top of the ridge. They changed their minds when they realized that the water posed a threat to people, animals, and the church building itself. The initial positive response to the appearance of water in Ixtepec is like the Nahuas welcoming the first Mestizo who settled in Huitzilán. One elderly Nahua woman told me that the Mestizos created jobs and brought medicine, making life easier at first. However, by the time I began my fieldwork in 1968, many other Nahuas were critical of the behavior of some Mestizo settlers, particularly from Tetela, just as the Totonacs became critical of the water bubbling out of the ground in Ixtepec.

Nacho made his devotion to the Church a conspicuous part of his story. He told how the water posed a threat to the structure of the church building itself, first appearing at the base (line 3) and then oozing out of the upper walls (lines 20–23). He told how the people of Ixtepec implored the priest to do something about the water (lines 28, 31). Despite his devotion to the Church, however, Nacho turned his story into an affirmation of his belief in the efficacy of rain gods. Nacho had expressed his own admiration for the rain gods when he remarked on their beauty when dressed in the costume of San Miguel dancers.²² The priest could not do anything about the threat, so the Totonacs decided to appeal to a rain god's human companion in Huitzilán to get rid of the *achane* that brought the water to Ixtepec. Nacho and his brothers identified the rain god's human companion as Petra, who lived on a ridge just above Calyecapan

(line 25). It might just be a coincidence, but there are parallels between the way the Totonacs of Ixtepec went to Huitzilán asking Petra for help and Luis VINO and Vicente Peralta's trip to Pahuata to ask for the help of the UCI organizer, Felipe Reyes Herrera. Luis VINO and Vicente Peralta needed his help to form a group that would protect them from Pedro Manzano.

Nacho told how some rain gods chased the *achane* through the water from Ixtepec all the way to Tetela de Ocampo, where other rain gods were waiting to strike it down (lines 46–50). Tetela de Ocampo is where the Mestizos, Juan N. Mendez and Isidro Grimaldo, who had acquired a great deal of land in Huitzilán, resided. It was also the place of origin of Antonio Aco, whom Gabriel Barrios sent to administer the lands of Isidro Grimaldo's widow, Doña Elena.

Nacho expressed nativism telling how the *achane* was the animal companion (*tonal*) of a *coyot* as *abmo cualli* (devil) whom the worker from Huitzilán encountered in his return from the hot country. Their encounter took place as the worker was climbing up from the Zempoala River toward the ridge above Clayecapan. The *coyot* was coming from Tetela and descending the same ridge, headed toward the Zempoala River with the aim of returning to Ixtepec.²³ The *coyot* is the *abmo cualli* or devil who says to the worker: "They may have chased me away [from Ixtepec] but I shall pull them down [into the land of the dead] when I want them" (line 63). Later, the *abmo cualli* as *coyot* appeared in Huitzilán and asked the president for permission to settle in his community (lines 65–69). Nacho blames the president for neglecting to ask the *coyot* about his origins (lines 70–72). The president gave the *coyot* permission to build his house wherever he desired (line 78), and soon water began to bubble out of the ground (lines 79–81). The Nahua community was lost (line 79).

The *Cantares Mexicanos*

This and other stories of the rain gods' rebellion express sentiments of nativism that are like those that appeared in the *Cantares Mexicanos* in the sixteenth century (Bierhorst 1985). In the rain gods' stories, bolts of lightning strike down and kill or try to kill the *achane*, who are the animal companions of bad *municipio* presidents and unwanted settlers. In the *Cantares*, souls of dead warriors descend as birds, raining from paradise to earth with the aim of driving out the Spaniards. Both fail in their ultimate purpose. They are fantasies of revenge by narrators and singers who are members of societies and cultures living in a "context of subordination" (Scott 1977a: 12). The narrators and singers shrouded their messages in obscure symbolism that outsiders find challenging to understand

(Bierhorst 1985). Nacho Angel Hernández, like de la Co Ayance, dissimulated his critique of Mestizos who settled in the Sierra Norte by placing the action of the story in a Totonac community north of Huitzilán. Dissimulation, however, did not mean that all Mestizos were fooled. Since 1968, more and more Nahuá children have attended school with Mestizo children, some of whom picked up Nahuá beliefs and heard Nahuá stories. Some Mestizos I knew suspected that the Nahuás' deference was "inauthentic" (Scott 1985: 286). They expressed their suspicions by remarking that Nahuás look like good people but they are not. Some feared a Nahuá rebellion, and, when I returned after the UCI uprising had ended, they described "acts of savagery" that confirmed their worst suspicions. One told me that living under the reign of the Nahuá-led UCI in Huitzilán was far worse than living under any other regime.

There are notable differences between Nacho's nativism and that of the singers of the *Cantares Mexicanos* and the Nahuás who resisted the friars during the early colonial period. The Nahuás of the early colonial period lamented their political subjugation, resisted the religion of the friars, and continued to promote their ancient religion (Stresser-Péan 2012: 63–79). Following Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, Nahuás faced new challenges with the migration of a new wave of Mestizos into their territory. Nahuás eventually became *talticpac cristianos* (Christians from earth), showed respect to Christian gods, and expressed their criticisms of Mestizos as they allied themselves with the Church (Chapter 3).

Selective Nativism

Nacho, moreover, was selective in his nativism, targeting only some individuals whose families had come from Tetela de Ocampo and who had violated "professed values" (Scott 1985: 336) that Nahuás and Mestizos considered to be important. Among those professed values are the ideals of respect expressed when celebrating a new relationship of ritual kinship. Nahuás in the UCI had grudges against individuals who violated those values and carried out some vendettas against them, but they showed no sign of attempting to eradicate all Mestizos from Huitzilán. On the contrary, Nahuás in the UCI and Mestizos became implicated with each other to avenge their enemies, who were as likely to come from the same ethnic group as from across ethnic lines. Nahuá nativism was mitigated by biological kinship and ritual kinship, the experience in specific relationships that crossed ethnic lines, and the way Nahuás thought of descent and ethnicity.

I have already described the ritual kinship ties that Nahuas had established with Mestizos. An example of biological kinship across ethnic lines is Nacho's deceased wife, Victoria who was the daughter of Juan Bonilla Pereañez, the son of Ponciano Bonilla, and María Pereañez, a Nahua woman. Mestizos referred to Juan as Juan Pereañez rather than Juan Bonilla to stress his Nahua heritage and to discount his Mestizo one. In an ethnically stratified community like Huitzilán, the effect was to create resentment; it is no coincidence that Juan Pereañez became one of the leaders in the UCI and was the first to fall when the Antorcha Campesina, with the support of the army, drove the rebels out of Huitzilán. Nevertheless, one of Ponciano's sons, a Mestizo, expressed sorrow that his brother, Juan Pereañez, and several of Juan's children had died in violence that culminated in a massacre at the end of the UCI rebellion.

The way Nahuas reckon descent and ethnicity is also important for understanding their selective nativism. Stressing biological descent as a basis of kinship can, under the right circumstances feed into a racist form of nativism. However, Nahuas define their kinship connection to another person with a combination of biological ties to their ancestors as well as ties created through human activity or work (*tequit*).²⁴ For example, Nacho described his kinship connection with Luis Vino by mentioning genealogical origin as well as human activity. He began by stressing that their ancestors came from the same locality in Huitzilán: “[Luis] was our relative. From where I came, he was from where my grandmother came, from where my father came. We were from one stalk.” (“*Topareinte catca. Campa neh nibualliuuh, yeh campa nobuianan catca hualliuuh, notabt catca campa hualliuuh. Ce tactozn ticen catca.*”)²⁵ Nacho used the term *tactzon*, which is a combination of *tac-ti*, or torso, and *tzon-ti*, or head of hair (Karttunen 1992: 256, 318). Nacho defined *tactzon* as the stalk of a plant because he, like the ancient as well as contemporary Nahuas (López Austin 1988 I: 162; see Sandstrom 1991), identified the human body with the corn plant. Regarding the ancient Nahuas, López Austin (1988 I:162) notes that the word *tonacayo* (the whole of our flesh) “is applied to the fruits of the earth, especially to the most important one, corn, thus forming a metaphoric tie between man's corporeal being and the food to which he owed his existence.”

At first glance, it might appear that Nacho invoked the image of a family tree when talking about his kinship ties with Luis Vino. However, his image of the stalk alludes to some of the ways he and other Nahuas think about kinship as something created by work as well as by blood. When talking about Luis Vino, Nacho was alluding to the equation between planting and procreation, which runs through many of his stories. Planting is a form of work, or *tequit*,

which is the word Nahuas use for many forms of human activity. The equation between planting corn and procreation also appeared in the ancient myth of Tamoanchan in which Xochiquetzal gave birth to Cinteotl, the god of corn, after picking the flower from the tree in Tamoanchan, an act that probably referred to sex (Graulich 1997: 56; Quiñones Keber 1995: 29, 183). The ancient Nahuas described conception with the phrase "The infant (seed) is seated in the womb" (*Ibctic motlalia in piltzinti*), which conveys an image very similar to the contemporary practice of planting corn (*tzint[li]*) by inserting kernels in the moist feminine earth (López Austin 1988 I: 297).

Nahuas have had time to create ties by working with Mestizo settlers. Ties between ethnic groups had become "highly segmental, functionally specific and instrumental" and "circumscribed by well-defined roles," to borrow from Benjamin N. Colby and Pierre L. van den Berghe (1969: 157), who carried out a study of an ethnically stratified community in Guatemala. Nahuas in Huitzilán made a point of distinguishing between good and bad work relationships they have had with Mestizos. Aurelio Aco and his wife, Mencha, had good relations with Nahuas in Huitzilán. Vicente Peralta, one of the leaders of the UCI, had worked for Aurelio and his wife and had eaten in Mencha's kitchen. Vicente had a warm relationship with Aurelio and Mencha's children; their son, Alonso, went to school with Vicente's brother, Cirilo. Such ties are perhaps the reason that Vicente Peralta, at a very tense moment in the rebellion, told Mencha that the UCI would not harm her children.

Aurelio reported that he got into trouble because he transported the wounded from Huitzilán to the hospital in Zacapoaxtla, regardless of their political affiliation. He charged each wounded person 100 pesos to make the fifty-kilometer trip. The Nahuas in the UCI were unhappy that Aurelio consented to take their enemies to Zacapoaxtla and vice versa. He received anonymous notes under his door threatening harm to him and his family if he continued the practice. Unable to appease both sides, he decided to leave the community and live in Puebla for a period of four years during the UCI rebellion. However, unlike some of his relatives, he later returned to Huitzilán and resumed his business as a store owner and coffee exporter.

In sum, by the time the UCI rebellion broke out in Huitzilán in late 1977, the Nahuas' nativism had become diluted and was focused on only a few Mestizos who had violated commonly held values. About a year later, the violence reached a new level after Pedro Manzano allegedly shot and killed the UCI activist, Felipe Reyes Herrera, and Juan Aco allegedly orchestrated the burning of the UCI's cornfield on Talcuaco. However, much of the violence was less the



FIGURE 7.2. Men planting with a dibble or *coa*.

result of ethnic hatred than a consequence of Nahuas in the UCI fearing that those who did not join them in their rebellion were plotting against them. I have already described how some Nahuas in the UCI put Nacho on a hit list because he did not join in the land invasion and they feared he would betray them. Mestizos were also split among themselves; Juana Gutierrez did not leave a will and her descendants were also bitterly divided among themselves. Some saw the UCI as providing them with the opportunity to get back at Juan Aco, the younger brother of Antonio Aco, for claiming Talcuaco as his property. Moreover, there were serious disputes within the extended family of Antonio Aco that had originated before the appearance of the UCI in Huitzilán. When I returned to Huitzilán for the third period of fieldwork, a Mestiza told me her uncle had given arms and ammunition to the UCI in the hope that they would carry out vendettas against his cousins. The comparatively rare Nahua attacks on Mestizos usually took place when grudges harbored by the members of the two ethnic groups focused on the same individual.

Nevertheless, the power asymmetry between wealthy and impoverished Nahuas was real. A wealthy Mestizo had a great deal of power over the Nahuas who worked on their estates, but the asymmetry of power could produce what appeared on the surface to be remarkable contradictions. The next chapter will feature a humble Nahua man's story of what it means to be at the whims of a powerful Mestizo *patrón* (employer). The story expresses the narrator's contradictory feelings of wishing to be a powerful and wealthy Mestizo *patrón* while also criticizing the patron-client relationship.

“A Humble Man’s Predicament,” 1978

Antonio Veracruz was one of the most talented storytellers in Huitzilán, and his tale of “A Humble Man’s Predicament” describes the predicament of a protagonist that fits the Mestizos’ idea of the Nahuas as the “humble people” or *gente humilde*. His protagonist works for a powerful and mercurial *patrón* who is like Rogelio Carvallo, one of the wealthiest men in Huitzilán at the time Antonio Veracruz told his story in 1978. Rogelio Carvallo owned a great deal of land and could be very generous lending money, with only a verbal agreement, to bank-roll projects in many parts of the southern Sierra Norte. He also lent money to Nacho to start a small store in Huitzilán after his marriage to Victoria.

Rogelio was known to have a temper and mistreat some of his workers. He reputedly provided the money to get Pedro Manzano out of jail, after Pedro had killed José Pescado and his mother, because Rogelio needed an enforcer. He liked to gamble and, during the first period of fieldwork (1968–1975), he wagered that his powerful mare could beat the swift horse of another man from Zapotitlán. The two staged a race in Zapotitlán, where streets were more level than those of Huitzilán, and Rogelio’s mare won by several lengths. A few years later, in the spring of 1978, Rogelio had a fierce argument with his nephew over the terms of their oral agreement regarding the sale of land. Their argument grew heated, and the two drew their pistols and fired, killing each other in front of Rogelio’s stately house near Calyecapan. Nahuas and Mestizos from every corner of Huitzilán paid their respects to Rogelio in the evening following the gunfight, and attended his funeral a few days later in the church in the center of town. Among the mourners were the UCI, led by Felipe Reyes Herrera, who crowded into the church along with everyone else for the funeral Mass. This was a tense moment in Huitzilán that sparked speculation on whether or not violence would erupt between the UCI and their enemies. It did not. The priest finished the Mass, the UCI joined in the funeral procession that passed by the

Ixtahuatalix *ejido* on the way to the cemetery at the southern end of town, and they witnessed the burial of a very powerful man.

Antonio Veracruz told me his story a few months before the funeral. He was sixty-six at the time, living on the Ixtahuatalix *ejido* with Beatriz Pérez and her married son, daughter-in-law, and unmarried younger children. Antonio planted his corn on a small plot he owned and on another one he rented, both in the locality of Tecuanteco. He frequently worked as a wage laborer in the neighboring community of Zapotitlán.

Antonio's protagonist is a humble man, perhaps like himself, who works for a big *patrón* who has the power of life and death over his workers. The *patrón* is angry because he is in the middle of a drought and he needs rain to water the crops on his land. He assembles his workers and asks if anyone knows when it will rain. The workers hear a humble man in the back say that rain is not far away. The workers present him to the *patrón*, who issues a life-and-death challenge: If it rains in four days, he will give him half of his property and, if not, he will go to the humble man's house and put five bullets into him.

The reader might recognize the similarities between Antonio Veracruz's story and the one Juan Hernández told about the rain god who also faced pressure to reveal when it would rain to end a drought. Juan's protagonist was a rain god's human companion who shared a *quiyauhteotonalle*, while the one in Antonio Veracruz's story is an ordinary Nahua worker who has little recourse but to accept the wager imposed by his powerful *patrón*. The humble man escapes from his predicament with the aid of the rain gods, who bring an end to the drought. Antonio's story is, among other things, a Nahua's fantasy of becoming a wealthy and powerful *patron*, perhaps like Rogelio Carvallo.

To put Antonio's story into a broader perspective, I shall compare how he describes the predicament of his protagonist with the ways that narrators in the more class-egalitarian community of Santiago Yaonáhuac, also in the southern Sierra Norte, described that of their protagonists in similar stories. Only one Mestizo family resided in Yaonáhuac when I carried out fieldwork in that community in the fall of 1977. A man from that family worked as the *municipio* secretary, and his knowledge of local laws gave him a measure of authority. However, there was no one in Yaonáhuac who had the wealth and power of Rogelio Carvallo, Antonio Aco, and Ponciano Bonilla in Huitzilán.

I shall draw on the comparison between the two communities to consider how ethnic hierarchy in Huitzilán appears to have contributed to Antonio Veracruz's false consciousness, based on his identification with his aggressor. In 1978,

a story from Huitzilán about a man who wins a bet with his *patrón* and acquires half the rich man's property seemed to be a delusional fantasy. However, what gives me pause in reaching this conclusion is Antonio's subtle sense of humor and his satirical characterization of the powerful Mestizo *patrón* who looks so much like Rogelio Carvallo. Moreover, Antonio Veracruz was among the many narrators who also told the trickster tale of "Rabbit and Coyote," which is the Nahuatl version of Brer Rabbit and a thinly veiled criticism of class and ethnic hierarchy. I shall return to Antonio's complicated social consciousness following the English translation and the Nahuatl original versions of Antonio Veracruz's story.

1. They say there was a man who had workers.
2. That is how he was working.
3. He was working.
4. He had a lot of workers.
5. And he was working on a big project.
6. And one afternoon he thought about how hot it was.
7. So he gathered his workers and asked them, "Well now, with all of these workers here, is there anyone who knows?"
8. Can any of you tell me when it will rain?
9. Because right now we are working [and] working.
10. But we cannot do anything and we shall not have a crop because it is so hot.
11. And it does not look like it is going to rain.
12. And everything is very dry."
13. "Well," someone told him, "we do not know.
14. We are working.
15. Give us work, boss.
16. We are working but we do not know.
17. Only God knows."
18. "It is very, very urgent that you remember who knows [when it will rain]," insisted the patron.
19. And a little man in the back spoke.
20. He appeared to be ill.
21. He looked like a fool.
22. And he said, "Rain is not far away.
23. One sees the sun shining; the sun is hot.
24. But tomorrow or the next day there will be clouds.
25. There will be rain.

26. Rain will come in two, three days.
27. It will be here."
28. His companions said, "Well now boss, there is one here who was heard [saying something about the rain].
29. He says it will not be long before it rains."
30. "Who said that?
31. Who knows [when it will rain]?"
32. "Here he is."
33. They made that man, who was hiding in the back, come forward.
34. He was the one who looked like a fool.
35. He looked ill.
36. The boss asked him, "Is it true that you know when it is going to rain?
37. Is [the rain] not far off?"
38. "Well, I do not know.
39. But one always says it will start to cloud up tomorrow or the next day [and] then it will rain.
40. Right now it is hot, but when it clouds up, no one knows for sure if the rain comes or not.
41. But rain, it is not far away."
42. This is what the boss said in reply.
43. "So then, if it really does rain, I shall wait and hold my patience for three days, even four days.
44. In three days if it rains, it rains.
45. If it does not rain in three days, but if it rains within four days, then fine.
46. And if not, if it does not rain, I want you to know that I shall go to your house and shoot five bullets into you.
47. And if it does rain, then all these things I have, everything—I have houses, I have pack animals, I have crops, I have whatever, beasts of burden, I have land—half of it will be yours."
48. The humble man heard him, and the other workers heard him.
49. "As for witnesses," the boss said, "I say in front of all of you that half of what I have will be his if it rains in three or four days."
50. And if not, all of you are hearing that I shall shoot him in his own house."
51. So then that man thought, he went home and thought about whether or not it would rain.
52. The next morning he saw that it was very clear.
53. It was another beautiful day.
54. It was a sunny day.

55. The next day was the same.
56. It was clear in the morning.
57. The sun was hot.
58. It was the same sun.
59. For two days.
60. For three days.
61. Again he saw it was a beautiful day.
62. It was clear.
63. The sun was hot.
64. It did not look as if it would rain.
65. There were no clouds.
66. "Well," he thought to himself, "now what am I going to do?"
67. It has been three days now.
68. And the agreement is for [it to rain] now or tomorrow.
69. If it does not rain, my boss will come and shoot me."
70. It had been three days.
71. It would be four days the next morning.
72. It was morning.
73. He got up in the morning and said to his wife, "Get up now.
74. Make my tortillas.
75. I know I have to go now or just wait for my boss.
76. But I am not going to wait for him because the agreement is he will shoot me."
77. His wife asked, "But why will he shoot you?"
78. He is your boss!"
79. "No matter, but we know he is going to shoot me.
80. Just for what I said.
81. And it does not look like it is going to rain.
82. Make my tortillas, and I am going."
83. So then she gave him his tortillas early that morning, and early, early he went out of the house and left.
84. He left in a hurry.
85. He did not know where he was going.
86. He just went.
87. He just picked a road.
88. He did not know where he was going.
89. So then he went on, he went on, he went on until he came to a gully in a forest.

90. He came upon a sparrow hawk.
91. The sparrow hawk called out to him, "José! José! José!"
92. "What 'José'!?"
93. That is not me.
94. You do not know where I am going.
95. Do not screech at me anymore.
96. Do not call out to me, and if you do, I shall throw a rock at you."
97. The sparrow hawk continued; "José, José, what makes you sad?"
98. Where are you going?"
99. "I know where I am going," he said to the sparrow hawk.
100. But the humble man did not know.
101. "No," the sparrow hawk said, "and I know very well where you are going."
102. "Not true," the humble man said to the sparrow hawk.
103. "How would you know?"
104. If you know, tell me and if not, I shall hit you with a rock."
105. "Well you," the sparrow hawk said, "are going because of this worry you carry with you.
106. But do not worry about where you are going.
107. You are going because you think your boss is going to shoot you because it is not going to rain.
108. But he is not going to shoot you," the sparrow hawk said.
109. "Right now," the bird said to him, "you will arrive at a place where you will also look for water.
110. You are just about there," the sparrow hawk said.
111. "Really?" the man asked.
112. "It is true."
113. "Well then, tell me," the humble man said to the sparrow hawk, "where [is this place]."
114. "That hill over there, just go there right away.
115. Make a turn, and there will be a big rock.
116. And just turn your head.
117. From there you will take [another] road.
118. Go on it.
119. You will see a big house in the distance.
120. You will arrive there.
121. And that is where the water is.
122. And that is where the person, whom you are looking for, will be.
123. Just go there.

124. Just go.
125. He found that big standing rock.
126. He just turned around.
127. He was going down another good road.
128. He went on down that road and saw a house, but it was a big house.
129. "Good," he thought to himself, "well, there it is.
130. Now I am going to see if it is true."
131. He went on.
132. He went on.
133. And he arrived to find a woman grinding on the *metate* [grinding stone].
134. She was alone.
135. She was just grinding on the *metate*.
136. He went over to greet her.
137. "Oh, my son," she said, "why did you come here?
138. What brought you here?"
139. None of my children from earth comes here.
140. How amazing that you, my child, have come here!"
141. "Well, I have come," he said to her, "because I am worried.
142. The reason I have come is because the day has arrived when my boss is going to shoot me.
143. I am worried because it does not look as if it is going to rain."
144. "Oh," she replied, "but they will not shoot you for that reason."
145. She said to him, "Now sit down and wait for my brothers because they are not here.
146. They went visiting but they will return soon.
147. You need to talk to them."
148. Good, he took a seat.
149. He sat down for a while until those boys came home.
150. They were all naked.
151. They were not wearing any clothes.
152. Four of them came.
153. But they were all wet with their sweat.
154. They were tired out.
155. And as soon as they arrived, the man stood up.
156. Right away they went over and greeted him.
157. They said, "How is it possible you have come here!
158. We do not see any Christians from earth paying us a visit.

159. How amazing that you have come!"
160. "Well, I have come because I spoke with my boss, we spoke where we were working.
161. And he wanted to know when it was going to rain.
162. It was very hot, everything was dried out, and we could not work.
163. I have come to you because my boss wants to shoot me after asking us when it is going to rain.
164. None of my companions told him.
165. We do not know when it will rain.
166. It might rain tomorrow or it might rain the next day.
167. But we do not know.
168. And I was standing in the rear.
169. I just said when it will rain.
170. 'Rain is not far away just because today we see a beautiful sunny day—it is beautifully clear—but tomorrow or the next day will be cloudy.
171. The rain will come.
172. It is not far away.'
173. That is what I said.
174. Afterwards, my companions handed me over to my boss as someone who knows when it will rain.
175. Then my boss made a wager with me that there really will be rain in three or four days.
176. If it rains within this period, then he is going to love me.
177. And if not, he is going to kill me."
178. "Uh hu," they said.
179. "But they will not kill you," one of them said to him, "let it rain right away if he wants it to rain.
180. He did not want it to rain before because he got angry if he saw that it rained.
181. If it rained, he was not able to work.
182. He wanted it to be sunny so he could work.
183. Now that it is sunny, let him work.
184. Why can't he work?
185. He does not like the rain.
186. He gets angry and swears at the rain.
187. But do not worry.
188. It is going to rain now.

189. Do not worry.
190. Go right now.
191. Take this cloak.
192. Go outside and climb up on top of the house.
193. Go right away, right away.”
194. And right away he went.
195. “We just have to take a bath.”
196. And right away he went.
197. They gave him a cloak, and he came home.
198. And he saw them sprinkling themselves with the water.
199. But the water was pulling him.
200. But he did not see where water there was taking him.
201. The water was pulling him.
202. He went into the water.
203. And that man came home.
204. He did not even know how he came home.
205. He was gone for a long time.
206. But he came back.
207. He did not know when he knew he was home.
208. And it rained, it began as just a little sprinkle on the house.
209. There was wind.
210. And a lot of hail fell.
211. But it was a big beautiful rainstorm.
212. It was within four days.
213. Now the man was inside his house.
214. As for what he did, he liked the rain.
215. Now that it was raining, the next day would make five days, [and] the boss ordered the workers back to work.
216. They worked.
217. The boss sent for him.
218. His boss did not cut [shoot] him.
219. Instead, the boss ordered the workers to find flowers and adorn all of the hacienda owner’s house.
220. And all along the road.
221. They put an arc of flowers all the way to the houses of the workers.
222. They also adorned their houses.
223. And in the morning they butchered cattle, sheep, and pigs.

224. They prepared a big feast and held a dance.
225. And they went to bring that man.
226. They went to bring him and they arrived at the hacienda owner's house.
227. They placed him where they had adorned an altar as if he were a saint.
228. They adorned everything.
229. And they went to get him in the evening.
230. They sent for all of the workers and musicians and for some rockets.
231. They went to bring him.
232. They went to bring him and seat him [at a table].
233. They went to get him and carry him in their arms as if he were God.
234. They came bearing him in their arms.
235. Together with his wife.
236. They brought all of them.
237. They came to the hacienda owner's house.
238. There they joked with him and they placed him on the altar.
239. And they also placed his wife there and they lined up all of their children on the ground.
240. Well then, they brought the man and his wife and children, and the hacienda owner shot off rockets outside the house, and the musicians played music inside the house, and the guests danced.
241. It was as if he were a god.
242. They danced.
243. Afterward they lowered the man from the altar and they also danced with him.
244. They danced with him beautifully, beautifully as if he were our hacienda owner.
245. From there, yes.
246. They put him into a beautiful chair and sat him at a beautiful table.
247. And the humble man, his wife and family started eating with the boss and all of the workers.
248. They ate the meat with gusto.
249. From there, yes.
250. The boss announced, "Now, yes, just as we spoke with this man in front of you yesterday and the day before, now, in front of you, know that everything will be divided evenly.
251. Half of the land belongs to me, and half belongs to him together with the house and half of the animals.

252. The store of corn, half of it is his.
253. Now in front of all of you, he will take what we divide, and we shall put it in writing.
254. And no one will be upset that half belongs to him.”
255. So then, that is what they did.
256. From there, yes.
257. They stayed [at the hacienda owner’s house] and began dancing.
258. There was a dance.
259. They danced all day and all night.
260. They made a fiesta.
261. The fiesta ended, and there that man stayed.
262. The hacienda owner gave him that house, some of which belonged to him and some to the hacienda owner.
263. From there. Yes.
264. They gave him all of the animals.
265. They gave him all of the land that belonged to him.
266. And he stayed there and afterwards he began to work the animals and the land.
267. Then he began to be a big hacienda owner.
268. He became like a boss.
269. He was also a hacienda owner.
270. He began doing great work.
271. And that is how it was.
272. It was a good thing.

1. *Pues quibtoa nihon tacat quinpiya taquehualmeh.*
2. *Tequititoc ihcon.*
3. *Tequititoc.*
4. *Miac taquehual quinpixtoc.*
5. *Huan quichiutoc huei tequit.*
6. *Huan ce tonal tiotaquito quinemili por tel tatotonia.*
7. *Entonces quintahtolti taquehualmeh den quinentili huan quinilia, “Pos axcan ten nihin yetoqueh taquehualmeh, ahmo ce me nanquimati?”*
8. *Ahmo nechmaca razon quemanyan quiyahuiz?*
9. *Porque yequintzin titequititoqueh, tequititoqueh.*
10. *Pero ahmo hueli tei ticchihuah huan ahmo hueli tehza mochihua tatoc porque totonic telcenca.*
11. *Huan ahmo neciz cox quiyahuiz.*

12. *Huan ta tel huayic ya.*"
13. "Bueno," *telia occequin*, "ahmo ticmatih tehhan.
14. *Titequititoqueh.*
15. *Techmaca in tequit patron.*
16. *Titequititoqueh pero tehhan ahmo ticmatih.*
17. *Solo Dios quimati.*"
18. "De repente cimi, cimi nan talnamictoqueh [talnamiquiliztoqueh] cualli acza quimatoc."
19. *Huan quitelia tacuitapan ce tacatzin.*
20. *Moittaya yazqui cococoxque.*
21. *Que neztoc tonto motta.*
22. *Huan yeh quihtoa*, "Quiyahuit ahmo huebca yetoc.
23. *Ce quitta tonatoc; tatotonia.*
24. *Pero mozta o huipta motalilia mixti.*
25. *Ompon yetoc quiyahuit.*
26. *Quiyahuit ome, eyi tonal.*
27. *Ompon yetoc.*"
28. *Bueno quihtoqueh nihon compañeros*, "Pos axcan patron, nican ce caquiztic.
29. *Quihtoa que ahmo huebcahua quiyahuiz.*"
30. "A ver aconi nihon quihtoa?"
31. *Aconi quimatoc?"*
32. "Nican yetoc."
33. *Quitoquia non tacat den tacuitapan ichtatoya.*
34. *Motta ya tonto.*
35. *Cocoxqueh motta.*
36. *Quilia*, "Melaub," *quilia*, "teb ticmatoc ca quiyahuiz ya.
37. *Ahmo huebcahua?"*
38. "Pos ahmo nicmati.
39. *Pero siempre ihcon ce quihtoa pehua tamixtemiqui mozta ozo huipta, ompa yetoc in quiyahuit.*
40. *Yequintzin tatotonia pero cuan tamixtemi, ahmo acab quimati cox huitza quiyahuit cox ahmo.*
41. *Pero quiyahuit, ahmo huebca yetoc.*"
42. *Icuin quihto.*
43. "Entonces, como melaub quiyahuiz, nimitzch[i]ya huan nimitzpiyalia¹ pacencia eyi tonal, hasta nahui tonal.
44. *Eyi tonal como quiyahui, quiyahui.*
45. *Ai ahmo quiyahui tech nahui tonal, como quiyahui, cualli.*

46. *Quilia, "Huan como ahmo, como ahmo quiyahui, xicmati," quilia, "nyaz tech mochan huan nimitzmacatiuh [nimitzmacati] macuil tiros.*
47. *Huan como quiyahui, entonces huan axcan de cosas nicpiya, nochi, nicpiya calli, nicpiya tatol² [tatoc], nicpiya den yazqui, tapialmeh, nicpiya talmeh, parejo tahco moaxca."*
48. *Bueno, cayic ya huan quicaqueh in taquebualmeh.*
49. *"Huan testigos," quilia, "namoixco nochi niquihtoa ca tahco neh noaxca como quiayhui tech eyi tonal, nahui tonal.*
50. *Huan como ahmo, pero nochi ta cactoqueh tech ichan nimacatiuh [nimacati]."*
51. *Entonces monemiliaya non tacat ya, yahqui ichan huan monemilia cox quiyahuiz o cox ahmo.*
52. *Non cualcan quittac ihcon yec taquizac.*
53. *Cualtzin ceppa.*
54. *Ce tonal chicahuac tona.*
55. *Mozta oceppa ihcon.*
56. *Cualcan taquiztoc.*
57. *Tona chicahuac.*
58. *Tona ihcon parejo.*
59. *Ome tonal.*
60. *Eyi tonal.*
61. *Ceppa quitta ihcon cualtzin.*
62. *Taquizac.*
63. *Tonac chicahuac.*
64. *Ahmo motta cox quiyahuiz.*
65. *Ahmo tei mixti.*
66. *"Bueno," quitmolía, "toni nicchibuati?"*
67. *Eyi tonal ya.*
68. *Huan trato ya ca axcan ozo mozta.*
69. *Como ahmo quiyahui, huitza nopatron huan nechmacaqui."*
70. *Eyi tonal.*
71. *Ca nahui tonal cualcan.*
72. *Cualcan.*
73. *Cualcan mehuac huan quilia in cihuat, "Axcan xmehua.*
74. *Pos xtali notaxcal.*
75. *Neh nicmati can nyo porque zayoh axcan nichya nopatron.*
76. *Pero ahmo nichyati porque trato axcan nechmacaquiuh."*
77. *Quilia, "Pero que ye mitzmacaz?"*
78. *Ta mopatron!"*

79. *"Mazqui pero tebhan ticmatih que ye pero nechmacaquiuh.*
80. *Zayoh por nin tahtol icuin niquiht.*
81. *Huan abmo neci cox quiyahuiz.*
82. *Xtali notaxcal huan nyo."*
83. *Entonces quimaaque in taxcal cualcan huan cualcan, cualcan chicoquizac huan yahqui.*
84. *Yohui elihuiz.*
85. *Abmo quimati can yohui.*
86. *Ihcon yohui.*
87. *Ihcon quicuic non obti.*
88. *Abmo quimati can yohui.*
89. *Entonces yohui za, yohui za, yohui za ihcon, huan cabcito ce cuauhtab, atahuit ihcon.*
90. *Cabcito ce cuixin.*
91. *Quilia, "José! José! José!"*
92. *"Que 'José'!?" quilia.*
93. *"Abmo motequiuh," quilia.*
94. *"Abmo ticmati can nyo.*
95. *Abmo cachi nechtzahztzili.*
96. *Abmo xinechztahztzili," quilia, "huan como ta, nimitztamotaz ca in tet."*
97. *Ai yeh queman cachi quinozta, "José, José, toni mitzyolcocoa?"*
98. *Can tyo?"*
99. *"Neh nicmati can nyo," quilia.*
100. *Abmo can quimati.*
101. *"Abmo," quilia, "huan neh cualli nicmatoc," quilia, "can tyo."*
102. *"Abmo melaub," quilia.*
103. *"Quen ticmatoc?"*
104. *Como ticmatoc, tinechili huan como abmo, nimitzmacaz ca tet."*
105. *"Pos teb," quilia, "tyo porque nin telnamiquiliz ticuica.*
106. *Pero abmo xmonemili³ can tyo.*
107. *Teb tyo," quilia, "porque timonemilia por in abmo quiyahui huan mopatron mitzmacati.*
108. *Pero abmo mitzmacati," quilia.*
109. *"Ye quintzin," quitquilia, "tiabci," quitquilia, "campa no tictemoa non at," quitquilia.*
110. *"Ya mero tiabciz," quitquilia.*
111. *"Melaub?" quilia.*
112. *"Ye melaub."*

113. *“Pues entonces, [xi]nechili,” quilia, “can.”*
114. *Yequintzin zayoh nibon lomita, tyo icuin.*
115. *Icuin tictemaca vuelta huan yetoc ce huei telaja⁴ yetoc.*
116. *Huan zayoh icuin tiquixquepa⁵.*
117. *Ompa icuin ticuiti ce obti.*
118. *Icuin calaqui.*
119. *Ihcon tiontachaa⁶ yetoc ce huei calli.*
120. *Ompa ye abci.*
121. *Huan ompa yetoc non at.*
122. *Huan ompa yetoc aquin quintemoa.*
123. *De ompa yohui za.*
124. *Yohui za.”*
125. *Cahcito quit non telaja ihcatoc huei.*
126. *Zayoh quit quiquepato.*
127. *Cualli obti yatoc ceppa.*
128. *Icuin calaquito huan non tachaac ce calli yetoc pero huei calli yetoc.”*
129. *Bueno,” quitmolía, “pos ompa ya ne.*
130. *Axcán niquittati cox ompa melaub ya.”*
131. *Ihcon yohui.*
132. *Ihcon yohui.*
133. *Huan de abci, cahcito quit ce nanita tixtoc.*
134. *Icelti yetoc.*
135. *Tixtoc za.*
136. *Quitahpaloto.*
137. *“Ay hijo,” quilia, “que ye tihualla?”*
138. *Quilia, “Toni ticuito nican?”*
139. *Quilia, “Nican,” quilia, “abmo acah huitza,” quilia, “de talticpac nopilhuan.*
140. *Quemach teh tihualla noconiuh!” quilia.*
141. *“Pos nihualla,” quilia, “porque nicualcui tanemili[l].*
142. *Icuin, huan icuin ica nihualla porque nopatron yetoc, ehoc tonal axcan nechmacati.*
143. *Zayoh ca nibin tanemili[l] timocauhqueh huan abmo neci cox quiyabuiz.”*
144. *“Eh,” quitquilia, “pero ca nibon,” quitquilia, “abmo mitzmacazqueh.”*
145. *Quitquilia, “Axcán,” quitquilia, “ximotali huan xquinch[i]ya nocnihuan porque abmo yetoqueh.*
146. *Yabctoqueh cecco calpanotoh, pero ma ehocahuan.*
147. *Yebhan tiquinnonotzaz.”*
148. *Bueno, ompon motali.*

149. *Motali ce ratillo huan que huitzeh, quit, non telpocameh.*
150. *Nochi xixitatziq ueh.*
151. *Abmo quiqiyah tilman.*
152. *Nahuin huitzeh.*
153. *Pero nochi ayohqueb⁷ ica netonti⁸ za.*
154. *Ciubtihuitzeb⁹ [ciabtihuitzeh].*
155. *Huan que ehoqueh, niman quiquetzac nin tacat.*
156. *Niman quinamiquitoh huan quintahpaloah ya.*
157. *Quilia, "Quemach," quitquilia, "nican tihualla!*
158. *Abmo nican tiqittah ce cristiano talticpac ma techcalpano.*
159. *Quemach tihualla!"*
160. *Pos nihualla," quitquilia, "porque nopatron ihuan nimonotzac, timonotz-toyah campa te tequitih.*
161. *Huan ma tahtani xa ca quimati quemanyan quiyahui.*
162. *Tel tatotonia huan nochi ca tel huayic huan abmo hueli tequitih.*
163. *Pos nihualla," quilia, "namehhan porque nopatron quinequia nechmacaz por techtahtoltia quemanyan quiyahui.*
164. *Huan companyeros abmo acah quilia.*
165. *Quilia que abmo ticmatih quemanyan quiyahui.*
166. *Quiyahui mozta ozo huipta, quiyahui.*
167. *Pero abmo ticmatih tehhan quemanyan.*
168. *Huan neh tacuitapan niyetoya.*
169. *Zayoh niquihtu quemanyan quiyahui.*
170. *Quiyahuit abmo huebca yetoc porque tiqittah cualtzin tonatoc, cualtzin taquiztoc, pero mozta ozo huipta motaliz in mixti.*
171. *Quiyahuit ompon yetoc.*
172. *Abmo huebca yetoc.'*
173. *Icuin niquihtu.*
174. *Después nechtema[c]tiq ueh¹⁰ nocompañeros ica nicmatoc quemanyan quiyahui.*
175. *Entonces nechmaca nopatron ma niqiliz melauh quiyahui in eyi tonal, nabui tonal.*
176. *Como quiyahui, entonces nechtazohtati.*
177. *Huan como abmo, nechmictiti."*
178. *"Uh hu," quilia.*
179. *"Pero abmo ihcon mitzmiquitizq ueh," quitquilia "que ma ca quiyahui como quinequi quiyahui," quilia, "yeqintzin.*
180. *Yeh abmo quinequi quiyahui porque quittac que quiyahui, yeh cualani.*

181. *Yeh, como quiyahui, ahmo hueli tequiti.*
182. *Yeh quinequi ma tona para tequitiz.*
183. *Pos axcan tona, ma tequiti.*
184. *Que ye nen ahmo hueli tequiti?*
185. *Yeh ahmo cuellita quiyahuit.*
186. *Yeh cualani huan cuihuicaltia¹¹ [cuicuitabuiltia] in quiyahuit.*
187. *Pero ahmo ximoyolcoco,” quilia.*
188. *Axcan quiyahuiti.*
189. *Ahmo ximonemiliti,” quitquilia.*
190. *“Xyo niman.*
191. *Xcuica nin manga.*
192. *Huan tyaz icalteno huan xtamota ahco tech in calli.*
193. *Pero niman, niman xyo ya.”*
194. *Huan niman ompon yohue.*
195. *“Zayoh ma timaltican.”²*
196. *Huan niman ombon yohue.*
197. *Quimaaqueh [quimaaqueh] non ce manga huan hualla.*
198. *Huan yehha zayoh quinittac motepeuhqueh tech in at.*
199. *Pero tilantoc in at.*
200. *Pero niyoh quittac can t[il]antoc in at.*
201. *Tilantoc ce at.*
202. *Ompa calaquito.*
203. *Huan yeh hualla non tacat.*
204. *Niyoh si quiera momac cuenta queniuh hualla.*
205. *Yahqui huebcahuac.*
206. *Pero hualla.*
207. *Ahmo quimati cuac quimatic yetoc ichan ya.*
208. *Huan ce quiyahuiz quit cox tepitzin za pehuac pero hasta quixixintinili¹³ in calli.*
209. *Ta ehecat.*
210. *Huan miac tezihuit¹⁴ [tetzahuit] huetzic.*
211. *Pero huei quiyahuit cualli.*
212. *Itech in nahui tonal.*
213. *Axcan tacat yetoc ichan ya.*
214. *Bueno, den quichihuac, cuellitac quiyahuic.*
215. *Axcan den quiyahuic ya, para mozta, itech macuil tonal, ceppa de nohon taquehualmeh quinpiya, quinahuati ya ma tequiti.*
216. *Ya tequitic.*

217. *Quitanic.*
218. *Abmo cotonic.*
219. *Pero ma quitemocan xochit huan nochi tachihchihuati ichan non haciendero.*
220. *Huan nochi tech in obti.*
221. *Nochi quitalliqueh in arco xochit hasta ichan ne taquehual.*
222. *No tachihchihuato.*
223. *Huan cualcan ta mictiqueh ica cuacuabuehmeh, ica borregos, ica pitzomeh.*
224. *Quichihqueh miac tapalol huan mochihuati baile.*
225. *Huan quicuiti ne tacat.*
226. *Quicuiti huan quiehcoltizqueh tech ichan ne haciendero.*
227. *Campa quitallizqueh, quichihchihqueh ce altar quemeh yazquia ce santo.*
228. *Nochi tachihchihqueh.*
229. *Huan entonces tiotac quicuito ya.*
230. *Quintitanic nochi taquehualmeh huan tatzotzonanih huan cohete.*
231. *Yahqueh quicuitoh.*
232. *Quicuitoh huan quehqueltiqueh¹⁵ [quiehueltiqueh].*
233. *Quicuitoh pero imaco quicualcui ihcon quemeh casi como Dios.*
234. *Ihcon huallaqueh imaco.*
235. *Huan nochi ca in cihuat.*
236. *Nochi ihcon cualcuib.*
237. *Hualliuqueh ichan non haciendero.*
238. *Ompa quehqueltiqueh huan quitalliqueh ne tech in altal.*
239. *Huan in cihuat no ompa quitalliqueh huan in nochi in pipil quintecpanqueh¹⁶ ya talpan.*
240. *Pos entonces ompa quiquecoltiqueh¹⁷ [quiehcoltiqueh] huan quitallia, quitallia in cohete calan huan tatzotzona calictic huan m[o]ihtotiah.*
241. *Yeh quemeh dios yetoc.*
242. *M[o]ihtotiqueh.*
243. *Zatepan hasta quintemohuiqueh¹⁸ huan yeh no quihbtotiqueh in tacat.*
244. *Nochi quihbtotiqueh cualtzin, cualtzin quemeh toteeco¹⁹ yazquia.*
245. *Ompa quemah.*
246. *Quitalliqueh tech ce cualli silla huan ce cualli mesa.*
247. *Huan peuqueh tacua nochi ca in patron, nochi ca in taquehualmeh.*
248. *Tacuaqueh cualli ca in nacatzin.*
249. *Huan ompa quemah.*
250. *Tanahuati ya in patron ica, "Axcan quemeh namoixteno nen tinonotzqueh [timonotzqueh] in yalhua huan yalhuipta ica nin tacat, axcan ceppa namoixteno xicmatocan ca motaxeloti parejo.*

251. *Tabco noaxca tal huan tabco yeaxca ca nochi calli yetoc huan tabco yeaxca tapialmeh.*
252. *Tzinti quemeh yazqui yetoc herencia, pero parejo tabco yeaxca.*
253. *Axcán quincuic namoixteno titaxeloah huan titacuiloah ya.*
254. *Huan abmo acah tacuemeloa²⁰ oc tabco yeaxca ya.*"
255. *Pos entonces, pos ihcon quichiuhqueh.*
256. *Ompa quemah.*
257. *Mocauqueh huan peuhqueh, peuhqueh m[o]ihtotiyayah ihcon.*
258. *Oncac baile ya.*
259. *Ce tonal ce yohual parejo mihtotitoqueh.*
260. *Mochiuhhoc ilhuit.*
261. *Tamic in ilhuit huan ompon mocauh ya nihon tacat.*
262. *Quitamactiliqueh ya ca nican calli, yeaxca callimeh cequin huan cequin yeaxca patron.*
263. *Ompa quemah.*
264. *Nochi tapialmeh quimactiliqueh.*
265. *Nochi tal quimactiliqueh ca nican ya nihon yeaxca yazqui.*
266. *Huan ompa mocauh huan zatapan pehuac tequiti ica itapialhuan huan ica ital.*
267. *Entonces pehuac cachi huei iteeco ya.*
268. *Ceppa mocahuac quemeh yetoc in patron.*
269. *Ne no haciendero.*
270. *Ceppa yeh pehuac huei tequiti.*
271. *Huan yehba za ihcon.*
272. *Cualli ya.*²¹

The Protagonist's Predicament

To recapitulate, Antonio Veracruz described his protagonist as a little man (*ta-catzin* [line 19]) who appears to be ill (*cococoxque* [line 20]) and looks like a fool (*tonto motta* [line 21]). He is one of many workers whom his *patrón* assembles during a drought and asks if any of them can tell him when it will rain (lines 7–8). The workers hear the protagonist, standing in the back, say that rain is not far away; tomorrow or the next day there will be clouds, and there will be rain (lines 22–27). The coworkers report him to their *patrón* (line 28) and make him come forward (line 33). The *patrón* presents him with the challenge that if it rains within four days, he will give him half of his property, but if not, he will

go to the humble man's home and put five bullets into him (lines 45–47). The humble man is powerless to reject the challenge and heads into the wilderness, where he comes upon the mother/sister of the rain gods who bring rain and help him out of his dilemma.

Antonio Veracruz's story conveys a lesson (*neixcuitil*) on how it feels to depend on a powerful landowner like Rogelio Carvallo for one's livelihood. Antonio Veracruz brought up the humble man's predicament five times in his story to emphasize the subordinate position of Nahuatl workers like his protagonist. The five mentions are: (1) the boss's initial challenge (lines 19–42), (2) the humble man explaining the challenge to his wife (lines 73–76), (3) his conversation with the sparrow hawk (lines 101–109), (4) his explanation to the rain gods' mother/sister (lines 141–143), and (5) his explanation to the rain gods themselves (lines 160–177). Repetition is a rhetorical device that Nahuatl use for emphasis in many of their stories.

Antonio Veracruz drew on his wry sense of humor when describing the protagonist telling his wife, on the fourth day, to prepare his tortillas because he is going on the road to escape from his *patrón* when he comes to shoot him. The wife replies with amazement: "But why will he shoot you? He is your boss!" ("*Pero que ye mitzmacaz? Ta mopatron*" [lines 77–78]). Beneath the touch of humor is Antonio's satirical critique of employers who fail to appreciate the labor that Nahuatl contribute to making some Mestizos rich and powerful in Huitzilán.

Antonio's satire continues as he contrasts the humble man's vulnerability to his *patrón's* mercurial behavior with the warm embrace the humble man receives from the rain gods' mother/sister. She greets him affectionately as if he were a member of her family by saying: "Oh son, why did you come here?" ("*Ay hijo . . . que ye tibualla?*" [line 137]). She refers to him as "my child" when she says: "How amazing that you, my child, has come here!" ("*Quemach tibualla noconiub!*" [line 140]). Antonio Veracruz's use of kinship terminology in this relationship is his way of showing that the rain gods embrace the protagonist with love (*tazobtaliz*) that Nahuatl try to cultivate in their families through cooperation. The powerful *patrón*, on the other hand, threatens the humble man with a life-and-death challenge.

The contrast between the predicament of the protagonist as a worker for a powerful *patrón* and the warm embrace of the rain gods is also Antonio Veracruz's critique of the Nahuatl themselves. At the time he told his story in 1978, the issue of weak loyalties among Nahuatl was felt deeply and was the subject of

much Nahua commentary. Antonio mounts a critique of worker solidarity with his account of how work companions expose the humble man to their *patrón* rather than shield him. Three years earlier in 1975, Juan Hernández had described how workers were divided by their envy of the rain god's human companion who tried but failed to dissimulate his identity (Chapter 4). Weak loyalties among workers, driven by envy, conflicted with the value of "working as one" that Nahuas tried to instill in their children. As noted earlier, one Nahua remarked that fights between male siblings are especially disturbing forms of disrespect because they are manifestations of envy that disrupts cooperation within the family. The Nahuas in the UCI tried initially to overcome these challenges and live according to the values of their culture by collectively growing corn and dividing the harvest as if they were brothers.

Comparison with Yaonáhuac stories

To put Antonio Veracruz's story into a broader perspective, I compared it to similar stories that I recorded in Yaonáhuac during the fall of 1977. As mentioned, Yaonáhuac is a mono-ethnic community in the southern part of the Sierra Norte de Puebla where Nahuas do not live under the direct domination of Mestizos. The Yaonáhuac Nahuas also told stories of a drought and a protagonist who faces a challenge that, if it does not rain in three or four days, he will pay with his life. The drought in the Yaonáhuac stories is also the result of humans cursing and disrespecting the rain gods for bringing rain. The Yaonáhuac protagonist, like the one in Antonio's story, leaves home and wanders into the wilderness, where he comes upon the mother of the rain gods, who bring an end to the drought and save him from death.

However, the Yaonáhuac narrators described a community that is very different from Huitzilán in the way they developed the details of their protagonist's predicament. In a version I recorded from Mariano Isidro in Yaonáhuac (see Appendix), the protagonist is a drunk who shouts out in front of the presidential palace. A policeman grabs him and asks him what he is doing. The drunk reminds the policeman that it has not rained because he and others are stupid for swearing at the rain. The drunk declares that he wants it to rain in three days. The policeman sends him on his way, but the next day he comes for the drunk, telling him that the president wants to talk to him. The president reminds him what he said and issues a challenge that if it does not rain in three days, they will kill and burn him so that he will no longer act like a fool. They reach an agreement to free the drunk, giving him three days to produce rain. The drunk has

a role in setting the terms; "All right," he drunk says, "give me three days, and if it has been three days, and if it does not rain, well then so be it, kill me already." ("Bueno," *quihtoa*, "*nechcabualican tres [días]*," *quihtoa*, "*huan a las tres días*," *quihtoa*, "*huan ahmo quiyiuhui* [quiyahui = Huitzilán spelling]," *quihtoa*, "*pos cuahcohn*," *quihtoa*, "*nehmictican ya*" [line 28]).

The protagonist does not have an idea of how he can end the drought, so he asks his wife to make him a lunch. He escapes into the wilderness, where he comes upon the house of the rain gods. The rain gods take pity on him, and decide to help him by bringing rain on the condition that the people of his town stop swearing²² at the rain gods for bringing rain. They must also buy a candle, adorn a table by decorating it with flowers, light the candle, and place chairs around the table as if they were carrying out a ritual to honor godparents. They are supposed to show the rain gods the respect that one should display in the godparenthood relationship. The president agrees to this request, and the drought comes to an end.

Juan Mauro, the narrator of a second version of this story, described Yaonáhuac in much the same way but with a different twist (see Appendix). Juan Mauro began his story with his protagonist drinking in *cantinas*. Someone was collecting a contribution to pay the priest to say a Mass so that it might rain and end a drought. The person taking up the collection asked the protagonist to contribute, but the drunk replied:

Uh. Now you want rain. Remember how it was when it really rained. And you scolded the rain. You wanted to stop it. Because you wanted to stop the rain, the rain gods got angry with you. That is the reason they no longer bring us rain. The rain gods got angry because you scolded the rain. Do not feel hurt by this now. Rain, no rain are all the same to me. ("Uh. *Axcán nanquinequih ma quiyiuhui. Xiquelnamican ihcon quemah den melac ne quiyihuia. Huan nancabhuaqueh*²³ *quiyiuhuitzin. Nanquitatamiliqueh*.²⁴ *Nan, como tatamiliqueh quiyihhuatzin, entonces in rayitos cualanqueh. Por eso axcán ahcno techcualcuilia in quiyiuhuitzin. Yeh por nancabhuaqueh in quiyihhtzin, cualanqueh in rayitos. Es que axcán ahmo xmoicococan. Para nehua quiyihhuiz, ahmo quiyihhuiz, neh igual*" [lines 12–21]).

Those making the collection complain to the authorities, who send for the protagonist and put him in jail. The president thinks about burning the protagonist for refusing to contribute to the collection and for his rebuke (line 43). When the authorities ask him if he has come up with money to pay his fine, the protagonist defiantly says:

No, but get me out of here now, and it will rain tomorrow at noon. And if you do not get me out, there is going to be more sun. It is going to get hotter. (*Abmo,* *quih*ta, “*pero xinechquixtacan axcan huan mozt*a a las doce *quiyiuh*uiz. *Huan den abmo nechquix*tiah, *cachi más tonati. Cachi mas to- tonic oncac*” [lines 36–38]).

The official tells the *municipio* president, who calls for the protagonist to appear, and he repeats the same challenge he told the official earlier. The president accepts the challenge, saying: “Well, if it rains tomorrow, then you will go home.” (*Bueno, si tacan quiyiuh*uiz *mozt*a, *xyo mochan*” [line 50]).

The protagonist flees into the wilderness to escape punishment, and comes upon the mother of the rain gods. He explains his plight (line 58–66), and she agrees to help him. The rain gods arrive home appearing as little boys who are brothers; one is the wind and the other is the water. The drunk explains his plight (line 89–100) and admits to the rain gods that he tricked the authorities by issuing a challenge he had no way of meeting.

So then they locked me up, and I tricked them by telling them that now, at noon, it will rain so they must let me out of jail. And they let me out. (*Entonces por nech*tzacuaqueh *huan nibin* [niquin-] *cahcayauh*queh *que axcan hin a las doce quiyiuh*ui *huan ma nechquix*tia. *Huan nechquix*tilique” [lines 96–97]).

The rain gods tell the drunk to tell his neighbors that they must show respect and, if they do not, then they will pay a heavy price.

They must place a table decorated with flowers and they must light a candle where they were going to burn you. And they must place on it an incense brazier for filling the middle of the plaza, where they were going to burn you, with the scent of incense. Place these things [in the middle of the plaza] at twelve o’clock sharp, and then we shall arrive lighting up the plaza as we come. (*Pero ne cual*[cu]iliqueh *huan quih*ta, “*Campa mitz*tahtazquia *ma quit*alican *ce mesa xochillo huan ce velita ma xotato. Huan ce popoxcaxit, popoxcaxit ca copaltzin ma popocato ne tahco plaza camp*a *mitz*tahtazquia. *Ma mot*alican *al punto a las doce, huan entonces tehu*an *tiah*cizqueh *tixco- tacotabci*” [lines 110–112]).

The rain gods also specify that those living in the lowlands should be sure to prepare for a flash flood (lines 116–118). The drunk presents the rain gods’ demands to the president (lines 119–127). The president warns the people of the town

that there is an impending flash flood, but the people in the lowlands do not heed the warning when they realize that it came from a drunk (lines 128–132). On the dot of noon, the rain gods bring a storm that washes away "Christians, cattle, dogs, [and] pigs." (*Cristianos, cuahcuehmeh* [*cuacuahuemeh*], *itzcuimeh, pitzomeh* [line 137]). Juan Mauro personalized his story by providing an example of what can happen if one dismisses the views of one like himself who was a very heavy drinker. Juan Mauro claimed to be a rain god's human companion, but several in Yaonáhuac expressed skepticism about his claims.

The predicaments of the central protagonists in both of these stories from Yaonáhuac did not involve a powerful landowner who imposed a challenge to produce rain in a specified number of days or die. Rather, the challenges came from the protagonists themselves, one of whom used it as a ruse to get out of jail. Both of these stories accord with my observations that the social relations were comparatively egalitarian in Yaonáhuac (Taggart 1983).

The Nahua narrators in Yaonáhuac were different from those in Huitzilán because they did not tell stories of rain gods who organized a rebellion against the *municipio* president. They were keenly aware that they occupied a subordinate position relative to Mestizos in the region. However, they enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy to run their own community affairs and did not express the same degree of revolutionary consciousness found in the Huitzilán stories such as "The President and the Priest," "The President of Hueytlalpan," and "The Water in Ixtepec." Huitzilán narrators in these stories mounted dissimulated but nevertheless sharp criticisms of local secular officials and non-Nahua settlers. I also heard in Yaonáhuac fewer stories critiquing social hierarchy such as the trickster tale of "The Rabbit and the Coyote," a Nahua version of "Brer Rabbit" that was and continues to be popular in Huitzilán. One conclusion from this limited comparison is that a high degree of social hierarchy encourages rather than suppresses a revolutionary consciousness among the more subordinate Nahuas. However, ethnic hierarchy can also promote an identification with the oppressor.

False Consciousness?

Antonio Veracruz's story appears to be his fantasy of becoming a wealthy and powerful man by winning a wager. The protagonist not only wins half of the rich man's property, but, at the direction of his *patrón*, his fellow workers treat him as if he were a saint or a god. Antonio Veracruz said:

“They placed him where they had adorned an altar as if he were a saint” [line 227]. “They went to get him and carry him in their arms as if he were a god. (*“Campa quitalizqueh, quichihchiuhqueh ce altar quemeh yazquia ce santo”*) [line 228]. *“Quicuito pero imaco quicualcui ihcon quemeh casi como Dios”* [line 234].

In the final episode of the story, Antonio Veracruz develops his wish fulfillment by describing in detail how the protagonist experienced being treated as a god and a hacienda owner by sitting at an adorned table, eating a sumptuous feast of turkey meat, and receiving the adulation of everyone around him. The negligible chances of winning a rich man’s property in a wager and becoming like a god or saint make Antonio Veracruz’s story seem an expression of his false consciousness attributable to hegemony. His story appears on the surface to be a contradiction to Scott’s cultural theory of peasant resistance, according to which those in the lowliest positions in a hierarchical society do not resign themselves to their predicament. Scott (1985: 287) attributed ethnographic accounts of hegemony to an incomplete understanding of those who occupy subordinate positions in a society. He (1985: 323–324) noted that suffering extreme subordination does not lead to the belief that suffering is unavoidable. He (1985: 329) brought up the work of historian Eugene Genovese, who found that:

In the slave quarters of the antebellum South, one encountered a set of values very different from those that officially prevailed. There was a religious emphasis on liberation and equality drawn from the Old Testament texts, a profane view both of the masters and of slavery, justifications for resistance in the form of theft, pilfering, flight, and shirking.

Scott (1990: 18–19) brought up the example of the trickster tale of “Brer Rabbit” that circulated in the slave oral tradition in the United States antebellum South. He noted that, among slaves in the United States, folktales such as “Brer Rabbit” make up a realm of political discourse that lies between the elite’s public “flattering self-image” and the slaves’ “hidden transcripts,” or criticisms of their masters that they circulate among themselves. Slaves dissimulated their criticisms of their masters and expressed their fantasies of revenge in animal trickster stories such as “Brer Rabbit,” which are sufficiently ambiguous to protect the tellers from reprisals.

Antonio Veracruz displayed a complex social consciousness if one takes into consideration the other stories in his repertoire that included the story of “Rabbit and Coyote,” which is similar to and may be derived from a common

prototype of Brer Rabbit. "Rabbit and Coyote" was the most popular story that circulated among Nahuas in Huitzilán during the earlier stages of fieldwork and continues to circulate widely today. The protagonist in the Nahua story is a rabbit who outwits and eventually kills the larger and more powerful coyote, who tries to eat him. The Nahuas identify with the rabbit, and refer to the Mestizos with the derogatory term *coyot*, which is Nahuatl for coyote. Nacho's interpretation of "Rabbit and Coyote" accords with Scott's (1990: 18–19) interpretation of "Brer Rabbit":

You see someone who acts like a big shot, and they will see that the day will come, [and] they will fall. Why will they fall? Because even though one is small, one will figure out what to do, what one must do to vanquish whomever is the big shot." (*Tiquittac quemeh non acza mohueichihua huan quitaqueh ehco tonal, pos huetzi. Huetzi que yeh? Porque ce mas ca chiquitzin, pero tanemilitoc quenin quichihuaz, quenin quichihuaz para quitaniliz ne aconi.*)²⁵

"Rabbit and Coyote" is sufficiently vague that a Nahua could tell it while wearing what Scott (1985: 328) called "the mask of obsequiousness, deference, and symbolic complaine."

It is fair to say that Antonio Veracruz was one who criticized his society without wanting to destroy it, much like Scott's (1985: 344) characterization of Pedro Martínez (Lewis 1967: 97–116) and other Nahuas who joined Emiliano Zapata's agrarian army. They wanted to recover the communal land they had lost to the sugarcane haciendas without destroying the hacienda system. This perspective leaves a space for those like Antonio Veracruz, who fantasized about a better life for himself and his family while criticizing his social superiors' wealth and power.

Gutmann (1993), Sivaramakrishnan (2005), and Scott (1985: 341–344; 2005) himself have raised questions about the potential of a cultural theory of peasant unrest to explain how everyday resistance can turn into an organized rebellion. The following chapter will present the first of two stories that played a direct role in turning Nahua expressions of discontent into the UCI rebellion of 1977–1984.

“Malintzin,” 1978

One consequence of the Nahuas' subjugated position in Huitzilán was that Nahua women were vulnerable to the sexual predations of powerful Mestizo men. In 1978, several narrators told the story about a vanishing woman called Malintzin or Precious Mary. It developed out of an elite man's sexually predatory behavior that contributed directly to the UCI rebellion in Huitzilán. The name Malintzin is a combination of Malin or Mary, and the honorific suffix *-tzin*, meaning “precious” or “beloved.” In the story, Malintzin is a virtuous woman on her way to fetch some corn for her tortillas. She stops by a spring for a drink of water and spots a child lying on the ground. She bends down to lift it up, the child turns into a serpent and pulls her into deep water, and she is never to be seen again. Narrators make clear that the serpent is the devil (*ahmo cualli*), who has turned into an *achane*.

I recorded this story from narrators in Ixtahuatlax as well as Calyecapan, an indication that it circulated widely in Nahua oral tradition at that time. The story of Malintzin grew out of accounts of an actual event described many years later in a narrative I shall call “The Kidnapped Wife,” which Nahuas were circumspect in revealing to me, perhaps because of my *compadrazgo* relationship with the extended family of the offender. I had to wait until 2007 to record the Nahuas' full version of “The Kidnapped Wife,” long after the central protagonists had died or left Huitzilán for good.

Narrators set the action of “Malintzin” in the Totonac community of Nanacatlan north of Huitzilán, on the ridge across the Zempoala River, to dissimulate the connection with two people mentioned in the story of “The Kidnapped Wife.” One was a Nahua and the other a Mestizo, and both played an important role in the UCI rebellion. The story of “The Kidnapped Wife” is an example of what Scott (1990: 7) refers to as the “hidden transcript” that Nahuas were reluctant to repeat publically during the earlier fieldwork because of shame and fears of reprisals.

What follows are the English translation and the Nahuatl transcription of "Malintzin" that I recorded from Miguel Fuentes in his home on the Ixtahuatlix *ejido* in 1978. At that time Miguel Fuentes, age fifty-nine, owned no land and migrated once a year to Martínez de la Torre or Tenampulco, where he worked on plantations on the Veracruz coast. Following the English and Nahuatl texts of his story, I shall explain how Miguel Fuentes and other narrators recast and dissimulated "The Kidnapped Wife" as "Malintzin."

1. They say in the place of Nanacatlan, in the town of Nanacatlan, a woman went out, she went out.
2. The woman went out [of her house].
3. She went to fetch some corn [for her tortillas].
4. It was on April the twenty-fourth.
5. She went to fetch some corn, and she stopped beside a spring.
6. She sat down by the spring to drink some water.
7. She wanted a drink of water.
8. And something had fallen, something had fallen out of the house of the person who lived in the water, the house of the devil (*abmo cualli*).
9. It had fallen, and that women saw a child who had fallen.
10. The child was small, only three months old.
11. And it was lying at the edge of the water.
12. And because she wanted to lift it up, she put down her *huacal*, her load of corn.
13. She put down her *huacal* and went to pick up the child.
14. What child!
15. It was an animal that wrapped itself around her.
16. It was a damned serpent.
17. A big serpent.
18. It wrapped itself around her.
19. It twisted itself all around her and dragged her into the water.
20. Then it had her there; [the animal's] *padrino* (godfather) had her there.
21. They say [in Nanacatlan], "Well, this woman was called, she was named Malin (Mary)."
22. From that moment on, that place was called, that spring is still called Malintzin.
23. That is what it was named.
24. Malintzin.
25. But the woman went to where God is.

26. The water took her.
27. And it was a powerful thing.
28. It was not big [but very deep].
29. The [people of Nanacatlan] removed more than two hundred barrels of water and did not find the woman.
30. That is how it was.
31. That place is in the town of Nanacatlan.
32. It is called Malintzin.
33. This is not just a story.
34. These are very, very straight words.

1. *Quihto en lugar Nanacatlan, en lugar pueblo Nanacatlan, huan quizac, quizac ce cihuat.*
2. *Quizac cihuat.*
3. *Quicuito cequin tzinti.*
4. *Itech cempoal huan nabui de abril.*
5. *Quicuito cequin tzinti, huan mocahuac itech ce pozo de at.*
6. *Motali ompa calteno para quinequia taiz in at.*
7. *Quinequia taiz at.*
8. *Huan quizac nohon, quizac nohon tac mismo den aquin ichan den at, den ahmo cualli.*
9. *Quizac huan quittac ompa huetztoya ce coniuh ne cihuat.*
10. *Pero chiquitzin pilli de eyi meztí.*
11. *Huan ompa huetztoc iteno at.*
12. *Huan para quinequia cahacuíz, quitali nihuahcal, de ce bulto de tzinti.*
13. *Ne quitálico nihuahcalito huan cahacuíti ne iconiuh.*
14. *Quemanyan iconiuh.*
15. *Quinahuaco ce ocuilin.*
16. *Ce puto vibora.*
17. *Huei coat.*
18. *Quinahuaco ihcon.*
19. *Parejito quitetzilo¹ nochi huan pancalaquito itech in at.*
20. *Entonces ompa quiپیac, ompa quiپیac nipadrino.*
21. *Ompa quihtoá, "Pos nihin cihuat catca monotzaya, catca monotzaya Malin."*
22. *Entonces non ne lugar, monotzaya, axcan monotza itech non at Malintzin.*
23. *Ye nohon ica motenehua.*
24. *Malintzin.*

25. *Pero cihuat yahqui hasta solo Díos can yahqui.*
26. *Cuiac in at mismo.*
27. *Huan ce hue[li]yoh icuin yetoc.*
28. *Ahmo huei.*
29. *Quiquixtiaya más de dos cientos toneles de at huan ahmo quiabciqueh cihuat.*
30. *Eh nohon.*
31. *Lugar de nican pueblo Nanacatlan.*
32. *Ompa monotza mero Malintzin.*
33. *Ahmo zayoh cuentos.*
34. *Nohon mero, mero, mero palabras de derecho.²*

Interpretation

Miguel Fuentes declared that the action in his story took place on April 24 (line 4). He was referring to the April before I recorded his story in the winter of 1978, which would make the date April 24, 1977, several months before the Nahuas organized the UCI. The UCI invaded the cattle pastures of Talcuaco and Taltimpan around December 12, 1977, the date in the Catholic calendar commemorating the Virgin of Guadalupe and the time when Nahuas prefer to plant their winter crop of corn to reap their harvest in late spring.

The Nahuas in the UCI established, around that time, their headquarters in a house above the Talcuaco pasture. In that house lived a Nahua man married to the Nahua woman whom the son of an elite family actually kidnapped around April 24, 1977. This information emerged in a narrative I shall call "The Kidnapped Wife" that I recorded in 2007, in which the narrator provided a detailed account of an event that gave support to fears in the years leading up to the UCI rebellion that a rich and powerful Mestizo man who desired any Nahua woman might take her by force, even if she were married. In the account of "The Kidnapped Wife" appearing below, I used pseudonyms for the people the narrator mentioned in order to protect innocent family members who might be subject to reprisals. I call the kidnapper Coyot, after the term *coyot* (coyote) that Nahuas in Huitzilán use to refer to Mestizos whom they do not respect. I call the Nahua wife's husband "the UCI."

"There were Coyot and the deceased UCI and his wife. The UCI—How shall I put it?—had some sort of problem with his wife. She left him and came down from Talcuaco and went into Coyot's house [to work as a domestic servant]. So then Coyot, as for what he did, he grabbed that woman

and went and put her in another house. Here in the place called Taltzintan. Where only he would find her. As for what the UCI did, . . . he grabbed his wife and took her back home. So then Coyot decided to hire another *razón*, and they went to face that woman. The woman was lying [in bed] with the UCI [her husband], and they made her get up and carried her away. Afterwards, I do not know how, but the UCI took the woman back again. The UCI had a problem [with Coyot] because of the bad things that he and the other *razón* had done. And the other *razón* was a gunman and he worked for the rich ones [such as Coyot], so he did what Coyot wanted him to do. After the UCI came [organized] and . . . they armed themselves, the *razón* fled from the community.” (“*Bueno como yetoya, nibin Coyot huan ne UCI catca, huan icihuaub. Nibin UCI—queniuh [niquibtoa]?—quipiyc ce problema ihuan nicihuaub. Quicaub huan mocalaquico cihuat ichan Coyot. Tons Coyot den quichihuac, quicuic in cihuat huan yahque tapalcabua ta tech ce calli. Nican Taltzinta. Para ompa zayoh cabciti. Den quichihuac UCI, . . . quicuic in cihuat huan mocuiac ichan. Entonces nin Coyot, quinemili quitaquehuac nin razón, huan yahqueh quixtitoh in cihuat. Huetztoya cihuat ihuan UCI huan quiehuatoh cihuat huan cualiqueh. Zatepan ahmo nicmati quenin, quenin occeppa para occeppa cuiac in cihuat. Que yeh ca nohon problema porque ya nin mal de quichiuhqueh. Y razón o quiپیya pistolero ihuan rico, entonces quitacamachia³ que yeh quinequi. . . . Zatepan de que calaquih ya in UCI’s, huan . . . moarmatih ya, entonces yeh choloh ya.*”)⁴

No Recourse

At the time of the kidnapping, estimated to be around April 24, 1977, Coyot’s relative was the *municipio* president, and neither the Nahua wife nor her husband could file a complaint in Huitzilán and expect to get results. There was bad blood between the *municipio* president, on the one hand, and Coyot and his father, on the other, but elite Mestizos tended to close ranks and support each other in conflicts with Nahuas. Not everyone in Coyot’s extended family, however, approved of his behavior. A woman who was one of Coyot’s relatives told me he had made prejudiced and derogatory comments about Nahuas, whom he called Nacos, which is short for Totonacos and a racial slur. An elite woman, who married into Coyot’s extended family, turned a cold shoulder to him when she found out about the kidnapping episode.

Narrators recast the kidnapping into the story of "Malintzin" in several clever ways. They specified that the serpent, which coiled itself around Malintzin and pulled her into the water, came from the house of the devil or *abmo cualli*. This is an allusion to Coyot and his father, with whom the Nahuas had many quarrels prior to and during the UCI rebellion. Nahuas frequently described the devil as a *coyot* or Mestizo wearing store-bought clothes and riding a horse, both of which fit the description of Coyot and his father. They recast the UCI's wife going to work as a domestic servant to help care for Coyot's children as Malin, bending down to pick up and comfort what she thought was an infant. The narrator of "Malintzin" turned the experience of the UCI's wife being dragged out of her marital bed as Malintzin having a serpent coil around her neck and drag her into the water.

Sex with the Devil

The story of "Malintzin" struck a chord with many Nahuas in Huitzilán and circulated widely in 1978 among narrators in Ixtahuatalix as well as in Calyecapan. The Ángel Hernández brothers in Calyecapan, who were among the narrators who told "Malintzin," also told an Orpheus myth that warned Nahua women against becoming involved with wealthy Mestizo men. In one particular variant of Orpheus, the devil appears as a Mestizo mounted on a horse, and carries a married woman to the underworld. The Mestizo turns into a goat and devours the woman's body, leaving her heart to palpitate and flip around on the floor of their cave until it regenerates into the woman, who is doomed to undergo the same experience, presumably for eternity. The purpose of this Orpheus story is to teach Nahua women to fear Mestizo men who may offer them money for sex. The Orpheus story also justifies why Nahuas carry out their betrothal and marriage rituals with an adornment called the flower tree or *xochicuahuit*. [See photograph 9.1.] During the last stage of fieldwork, Nacho's niece explained the purpose of the flower tree ritual by remarking: "The goat will eat whomever does not marry with a flower tree." (*"Aqui abmo monamictiz ica xochicuahuit quicuaz chivo."*) She was referring to the goat that devours the married woman in the Orpheus myth. The flower tree or *xochicuahuit* is a ritual adornment with a handle and three sticks of wood for placing alternating combinations of flowers and bread. The climactic moment in the *xochicuahuit* ritual is the performance of the dance of four or *nanabuin*, who are the bride, the groom, and the godmother and godfather of marriage, each holding a *xochicuahuit*. The



FIGURE 9.1. Dance of four or nanahuin, 1969.

intermediary or *cibuatanque* weaves incense around the four dancers to create a web of love and respect.

The flower tree rituals and the Orpheus myth were around long before the actual kidnapping of the Nahua wife in April 1977. I witnessed the rituals in 1968, and recorded an Orpheus myth from Nacho Ángel Hernández in 1970 and transcribed it several years later. The existence of the rituals and the story at that time in Huitzilán are an indication that Nahuas have regarded Mestizos as a threat to Nahua women prior to the kidnapping that took place around April 24, 1977.

Violation of Professed Values

The legend of “The Kidnapped Wife” describes a violation of “professed values” (Scott 1985: 336) regarding marriage held by Mestizos as well as Nahuas in Huitzilán, who expressed their understanding of respect in their *compadrazgo* rituals. (See Chapter 5.) Mestizo and Nahua men alike did not condone other men having sex with their wives. When I returned for the third stage of fieldwork, years after the UCI rebellion had ended, an elite woman, who had married

into Coyot's extended family, said to me: "We made some mistakes." She was alluding to Coyot kidnapping the Nahua woman as well as to Coyot's father allegedly calling in the army to burn down the UCI's corn field on Talcuaco, which I shall discuss in a later chapter.

Mestizo and Nahua men sometimes displayed a double standard in Huitzilan by guarding the marital chastity of their own wives while having sex with other women. The Nahua women I knew, however, objected strongly to a straying husband because it undermined the relationship of *tequipanoa* or reciprocity in work. Nahua men expressed more tolerance of Mestizo men married to Mestizo women and involved with Nahua women in long-term relationships. One example is Ponciano, who had several common-law Nahua wives with whom he had children. Nahuas I knew declared that he conducted himself with less wanton promiscuity and more respect than did many other Mestizos. The children of Ponciano and his Mestizo and Nahua partners recognize each other as siblings, although those born to Ponciano's Mestiza wife refer to their siblings born to Nahua women with their mother's surnames. Those siblings include Juan Pereañez—Nacho Ángel Hernández' father-in-law—and Manuel Mina, the maternal half brother of my *compadre* of baptism, Juan Gravioto. Juan Gravioto spoke well of Ponciano, saying that he treated him fairly by selling him some land at a fair price.

A Direct Connection to the UCI Rebellion

The events recorded in "The Kidnapped Wife" were among the reasons that the Nahua husband joined the small contingent of Nahuas who went to the neighboring community of Pahuata where the UCI were attempting to organize Nahuas to invade intestate pastures. He and the others invited the UCI organizer, Felipe Reyes Herrera, to come to Huitzilan. Felipe obliged, and, as mentioned, the Nahua husband lent his house to be the headquarters of the UCI rebellion. The UCI placed a loudspeaker on the roof of his house, from which Felipe Reyes Herrera broadcast his speeches threatening "death to the *ricos*" directly into the kidnapper's house below. The husband became one of UCI's leaders and continued in this role after the death of Felipe Reyes Herrera in approximately 1979. With the support of the rebels, the UCI allegedly shot Coyot in the stomach. Coyot survived, but the UCI reputedly burned down his house and drove him from Huitzilan, and he has not returned.

The next chapter presents a second event that contributed directly to other Nahuas taking the risky step of joining the UCI. That event involved another parcel of land that a wealthy Mestizo had seized from a Nahua under conditions that both Nahuas and other Mestizos considered to be unfair. At the conclusion of the next Chapter I shall offer a hypothesis on the role that stories of “The Kidnapped Wife” and “Malintzin” and those of the seized land parcel played in creating the necessary conditions for the UCI rebellion.

“The Land Transaction”

I heard many stories of Mestizos who tricked Nahuas out of their land, and one became a widespread and enduring collective memory. The story I shall call “The Land Transaction” recounts how several Nahuas joined the UCI to recover the land they considered stolen from their grandfather. Mestizos as well as Nahuas circulated versions of the story during all three periods of fieldwork, starting in 1968 and ending in 2012.

“The Land Transaction” provides a second example of the role that local Nahua culture played in justifying the UCI rebellion and in remembering it long after it came to an end. Below is a version I recorded in 2012 from a narrator who is related by kinship to the Nahua who lost his land to a wealthy Mestizo.

“Well, there was a little old man called C. He was old then. He really liked to drink. He wore what we used to call a *pintocoton* that was split open on the side. It was open here [narrator points to his sides]. It was not closed. It was closed in front and back like a serape. That was what he wore. But that little old man really liked to drink. He hung around where a rich man had his store. He liked it there a lot because the rich man gave him food. He went home. He told his wife, ‘That rich man really loves me because he gives me food.’ He was very content. Then the day came when he saw how much of a tab he had run up, and the rich man told him, ‘Now you have to give me title to your land because you ran up a big bill.’ At that moment he grabbed the old man’s land.”

(“Buena huan non tacatzin monotza C. Ce huebueht catca. Melauh ca tabuanaya. Nitilman catca ne tiquiliaya pintocoton ma tapacti. Nican ce coton tapacti. Ahmo tzactoc. Yehhaza nican tzactoc huan tacuitapan quemeh non serape. Quitaquemia. Pero melauh ca tabuana ce huebuentzin. Mocahuaya campa nican Rico campa tanamacaya. Melauh cuellitaya por ompa quitamacaya. Te yaya ichan. Quihta, Melauh nechtazobta nen Rico porque ompa

nechtamaca. 'Entonces mobuellitaya. Pero cuando taquittaya que miactzin nicuenta, entonces quilia, 'Pos axcan, tinechmaca ya moamat porque huei tac tiyetoc ya.' Es que cuiliqui in tal.")¹

The narrator explained that the old man's grandchildren joined the UCI to get the land back:

"Well, there were the grandchildren, who as children or even adolescents could not do anything. But then the UCI came, and the grandchildren, who were fully grown by then, took heart and thought they would try to snatch back the land. . . . They joined the rebellion. They went into the UCI for the purpose of recovering that land. But the UCI did not prevail." ("*Bueno te ixhuiuhuan, de pilbuan ahmo, naquin ichpochbuan ahmo quichihqueh. Pero de hualla in UCI huan te ixhuiuhuan pues quemeh tacah ipa huan moyolchicahuac, quitmolia quicuiltih non tal. . . . Tebuan mocalaquiueh. Tebuan mocalaquiueh UCIs para quicuzquia non tal. Pero ahmo taxicoqueh.*")²

The *Achane*

The Nahuas were in the process of converting the story of "The Land Transaction" into a myth that conferred moral importance to this event by telling how the water-dwelling animals and the rain gods punished the Mestizo who had tricked the grandfather. The narrator explained that sometime after the grandfather died,³ someone noticed that water began to seep out of the ground on Mt. Tachcuapan above the disputed plot of land. The narrator identified the *achane*, which brought the water, as a serpent. He described the *achane's* *coatonalle* or companion spirit as the devil, who also changed into a man seeking to settle in Huitzilan.

"I remember that it was up on Mt. Tachcuapan, [where] that mountain is. Up there is a place just below the summit, where the mountain towers above nearly everything below it. So then water rose out of the ground below the summit where it is flat. It rose out of the ground. That is where that animal appeared. There was the animal. That is what they say. I do not know myself, but according to what they say that animal asked permission of the deceased rich man [for a place to make his house]. It was the rich man [who had snatched the land from C]. [The animal] asked permission. He said, 'Let me put my house in this place that I like.' But the rich man did

not know where he asked him to put it. Afterwards the rich man realized what happened when he saw the water on the flat part of the land begin to rise out of the ground. There was a lot of water. A lot of water was all around the farmhouse. It was all around it. We had to ford along the edge where land met the water. We saw how the water was increasing, increasing. There was a lot of it. So then they started dig a trench so there would not be more water."

Jim: "Was that animal a serpent?"

Narrator: "It was like a serpent. Only it looked like a man, the one who asked the rich man for permission. . . . But they say the animal grew to be big. Because they did not want [the *achane*] to make more water, this rich man put up walls so that what you are seeing is a lake. They put up retaining walls. So then it turned into a lake. But that was because they put up those walls. But they did not want to allow [the water to keep increasing] because cattle [drowned in the lake], and the water was blocking the road. So then they put in a ditch so that the water would flow away. But all at once it increased. All at once the water increased. Another rich man, E. C., he has his land around there. He saw a lot of [water] appearing again on the road so they say he cut a hole in [the retaining wall] so [the water] would not rise anymore." ("*Tiquelnamiqui nohon ne ahco ta lomo Tachcuapan ompa yetoc ce ta lomo. Ahco yetoc nipan tani, nipano tani huan casi nochi tani zayoh ahco yetoc non ta in lomo. Entonces in at panhuetzic in talpaniyan campa yetoc ce tamayan yetoc. Panhuetzic. Ompa nezic nohon yetoc oculin. Yetoc oculin. Quibtoqueh. Ahmo nicmati pero según quibtoqueh que non oculin quitatnilito⁴ [quitatanilito] nin Rico catca. Rico. Quitatani permiso. Quilia, 'Nechtacahuili,' quit, 'ma niquetza ce nochan nitahuelittaco⁵ [nitacuelittaco]. Pero ahmo quimati can quitatani. Zatepan según momaca cuenta quitta in at tamayan pehua meyachihua in at. Huei catca in at. Huei tayahualtoya in at quemeh ne caltzintan. Icuin tayahualtoya. Tehban ompa tipapanohuaya⁶ talteno. Tiquittah in at ihcon mozcaltia, mozcaltia. Huei mochihuac ya. Entonces pehuac quitenontia⁷ [quitenantia] para ma ahmo mochihua in at.*"⁸

Jim: "Pero nohon oculin quemeh ce coat?"

Narrator: "*Quemeh ce coat. Zayoh monextia quemeh tacat o según ihcuac quitatani permiso. . . . Pero quibta mohueichihua non oculin. Quemeh ahmo quitecualiqueh ma mochihua in at, nimotaliaya [nin motaliaya] non pantomeh⁹ tiquiztoc quemeh ce laguna. Motaliaya pantomeh. Entonces ne mochihuaya non laguna. Pero motaliaya non pantomeh. Pero ahmo*

quitahueliqueh [quitecabualiqueh] porque ompa miquih cuacuehmeh huan ompa ohti. Tons quitenotiqui para ma yohui in at. Pero ceppaza mochiuhca. Ceppa mochiuhca in at. Entonces yeh nen Rico, E. C. campa yeh iaxcan non tal. Ceppa quitta non ohti neztoc yec huei quit cohti¹⁰ huan at ma ahmo tehca.”¹¹

I pressed the narrator to explain how the *achane* had the power to make the water bubble out of the ground. He explained: “Well, it has force. It really has force. It is strong.” (*Pos quiipiya chicahualiz non. Como melaub nohon quiipiya chicahualiz. Chicahuac.*) I asked him to elaborate, and he said, “Well, they say that it probably was the devil. The devil turned into the animal. So that one would say that the [*achane*] was the devil. The devil is also strong.” (*Pos non ma quibtitocah yeh in mejor in ahmo cualli. Yeh in ahmo cualli porque mopata oculin. Para quibtoxa cox yeh in ahmo cualli. In ahmo cualli no chicahuac.*)¹²

Then the narrator explained why the *achane*/devil brought water to the land the Mestizo obtained by trickery from the grandfather. He began by explaining that the grandfather went to his grave resenting what the rich man had done.

“Well, it probably was . . . because [the rich man] did not buy the land. He just took it from C. And right away that sick [old man] resented it. That is what the old man did. It was entirely for that reason.”

I asked: “Because the man died afterward?”

Narrator: “Yes, he died. From so much *aguardiente*. He died.”

I pressed further: “And did the water appear before or after he died?”

Narrator: “He died first. It appeared afterward.”

We had been discussing the fear of the dead, which seemed particularly acute after the end of the UCI rebellion. I suggested:

Jim: “Perhaps the water appeared because the man was angry. Even though he died and was in Mictan [Land of the Dead].”

Narrator: “Well, it is likely that he felt very badly. So much so that he probably [uttered] a curse or did something. I do not know what he did.”

Jim: “But in your mind how do you see it?”

Narrator: “Many will say that when there is a man and he knows [someone] banishes him, well, he does not withdraw. He will not withdraw until he does what he wants to remove what that [other] man did to him. It is sort of like he would carry out an act of vengeance. His spirit did it, his memory did not die. . . . I do not know if he were a good man or not but

since [the rich man] did that to him, snatching that land, well, he probably felt badly."

(*"Pues a lo mejor xa . . . porque ne tal abmo quicoac. Quitecuili za. Huan ca nenque¹³ moyolcoco ne cocoxque. Ne tacat. Nochi non."*)

Jim: *"Porque zatepan miquic in tacat."*

Narrator: *"Uh hu miquic. De tanto refino. Miquic."*

Jim: *"Huan neci in at achto o zatepan miquic?"*

Narrator: *"Achto yeb miquic. Zatepan ya necic."*

Jim: *"Xa neci in at porque cualani in tacat. Mazqui miquic huan yetoc mictan."*

Narrator: *"Pues a lo mejor moyolcoco telcenca. Toni a lo mejor maldición o ta telchihualiz¹⁴. Abmo nicmati que ye ihcon quichihuac."*

Jim: *"Pero tech monemiliz queniuh tiquitta?"*

Narrator: *"Miac quibtozqueh cuando ce tacat huan quimatoc tocatehua, pues abmo tapatabua.¹⁵ Abmo tapatahuaz hasta que quinequi quiquixtiltiz ton quichihuili ne tacat. Cox yeb quemeh yazquia quibtoznequi venganza non quichihuac. Entonces quichihua non ne alma, ne telnamiquiliz por abmo miqui. . . . Abmo ticmati cox cual tacat catca o abmo pero quemeh quichihuilizqui quicuilizque non tal, pues a lo mejor moyolcoco."¹⁶*

The Rain Gods

Somewhere around the time I arrived in Huitzilán in the fall of 1968, there was another event that took place on the rich man's land. A Nahua explained:

"A lightning bolt fell from the sky and killed many [of the rich man's cattle]. I think about seven head of his cattle were killed. They were struck by lightning. Something ate some of them. I do not know if that something ate all of them. But it appears that they swallowed a lot of them. Many were killed. I do not know if they came to remove [the dead cattle] after picking them up from the earth. I do not know what they did with them. We do not know." (*"Huetzic in rayo ompa nebuan¹⁷ miquiqueh miaqueh. Nez chicomeh cuabcueme h miquiqueh. Quinrayohuiqueh. Cequin quincuaqueh. Abmo nicmati cox nochi quincuaqueh. Cox nez quinololoqueh pero yetz¹⁸*)

miaqueh. Miaqueh miquiqueh. Non ahmo nicmati cox ompa hualla ompa quizaco de nohon de quitehc[ob]juli in tal. Ahmo nicmati cox ye ca non ihcon mochiuh. Ahmo ticmatih.”¹⁹

This narrator’s explanation for why the *achane* and the rain gods punished the man who seized the grandfather’s land are good examples of why Nahuas feel bound to treat others well and avoid incurring their wrath. The *achane* that brought the water to the rich man’s land was, according to the narrator, an agent that carried out the old man’s desire for revenge after he had died and had gone to the land of the dead. The old man carried his desire for revenge in his memory, which left his dead body and traveled to the land of the dead, whence it returned as an *achane* and flooded the land the rich man had snatched from him.

During the third period of fieldwork, I was struck by the palpable fear of the dead that Nahuas expressed around Todos Santos. They recounted many stories of the dead spirits returning to the land of the living and punishing with envy sickness or *nexicolcocoliz* their family members and anyone else for whom they harbored a grudge. Envy sickness is a broad category that includes many different chronic illnesses and even death. A dead person can harbor a grudge for many reasons, including an envious intentionality (*tequiuh*). Nahuas particularly tended to attribute grudges to envy in family relationships, and one recounted a story of a grandmother who had envied her daughter-in-law and returned from the land of the dead to get back at her by attempting to kill her own grandson with envy sickness. The effect of such reasoning is to compel Nahuas to avoid offending others lest they carry their grudge to the grave with them.

The rain gods who killed the rich man’s cattle operated differently; they handed out justice to the Mestizo who snatched land unjustly from the Nahuas man C. In stories considered up to this point, the rain gods, often at the instigation of their human companions, organized rebellions to punish those who have acted badly by practicing negative reciprocity, acting as autocrats, and flooding a community. In this respect, the rain gods act as just gods who love the Nahuas. Juan Hernández had declared in his interview that he believed the rain gods love the Nahuas because they provide them with rain and the seed with which to live. The loving nature of the rain gods is a trait they share with the Virgin of Guadalupe, whom some Nahuas, such as Nacho’s brother, also credited with bringing rain to the Nahuas in Huitzilan and elsewhere.

From Discontent to Rebellion

Narrators of "The Kidnapped Wife," "Malintzin," and "The Land Transaction" played different roles in converting the Nahuas' discontent into an organized rebellion. I suspect but cannot prove that "The Kidnapped Wife" appeared soon after the actual kidnapping of the Nahua wife that took place in late April 1977. Narrators, outraged by the abduction, converted the details into the myth of Malintzin. In that story, the plot is reduced to a virtuous woman who takes pity on a crying child only to be dragged into deep water, never to be seen again. The trimmed-down version spread widely in Huitzilán, reaching Ixtahuatalix in the south and Calyecapan in the north by early 1978. The events that took place in "The Kidnapped Wife" were a powerful motive for the aggrieved husband to join the contingent of Nahuas who invited the UCI leader to come to Huitzilán. The subsequent spread of the story of Malintzin helped inspire other Nahuas to join the UCI's land invasion, until the number had reached about forty by the time I returned to Huitzilán in January 1978.

As far as I can determine, the story of "The Land Transaction," but not "Malintzin," continued to be part of the collective memory of the UC rebellion during the third period of fieldwork (2003–2012). "Malintzin" faded from oral tradition after the UCI successfully removed Coyot from the community and burned down his house. Meanwhile, the story of "The Land Transaction," which circulated in Mestizo as well as Nahua oral tradition since the first period of fieldwork, provided the justification for other Nahuas to join them in the UCI rebellion. The story discredited the moral authority of Mestizos who seized land Nahuas once used to grow their food. As pointed out earlier, the alienation of Nahua land began long before the first Mestizo settler had appeared in Huitzilán. The focus on land has continued right up until the end of my fieldwork in 2012 because the predicament of the Nahuas with respect to land has remained the same. Moreover, Nahua corn farmers in Huitzilán, like their counterparts elsewhere in Mexico (Appendini, Garcia Barrios and de la Tejera 2003; Arellano Mares 2012), have had to compete with cheap, industrially produced corn imported from the United States under the 1994 NAFTA agreement. One result is that, following the UCI rebellion, more Nahuas have abandoned the idea of producing their own food and have found work in and particularly outside of Huitzilán. A good number of these have gone to the United States, where they are undocumented workers. Prior to the UCI rebellion, Nahua migration from Huitzilán to the United States was almost unheard-of.

From my perspective as an outside observer, the stories reveal that the UCI rebellion was an indigenous phenomenon in the sense that it was the Nahuas' last desperate attempt to revitalize their corn-farming culture. That culture was based on the value of "working as one" to fill a common granary with enough food to last for an entire year. Usually Nahuas had to produce two crops of corn a year to reach this goal, one they planted around in mid-December and the other in mid-June. The corn-farming culture evolved over thousands of years during which Nahuas developed a high degree of symbiosis with the corn plant (Sandstrom 1991; Lara González 2019). The stories that Nahuas in Huitzilán told about rain gods and water-dwelling animals are contemporary expressions of the ancient fertility cult that was part of that culture. Johanna Broda (1971) traced the fertility cult to the earlier of two cultural strata of cultivators who lived in central and eastern Mexico long before the arrival of the Spaniards and before the Mexica had established their empire in Tenochtitlan, located in the center of what is now Mexico City. The myth of "Malintzin" and the stories of "The Kidnapped Wife" and "The Land Transaction," which has acquired the properties of a myth, provided additional emotional force for the rebellion. In this respect the Nahuas of Huitzilán, who supported the UCI rebellion, resemble the Quechuas in Perú who participated in the Shining Path Insurgency to get back at a Mestizo who stole their resources and assaulted their women (La Serna (2012: 155).

After the UCI

Between 2003 and 2012, long after the UCI rebellion had come to an end, I continued to hear “The President of Hueytlalpan” and “The Water at Ixtepec,” describing the rain gods’ rebellions, which had become enduring collective memories of past interethnic conflicts. The narrators of those stories continued to make associations among the *achane*, the devil, and the Mestizos. I also heard stories I had not heard before, in which some of the same narrators described rain gods and *achane* in new ways in accord with changes they had experienced in their own lives. The Ángel Hernández brothers marked two changes in particular that have affected many Nahuas in Huitzilán: turning away from *milpa* farming in which the members of extended families work as one to fill the family granary; and a change in the ethnic hierarchy that had characterized Huitzilán during the earlier periods of fieldwork in 1968–1975 and 1978.

“The *Achane* of Apohpocayan”

In an interview that took place in 2012, Nacho marked the turn away from cooperative *milpa* farming when he remembered the last time he heard the *achane* in Apohpocayan. He fixed the moment of his recollection around 1970, early one morning when he and his brothers were walking to their *milpa* in Apango. Nacho would soon marry Victoria, move into his father-in-law’s house near Ixtahuatlax, and cease working as one with his brothers on a common *milpa*.

[Apango] is where we had our crop with my brothers. And we heard [the *achane* then] and we do not hear it anymore. And it was after we were working there in Zapotitlán harvesting our *milpa* one time in June, July, thereabouts, and it was when we had arrived going down [to our cornfield] early in the morning. We were going [to Apango] around four in the morning, and we heard it as we descended the slope of the ridge. That

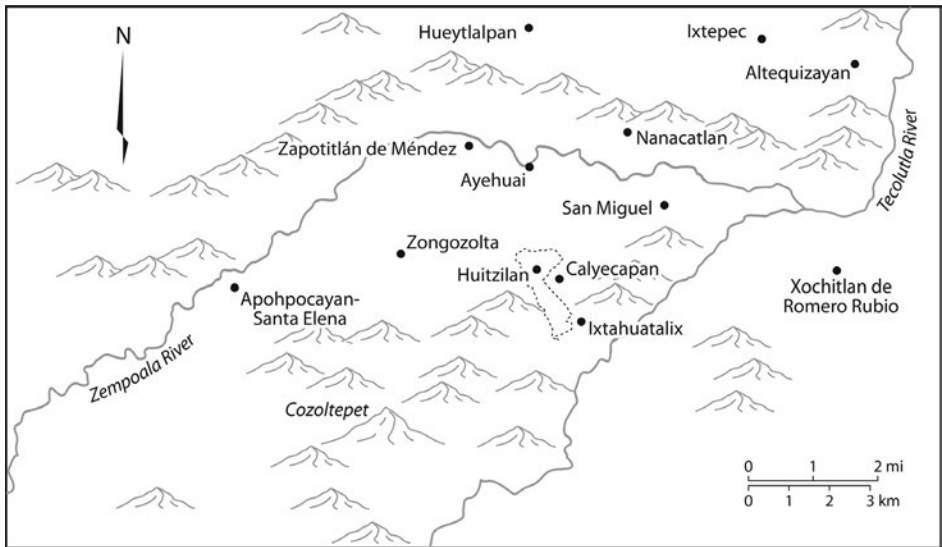


FIGURE II.1. Map of Apohpocayan (Santa Elena) and Aychual.

is where we heard it crying out in Apohpocayan. That afternoon it was sure to rain. And now one no longer hears it. (“*Ompa totatocayan ihuan nocniuhuan. Huan ticaquiah huan axcan abmo ticaquih oc. Huan zatepan tequitiah nican Zapotitlan titapixcayah ce tiempo junio, julio, icuin, huan cuac tia[h]ciauh titehcoh cualcan tyayah. Tyayah quemeh a las cuatro de la mañana, huan ticaquiyah titehcoh. Ompa ticaquih tzahtziz Apohpocayan. Non tiotac seguro quiyahuic. Huan axcan abmo caquizti.*”)¹

He turned his memory into a story that I shall call “The *Achane* of Apohpocayan.” The place name of Apohpocayan is derived from the verb *apohpoxoa*, which means to wallow in water (Karttunen 1992: 12). Mestizos refer to Apohpocayan as Santa Elena in honor of Elena Mendez, the daughter of General Juan N. Mendez, who led Nahuatl troops against the French during the French intervention. Apohpocayan is a good place near which to cultivate a *milpa* because it has an abundance of water flowing out of springs and draining into the Zempoala River that flows through the neighboring community of Zapotitlán de Méndez. Below are the English translations and the Nahuatl originals of Nacho’s story.

1. I do not know if I told you, but a long time ago, when I was about twenty years old or so we worked here in Apango.

2. And we used to go from here to where there is a field of tall grass and we heard someone crying out in Apohpocayan.
3. Someone was crying out.
4. According to what they say there was an *achane* there in Apohpocayan.
5. Because the water made a noise like crying out.
6. In May, when it is going to rain, the crying out begins.
7. If [the *achane*] cries out now, cries out early in the morning, then there will be a rainstorm in the afternoon.
8. Because whatever is in the water, I do not know what it is doing, but it cries out.
9. We could hear the *achane* beating a drum.
10. It is heard clearing a path.
11. And according to what the ancestors said, they killed it.
12. The rain gods killed it.
13. Because now, it is no longer shouting.
14. And the ancestors say the *achane* used to cry out.
15. I do not know myself, but this is according to what the ancestors said.
16. They say there was a boy.
17. He went to look for the crayfish.
18. At the waterfall.
19. And the day came when the boy found a girl there.
20. At the water's edge.
21. And that boy had a drum like the one the Quetzal dancers use.
22. So then he liked to mark a path [by beating the drum].
23. Then that animal, that girl started talking to that boy.
24. And she thought about embracing him to take him away.
25. So she embraced him and she took him into the water.
26. That is why they say that because of that boy, when they hold a fiesta, I do not know for sure, but the ancestors say he clears a path.
27. But now there is no more noise.
28. That water does not make noise.
29. And a long time ago it cried out in Apohpocayan.
30. They call that place Apohpocayan

1. *Abmo nicmati cox nimitztapohuiaya pero huehcauh cuando nicpiya quemeh cempobual xibuit icuin tequitiah nican Apango.*
2. *Huan tiyayah nican te in zacat huan ticaquiyah tzabtzi Apohpocayan.*
3. *Tzabtzi[a]ya.*

4. *Según quihtoqueh que nohon campa Apohpocayan ompa yetoc ce achane.*
5. *Porque tzahtzia in at.*
6. *Tiempo de mayo cuando quiyahuiz ya entonces pehuaz tzahtzi.*
7. *Como tzahtzi in axcan, cuantzin cualcan tzahtzi, entonces non tiotac quipiya ca quiyahuiz.*
8. *Porque yeh in at, ahmo mati quen quichiuhmoc pero tzahtzia.*
9. *Ticaquizquiah non tambor quimacato[c].*
10. *Cualtzin caquizti tabuiltequi.²*
11. *Huan según quimictiqueh.*
12. *Quiyauhteomeh quimictiqueh.*
13. *Porque axcan ahmo tzahtzioc.*
14. *Huan tzahtzia quihtoa.*
15. *Ahmo nicmati pero según ihcon quihtoqueh.*
16. *Quihtoa yetoya ce telpoch.*
17. *Quinittati cozolimeh.*
18. *Ompa campa nohon campa huetzi in at.*
19. *Huan ehoc tonal ompa cahcito ce cihuapil.*
20. *Ompa campa atenti.*
21. *Huan non telpoch quipiya ce tambor de non quemeh quetzaltini.*
22. *Entonces cuellitaya tabuiltequi.*
23. *Entonces non ocuilin, non cihuapil pehuac quinonotza non telpoch.*
24. *Huan quinemili cox quinanahuati ma cuica.*
25. *Tons quinahuati huan yahque quicuiya in at.*
26. *Por eso quihtoa por non telpoch cuando ilhuitia, ahmo nicmati pero según quihtoqueh que non tabuiltequitia.*
27. *Pero axcan ahmo caquizti.*
28. *Ahmo caquizti non at.*
29. *Huan huebcauh tzahtzia Apohpocayan.*
30. *Quilia Apohpocayan.³*

A New Image of an *Achane*

Nacho softened the image of the *achane* when he told the story of “The *Achane* of Apohpocayan.” He described it as the *tonal* of a girl who embraced a boy and carried him into the water where he beat a drum (lines 21–22) like the one used by the Quetzal and the flying pole dancers. Nahuas in Huitzilán played a vertical drum with a single membrane to accompany these dance groups, and Stresser-Péan (2012: 151) notes that others in the Sierra Norte associated the vertical

drum with “the fertility and the nourishing of the earth.” This is further evidence that the story of “The Achane of Apohpocayan” is part of the contemporary fertility cult as practiced in the Sierra Norte.

Unlike the stories of the earlier period, this *achane* is not a threatening figure because she embraced the boy with affection and she did not have a connection with the devil. Nacho declared that he and his brothers heard the boy beating his drum and marking a path when there was a fiesta after the girl embraced him (line 26). To explain why he no longer hears the *achane* of Apohpocayan, Nacho declared that the ancestors said that the rain gods killed it (lines 11–12).

Nacho did not explain his comment, and my first thought was that he was alluding to the dramatic change in the economy of Huitzilán from *milpa* to coffee cultivation. Upon my return to Huitzilán in 2003, I was struck by the degree to which coffee orchards had swallowed up land once used for growing corn and beans.

“The Man from Ayehual”

Then, in 2007, Nacho’s brother Miguel told “The Man from Ayehual,” another story I had not heard before, that describes latent if not manifest hostility as a chronic condition of rain god-*achane* relations but lacking in the ethnic associations found in the earlier stories of the rain gods’ rebellion. The *achane* no longer was the animal companion of *municipio* presidents who practiced negative reciprocity and acted like autocrats and Mestizos who threatened the Sierra Norte communities with too much water.

Miguel was seventy-seven when he told this story. He was living with his wife in Calyecapan next door to his brother, Nicolás, known to his family as Colax. His children were grown by now, and he no longer planted a common cornfield with his younger brothers. In Miguel’s story, a rain god and an *achane* are *compadres* who give the appearance of loving and respecting each other but actually harbor wishes to do each other harm. They displayed the ambivalence of emotion that Nahuas sometimes actually exhibit with their *compadres*, and, more often, with their siblings. In short, Miguel told a story in which he normalized relations between rain gods and *achane*.

Miguel set the action of his story in Ayehual, a locality where the river curves to make a circle below San Miguel (Xamiquel), a community immediately north of Huitzilán. Ayehual is also near where Miguel and his brothers planted their corn on land rented in Zapotitlán in the locality of Apango between Ayehual and Apohpocayan. Below are the English and Nahuatl texts of Miguel’s story,

followed by an explanation of why Miguel abandoned the associations among *achane*, the devil, and Mestizos that he and his brothers had made in other stories such as “The Water in Ixtepec.” Following the texts, I shall suggest that Miguel normalized relations between rain gods and *achane* in accord with a change in interethnic relations in his community.

1. Jim: Once there was a man from Xamiquel (San Miguel). . . .
2. Miguel: Uh hu, Xamiquel.
3. He was in the place called Ayequal.
4. This man and another man were in Ayequal.
5. One went to speak to the other.
6. The *quiyahteotonalle* [rain god’s human companion] asked, “What are you doing, *compadre*?”
7. The *coatonalle* [*achane*’s human companion] replied, “Nothing, I am here is all.”
8. “Ah,” said the visitor.
9. The *achane* was naked.
10. The visitor saw that the *coatonalle* did not have any clothes.
11. He was naked.
12. And the visitor asked him again, “What are you doing?”
13. “Nothing, *cabrón*, I am going to toast some frogs.”
14. The visitor wondered, “You are toasting frogs?”
15. The naked man explained, “And this is to eat in the evening.
16. I get hungry in the evening,” he said.
17. “Uh hu, perhaps you would like to eat one,” he offered his visitor.
18. “Try one of these frogs.”
19. The visitor said, “Good, thank you.”
20. “Eat it if you want to,” said the naked man.
21. From there yes, the visitor asked, “Good, *compadre*, and where do you put yourself these days?”
22. I have been looking for you, and you were nowhere to be seen.
23. I wanted to see you because we love each other.
24. I want us to love each other [and be] in the form of our shadows [coessences as a rain god and an *achane* rather than in human form].”
25. The naked man replied, “Oh yes?”
26. “That is what I want, and I am wondering where you might be.
27. I have gone everywhere looking for you: in the tall mountains, in the gullies, in the forest, at the water’s edge.

28. I have no idea where on earth you roam!" said the visitor.
29. "And I do not see you anywhere."
30. "And you wanted to see me?" asked the naked man.
31. "I am thinking that I do want to see you," replied the visitor.
32. "Oh good, well there is no reason why I would not wait for you," said the naked one.
33. "Uh hu, I shall wait for you at nine because I come out around eight o'clock.
34. I warm myself when the sun comes out.
35. Go where the sun rises.
36. Go there.
37. And I shall wait for you," he says.
38. "If you go tomorrow or the next day, I shall wait for you."
39. Then the visitor, who was a rain god [*quiyauhteotl*], sat down in a cloud that was directly above him and went away.
40. He went where the naked one told him to go to see him.
41. Where the sun rises.
42. The naked one was there but in the water below.
43. That is where his *compadre* was.
44. Nacho: That is where he was.
45. Miguel: But he spotted him from far away.
46. He did not get close to him.
47. Nacho: He did not get close to him.
48. Miguel: The naked one was a big animal.
49. He was big so that they say the visitor, who spotted him from afar, saw he was a big animal.
50. The animal was called a *petacoat* [a large constrictor serpent].
51. Nacho: A *petacoat*.
52. Miguel: The *petacoat* thought to himself, "Uh hu, let that *cabrón* come.
53. Let him know I shall swallow him if he comes."
54. But the visitor did not come.
55. He did not get close.
56. It would be better to go back.
57. And after he went back, he went to speak to him again.
58. "*Horalé compadre*," he said, "I did not want to get close."
59. "Why?" asked the *petacoat*.
60. "If you had, we would have spoken to each other," said the *petacoat*.
61. "Son and the whore, you know I would have eaten [you], and you were going to see me."

62. Nacho: He did not go.
 63. Miguel: He did not go.
 64. The rain god was afraid of him.
 65. Nacho: He was afraid of him.

1. Jim: *Nohon tacat yetoya Xamiquel.*
2. Miguel: *Uh hu, Xamiquel.*
3. *Nican Ayehual monotza.*
4. *Entonces nin tacat yetoya huan nihin tacat yetoya nin Ayehual.*
5. *Yabca quinonotzato.*
6. *Quibta, "Toni ticchiuhtoc compadre?"*
7. *Quilia, "Abmo tei," quibta, "nican niyetoc za."*
8. *"Ab," quilia.*
9. *Nin tacat xitatzic.*
10. *Quitta ne abmo quiipiya itilman.*
11. *Quixitatzic.*
12. *Huan quilia, "Toni chihua?"*
13. *"Abmo tei cabrón," quilia, "nican nimotatatehuatzito," quilia.*
14. *Quibta, "Titatehuatzoh [Titatehuatzoc] cacalameh?"²⁴*
15. *"Huan hin," quilia, "tacuaz," quilia, "yohuac.*
16. *Ta neh," quilia, "nimayana yobuac.*
17. *Uh hu, xa ticuaz ce," quilia.*
18. *"Xicua ce nin cacalat."*
19. *Quilia, "Bueno, tazohcamatic."*
20. *"Xicua," quilia, "como ticuaz."*
21. *Ompa quemah, ne quilia, "Huan bueno, compadre," quilia, "huan can timoabci tehha?" quilia.*
22. *"Ta neh nimitztemo," quilia, "huan abmo canah.*
23. *Nicnequi nimitzittaz quemeh nican timotazohthah ihcon.*
24. *Nicnequi ma timotazohthacah nepa campa toecabuil."²⁵*
25. *Quilia, "Ab quemah," quilia.*
26. *"Nicnequi," quilia, "huan nimolia, 'Pos can yetoz?"*
27. *Ta . . . nochí yabcah," quilia, "tech ne huei tepemeh," quilia, "tech in atahuiyo⁶, tech cuauhyoh," quilia, "tech in atenti.*
28. *"Ni razon," quilia, "can carajo tinemi!*
29. *Huan abmo nimitzitta."*
30. *"Huan tinequia," quilia, "tinechittaz?"*

31. *"Nimoliaya," quilia, "nicnequi nimitzittaz."*
32. *"Ab bueno," quilia, "pos ahmo tei toni," quilia, "nimitzhchiya," quilia.*
33. *"Uh hu, nimitzchiya quemeh a las nueve," quilia, "por neh niquizac," quilia, "quemeh las ocho.*
34. *Nimototonia," quilia, "cuando huitza ya in tonal," quilia.*
35. *"Pero xyo," quilia, "ne campa ca huitza tonal," quilia.*
36. *"Ompa xyo," quilia.*
37. *"Huan nimitzchiya," quilia.*
38. *"Como tyaz moztah ozo huipta," quilia, "pos nimitzchiya."*
39. *Entonces non quiyauhteot motali tamelahua nican ahco ce bola de mixti, huan yohui ya.*
40. *Yohui ya ne campa quinahuati ma ya ma quittati.*
41. *Campa huitza tonaltzin.*
42. *Pero non ahmo ahco yetoc sino tani tech in atenti.*
43. *Yetoc non nicompadre.*
44. Nacho: *Eso.*
45. Miguel: *Pero huehca za quinttato.*
46. *Ahmo quicercaro.*
47. Nacho: *Ahmo quicercaro.*
48. Miguel: *Ah pos huei in ocuilin.*
49. *Huei zo toc quit quittato huehca quittato huei yetoc non ocuilin.*
50. *Monotza petacoat.⁷*
51. Nacho: *Petacoat.*
52. Miguel: *"Uh hu. Ma huiqui ne cabrón" quitmolía.*
53. *"Ta ma quimati," quilia, "nictoloz⁸ como huitza."*
54. *Pero ahmo yahqui cercaro.*
55. *Ahmo quicercaro.*
56. *Mejor moquepac.*
57. *Huan de moquepac, ceppa quilico.*
58. *"Horalé compadre," quilia, "ahmo nihueli," quilia, "nicercaro."*
59. *Quilia, "Que ye?" quilia,*
60. *"Pos ta xiani⁹ timononotzazquiah," quilia, "ompa.*
61. *Hijo y puta," quilia, "ma ticmatic nicuazquia," quitquilia, "huan nechittati."*
62. Nacho: *Ahmo yahqui.*
63. Miguel: *Ahmo yahqui.*
64. *Pos quimaubhuili.*
65. Nacho: *Quimaubhuili.¹⁰*

Interpretation

Miguel's story is unlike the ones considered earlier because it is not about inter-ethnic conflict. It is about the relationship between the human companions of an *achane* and a rain god, who are *compadres* and are supposed to love each other (*motazohtab*) but are really ambivalent (lines 22–24). Kevin P. Groark (2008) suggests the term social opacity for the kinds of doubts that Nahuas express about the motivations of other Nahuas and the suspicion that they are likely to do them harm. In Huitzilán, those doubts arise because one with an envious *tequiuh* (disposition) is likely to dissimulate his or her intentionality. Those born with a twisted heart are inclined to conceal their envy and be out for themselves rather than cooperate with others and feel love; they are the ones who go against the value of “working as one.”

When I heard Miguel tell his story, I could hardly believe what I was hearing because other narrators had told so many other stories in which the *achane* were the animal companion spirits (*coatonalle*) of bad *municipio* presidents or the devil in the guise of a Mestizo. In those stories, the rain gods were affiliated with the priest and the Nahuas and they attacked the malevolent *achane* and liberated a Nahua or Totonac community from a threat. However, the *achane* in Miguel's story is an ancestor, as Nacho explained when adding the detail that he wore an *itapachcoton*,¹¹ a garment open on the sides. This is the same kind of garment worn by the little old Nahua man who had lost his fourteen-hectare plot of land to the rich man who collected on a tab for food and drink. (See “The Land Transaction.”) Nacho's mention of this garment located the action in ancient time, perhaps before Mestizos had settled in Huitzilán and posed such a threat to Nahuas by taking their land and, in some cases, their women.

Miguel made dissimulation an important part of his story, describing the rain god as disguising his true intent in seeking out his *compadre*, the *achane*. The rain god tells his *compadre* that he has looked for him everywhere—in the big mountains, in the gullies and canyons, in the forest, in the water—to no avail (line 27). In this context, the act of looking for another (*temoa*) could be an expression of love. But in fact, while the rain god declared that he was looking for the *achane* because “we love each other” (“*motazohtab*,” [line 23]), his real intent was to do his *compadre* harm.

Likewise, the *achane* (*coatonalle*) dissimulated his own hostility toward his *compadre*, the rain god (*quiyaubteotonalle*). Miguel described their encounter with food symbolism that carries a lot of emotional meaning, particularly with respect to love and envy. (See Chapter 5.) He described how the rain god finds his

compadre, the *achane* (*coatonalle*), grilling some frogs, which Nacho explained are his tortillas. The *achane* is not planning to eat the frogs immediately but will wait to eat them in the evening when he is hungry. The *achane* offers his food to his *compadre*, saying: “Won’t you eat one?” (line 17–18). The rain god accepts his offer and thanks his *compadre* (line 19). All seems in order because the two characters behave as one would expect *compadres* to behave; they share their food as expressions of their mutual love and respect. However, the *achane* dissimulates his hostility because he knows that his *compadre* (the rain god) is looking for him and wants to do him harm by striking him with a bolt of lightning. When his *compadre*, the rain god, announces he will pay him another visit, the *achane* says to himself: “Uh hu, let that *cabrón* come. Let him know I shall swallow him if he comes” (lines 52–53).

The first time I heard this story, I did not understand that envy was the reason for the conflict between the two characters. The Nahuatl word for envy (*nexicoliz*) does not appear anywhere in the story, but is implied rather than asserted outright because Nahuas do not know for certain the intentionality of any person. To help me understand the relationship between the two characters Nacho explained that love (*tazohaliz*) and envy (*nexicoliz*) are two sides of the same coin; where there is one there is the other. He applied his theory to explain the meaning of this story to me in the following way. The two *compadres* appear to love each other but, in fact, the rain god envies the *achane* because he “does not tire from working to eat.” (“*Nin ahmo ciahui tequiti.*”¹²) The *achane*, in his animal form, is a *petacoat*, a large, non-poisonous constrictor snake (*coat*) with an enormous appetite. He just waits in a pool of water with his mouth open and swallows whatever comes his way. The rain god, like the Nahuas, has to work hard to eat and, thus, envies the *achane* who does not suffer with work (*ihiyobuia*). When describing their life histories, Nacho and many other Nahuas told how they had to suffer with work in order to eat. However, while everyone must suffer for this reason, not everyone feels acute envy unless his or her heart is twisted. Nacho was not one to deny that Nahuas had problems among themselves, and the one he frequently mentioned was envy and its dissimulation.

Changing Ethnic Relations

Before and during the UCI rebellion, Nahua narrators expressed their adversarial views of ethnic relations in Huitzilán in their stories of rain gods, as allies of the Nahuas, attacking *achane* who were the animal companion spirits (*tonal*) of Mestizos or their agents. In Miguel’s story, the rain god and the *achane* are

compadres who are supposed to love and respect each other. While Miguel did not mention ethnicity, he describes an ambivalent relationship between two men who act like ordinary Nahuas.

Miguel's story marks a shift from describing the rain god and *achane* relationship as like the hierarchical and antagonistic interethnic Nahua and Mestizo relations before and during the rebellion of 1977–1984. Those relations changed following the UCI rebellion when the Antorcha Campesina gained firm control of the *municipio* government in March 1984. That organization retook the community with the support of some Mestizos and Nahuas, who were on the outs with the UCI. The organization has remained in power by regularly bringing up the threat of the UCI's return and by cultivating class consciousness among the Nahuas. (See Ramé Montiel 2013.)

With the Antorcha Campesina controlling the administrative and judicial machinery of the *municipio* government, local Mestizo elites in Huitzilán could no longer expect to act with impunity because they no longer controlled the offices of the Agente de Ministerio Público and the *municipio* president. No member of a prominent Mestizo family has served as *municipio* president since the end of the UCI rebellion. Nevertheless, in some respects the position of the Nahuas has remained the same. They serve in the *municipio* government today just as they have in the past, with the consent of Mestizos who have come from outside of their community.

“The Storm”

In 2007, I recorded the story of a devastating rainstorm that also appears to be a collective memory of living through the UCI rebellion.¹ The narrator did not specifically make this association, but big storms cause landslides, which Nahuas connect to the fate of men and women in their community. Nahuas I knew said that if a landslide takes place in the mountains that border Huitzilán to the east, then men will perish, and if it occurs in the mountains to the west, then women will perish. This belief is based on the gender association with the cardinal directions; Nahuas associated the east with the masculine half of the diurnal cycle when the sun rises in the morning, and the west with the feminine half of that cycle when the sun sets in the evening. Nahuas stories of storms that cause landslides and memories of the UCI rebellion express what it means to live in the grip of fear and convey the lesson that one should manage one's fears and be observant and clear-headed.

The primary narrator of “The Storm” was Nicolás (Colax) Ángel Hernández, who was seventy-three when he told this story, accompanied by his brothers Miguel and Nacho. Colax did not say that his story was a collective memory of any specific storm. I suspect that his experience of living through a powerful storm, like the one that took place in 1999, is probably the more immediate memory that inspired the story that he repeated in 2007. Nahuas are vague about chronology, so it was difficult to identify the exact storm the narrators had in mind.

Rainfall is usually plentiful or excessive in the Sierra Norte where too much water can cause mudslides, cutting a community off from the outside world and burying houses in tons of debris. The Sierra Norte is part of a region extending inland along the east coast of Mexico that had experienced twenty-eight tropical cyclones in 103 years between 1900 and 2003 (Gómez Ramírez and Álvarez Román 2005: 61). Mario Gómez Ramírez and Karina Eileen Álvarez Román (2005: 58) define a tropical cyclone as a low-pressure system that develops in tropical waters with winds that can reach hurricane levels.

Lucia Capra et. al. (2006: 206–207, 211) describe the effects of the tropical low-pressure system that hit the Sierra Norte de Puebla in 1999, causing mudslides that buried homes in the small community of Totomoxtla near Huitzilán de Serdán.

At the end of September and during the first week of October in 1999, tropical depression number eleven caused heavy rains in the northeast part of Mexico, with spikes in rainfall occurring between the fourth and the fifth of October. . . . The rains caused thousands of mass movements on the eastern flank of the Sierra Norte de Puebla. In the most affected states of Puebla, Tlaxcala, and Veracruz, 200,000, persons suffered damages, and 384 died. The economic damages were massive, with an estimated 200 millions of dollars in losses just for the state of Puebla. . . . Phenomena of this type occur during each rainy season, causing additional damage and deaths. Further deforestation and the construction of roads and other works, not properly planned out, have brought about an increase in the number and the magnitude of these massive events. . . . In towns around Zapotitlán de Mendez, the abundance of water caused massive earth movements that began as rotational landslides of limestone and schist and turned into flows of debris. . . .”

The Story

Colax’s story of the storm is notable for the extent to which he and his brothers develop its authenticity by naming the narrator who told it to them. That narrator was Palatzin, the *compadre* of Colax, whose grandfather was a rain god’s human companion and the main character. The story is important because it is an affirmation of the contemporary Nahuas’ belief in rain gods and their human companions after many had abandoned *milpa* farming. I shall argue that it is also a collective memory of the UCI rebellion.

According to Colax and his brothers, the storm came into Huitzilán because a rain god [*mixcoat* = cloud serpent] from Jonotla, another community to the north, decided to pay a visit to Huitzilán to steal the church bell and cause a storm that threatened to bring down the surrounding mountains, burying the community in mud and debris. The protagonist is a wise person who knows that the cloud serpent from Jonotla is coming to Huitzilán. He warns his work companions what to expect and guides them through a frightening experience.

There are parallels between Colax's story and the UCI rebellion. The storm came from another community (Jonotla) just as the UCI and Antorcha Campesina came from outside of Huitzilán. Some Mestizos told me that the UCI leader, Felipe Reyes Herrera, came from Xochiapulco, and others said he came from Veracruz. There are similarities between a violent rainstorm and an armed conflict, such as those that took place during the UCI rebellion. Nahuas in Huitzilán described a battle between the UCI and Antorcha Campesina, in the locality of Talteno, as consisting of bullets flying as thick as rain drops during a downpour. The flashes of lightning and claps of thunder resemble guns firing during the concluding phase of the UCI rebellion as well as during the second battle of Puebla, which involved the participation of a battalion of 100 Nahuas from the southern Sierra Norte de Puebla (Thomson 1991: 205).

1. Colax: And here is another story.
2. It was my *compadre* Palatzin over there who told it to me.
3. He was working in a sugarcane press.
4. In those days they worked sugarcane presses.
5. Palatzin's grandfather told them, "And this morning a rainstorm is coming.
6. A cloud serpent is coming," he said.
7. And the cloud serpent's companion spirit was this boy who lived here in Jonotla [north of Huitzilán].
8. And he told his father, "Tomorrow I'm going over there to pay a visit."
9. His father asked, "What is your purpose? Where?"
10. "I am going over there to Huitzilán," he replied.
11. "What is your purpose?"
12. "I am going there to go inside."
13. "You are not really going to go there!
14. Yes, [the rain gods in Huitzilán] are the ones who shine.
15. I know them well," he said to his son.
16. "No [don't go], "the father said, "I went there, I was traveling among [the rain gods from Huitzilán] in the bell tower.
17. [But] I did not see them anywhere.
18. I did not see one of them.
19. I know the inside of that bell tower very well.
20. It is not a place for you to enter.
21. Because they are like wasps, those guardians are," he said to his son.
22. "Who is going to go inside?" the father asked.
23. "But no.

24. I can go inside,” the boy insisted.
25. “I am going to find [the rain gods in Huitzilán]” he said, “in those mountains on this and that side [of Huitzilán].
26. I am familiar with those mountains, and we are going to flatten the town,” he said to his father.
27. He wanted to leave the town flattened.
28. “You cannot do it,” his father replied.
29. “And you know that I am telling you do not go there.”
30. “No, I am going,” the boy replied.
31. So then, as the workers in the sugarcane press were telling each other stories, there was one man who was the grandfather of Palatzin.
32. He was the deceased grandfather of Palatzin [who is our neighbor].
33. Perhaps he was the grandfather or the father of the deceased Lomen Chepa, Sevais Chepa, I am not sure.
34. We did not know him.
35. He also had a sugarcane press.
36. [Palatzin’s grandfather] said [to the sugarcane workers], “But no, do not be afraid.
37. We shall see what they will do.”
38. The next morning was very cloudy.
39. The clouds appeared down below.
40. “And they are coming here now,” [Palatzin’s grandfather] told them.
41. “But do not be afraid.
42. You see them down below, and it is already cloudy.”
43. So then those clouds came, and right away they heard the claps of approaching thunder.
44. Nacho: That is how the wise persons are.
45. Colax: Uh hu, the wise persons.
46. “Ah, do not stop being careful,” Palatzin’s grandfather said.
47. “We shall see what they will do.”
48. In a little while clouds came, and soon it rained.
49. And lightning flashed, and the claps of thunder were very loud.
50. [Palatzin’s grandfather] said they had arrived, they had arrived here, they finished [arriving].
51. They say they began shining brightly and thundered, they shone brightly and thundered until they lit everything up, according to the deceased [grandfather of] Palatzin.

52. So then that old man [Palatzin's grandfather] said, "Do not be afraid,
53. We shall see what [the cloud serpents from Jonotla] will do."
54. The [sugarcane workers] saw how it thundered until the [rain gods from Jonotla] lowered [the bell] to take it away.
55. To that place down river they call Teteliah where they threw [dropped] it as they took the bell to Jonotla.
56. They rang it on top of Cozolin [and] took the Ahuehueht with them.
57. The bell is on top of the mountain below on the Zempoala River.
58. The chicken crowed at eleven o'clock.
59. Miguel: It is a big mountain.
60. Colax: It is a big mountain.
61. Jim: It is near Zoquiapan.
62. Colax: It is around Zoquiapan but further on down.
63. Miguel: "Below Zoquiapan, and heading downriver.
64. Here they call it San Miguel Atiquizayan (Altequizayan) and it is down below here.
65. Colax: It is right there.
66. Miguel: It is that mountain that is in the pine grove.
67. It is in a pine grove but no pine trees grow on its sides.
68. Colax: It does not have any pine trees.
69. Miguel: It is the only [one without pine trees], those [other mountains] have pine trees.
70. Colax: And that is how it is.
71. Miguel: And the mountain looks like Cozolin's twin.
72. Colax: It is shaped like a needle.
73. And there the story ends.
74. Jim: Thank you, Nicolás [Colax].

1. Colax: *Huan [oc]ce cuento yetoc no.*
2. *Yeh mismo nipa nocompadre Palatzin² nechilica.*
3. *Yetoya tech ce trapiche.*
4. *No melaub tequitiah tech trapiche tequit.*
5. *Quinilia [Palatzin ihueitah], "Huan nin moztah, huitza ce quiyahuat."³*
6. *Huitz(a) ce mixcoat, "quitquilia.*
7. *Huan non telpoch mixcoat tonalle, nican ni[n] Xonota [Jonotla] ichan.*
8. *Huan quitquilia nitah, "Moztah nen ompa nyaz tacalpanoti."*
9. *Quitquilia, "Toni ticui? Can?" [quitquilia].*

10. *"Ompa nyo Huitzilan," quitquilia.*
11. *"Toni ticuitiuh?"*
12. *Quihta, "Ompa nyo para nicalaquiz," quitquilia.*
13. *"Abmo melaub.*
14. *Quemah, aconi, milaquini.⁴*
15. *Neh nicmatoc cualli," quitquilia.*
16. *"Abmo, huan neh," quitquilia, "nyaca, nicennemitoc tech nen tepozcal.⁵*
17. *Ca abmo can niquittac.*
18. *Ce nen abmo niquitta.*
19. *Neh nicmatoc cualli tech in tepozcal.*
20. *Abmo para ticalaquiz.*
21. *Como yeh yetoqueh quemeh non altzimeh," quitquilia, "tapiani.*
22. *Aconi calaquiti?" quitquilia.*
23. *"Pero abmo.*
24. *Ta hueliz," quitquilia, "nicalaquiti.*
25. *Niquinixnamictiuh," telia, "nohon tepemeh de nepa centapal⁶ huan nican centapal.*
26. *Niquinixnamiqwi tepemeh huan tamayan mocahauz," quitquilia, "in pueblo."*
27. *No quinequi tamayan cabuaz nin pueblo.*
28. *"Abmo tibueliz tabueh," quitquilia.*
29. *"Huan teh ticmati neh nimitzilia abmo xyo."*
30. *"Abmo, ta nyaz," quitquilia.*
31. *Entonces non melaub quemeh nin axcan motapobuitoqueh trapicheros, yetoya ce tacat nican quiliaya Pala Petzin huehueht.⁷*
32. *Catca ihueitabt catca nin.*
33. *Cox yeh ne Lomen Chepa catca, Sevais Chepa,⁸ ihuan itabt o hueitabt catca, abmo no nicmatic.*
34. *Abmo tiquixmatqueh.*
35. *Yehba no quiptiya trapiche.*
36. *Quilia, "Ma abmo," quilia, "abmo ximaubhuilican."*
37. *"Tebhan tequittazqueh," quitquilia, "que chibhuazqueh."*
38. *Non imozticah melaub tanexitoh.*
39. *Monexti mixti nepa tani.*
40. *"Huan huitza," quitquilia, "axcan," quitquilia.*
41. *"Pero abmo ximaubhuilican.*
42. *Namehban quitztoqueh nepa tani huan tamixtemic ya."*

43. *Entonces huitza ya non mixti huan niman ne caquizquia ya ne hualliuh ne tatzini ya.*
44. Nacho: *Ihcoya yec tamatinimeh⁹ ya.*
45. Colax: *Uh hu, tamatinimeh.*
46. *"Ah ahmo xicpolocan cuidado," quitquilia (Palatzin hueitabt).*
47. *"Tebhan tiquittazqueh quen cihuazqueh."*
48. *Ce tepitzin melauh tamixtemico pero niman quiyahuit.*
49. *Huan tapentantihuiz huan melauh nen tatataztini chicahuac.*
50. *Quihteuhqueh quiehcolticab, ehocah nican, que nin non tayehcohtoc.¹⁰*
51. *Peuhqueh quit tamilinib huan tatatzini, tamilinib huan tatatzini hasta ne taxoxotah, quihata ne Palatzin catca.*
52. *Entonces quihtoa nen tabtita, "Ahmo ximauhuican.*
53. *Tebhan tiquittazqueh que chihuazqueh."*
54. *Quitztoqueh quit ihcon ma ya tatatzinitih hasta ihcon cuicuiyahqueh quitemoltiah.*
55. *Hasta ta tani quit Teteliah¹¹ tani ca nican non quitamotatoh, huan de nin nequepia[h]¹², cualcuitiquizquih campana non Xonota [Jonotla].*
56. *Quitatatzilini tech non Cozolin [huan] cuicatilia in Ahuehuebt.*
57. *Ompa yetoque campana icuaco non tepet Zempoala tani.*
58. *Ta quitzabtzi in pio a las once.*
59. Miguel: *Huei tepet.*
60. Colax: *Huei tepec.*
61. Jim: *Campa Zoquiapan.*
62. Colax: *Campa Zoquiapan para tani.*
63. Miguel: *Tani Zoquiapan huan hualtani.*
64. *Nican quilia San Miguel Atiquizayan huan nicuin tani.*
65. Colax: *Ompa mero.*
66. Miguel: *Ta yehba za non tepet yetoc ocoyoh.*
67. *Ocoyoh pero nochi lados ahmo tei ocot.*
68. Colax: *Ahmo tei quipiya.*
69. Miguel: *El único, non tepet yetoc quipiya ocot.*
70. Colax: *Huan ihcon no.*
71. Miguel: *Huan melauh motta como Cozolin compañero.*
72. Colax: *Cuatahuitztic.¹³*
73. *Huan ompa tami non cuentos.*
74. Jim: *Tazohcamatic Nicolás.¹⁴*

Interpretation

Colax identified his source as his *compadre* Palatzin, whose grandfather is the original narrator Colax was quoting (lines 2, 5). Later in the story (lines 31–34) Colax went into detail with his brothers to establish Palatzin’s grandfather’s identity by defining his relationship to people they knew or did not know. Nahuas in Huitzilán place a great deal of importance on the personal experiences of particular narrators whom they believe are credible, so they take pains to name the source of their narratives. Palatzin is Francisco Pasión, and his grandfather is the rain god’s human companion (*quiyauhteotl*) who lived in Huitzilán. Colax placed his story in the ancient past; he explained the formation of a mountain that resembles Cozolin and the church bell in Huitzilán, located on an island in the middle of the Zempoala River.

The story is about a *mixcoat* or cloud serpent that comes from Jonotla, a community north of Huitzilán (line 7) and brings a powerful rainstorm. Colax explained the significance of Jonotla’s location when he quoted Palatzin the elder telling his coworkers at the sugarcane press “they are coming here now,” referring to the clouds down in the valleys north of Huitzilán (line 40). Colax has in mind the view from the ridge above the northern end of Huitzilán from which one can see in the direction of the sea and the source of the tropical depressions that strike the Sierra Norte. When Colax and his brothers cultivated a common *milpa*, they climbed to the top of that ridge and then descended toward Zapotitlán and on to Apango, where they had their corn plot. From the top of that ridge one has a spectacular view of the high ridge to the north, across the Zempoala River, and the Totonac communities of Ixtepec and Nanacatlan. At one time Miguel, seeking work, had crossed that ridge and walked beyond Ixtepec to Huehuetla, a Totonac community further to the north. On his journey he could see Jonotla.

Colax anthropomorphized the agent who brought the storm to Huitzilán from Jonotla as an adolescent boy (*telpoch*), who tells his father about his plans (line 7). As an adolescent, he is brave—too brave, in fact—and prone to excess (*ilihuizti*). Rain gods or cloud serpents can be prone to excess and bring too much rain, such as in the storm that actually caused the mudslides that nearly destroyed Totomoxtla in 1999. The boy’s father tries to discourage him, as many fathers try to keep their sons from causing or getting themselves into trouble. Colax (line 12) described the boy saying that he planned to go inside the church tower in Huitzilán with the daring intention of stealing the bell. Colax described

the father as warning his son that he will run into those who shine referring to lightning-bolts or rain gods in Huitzilán who will defend their community from rain gods coming from other communities, like Jonotla. Colax employed the imagery of warfare telling of invading cloud serpents attacking the rain gods inhabiting the mountains flanking Huitzilán on the east and the west, dislodging tons of mud [lines 26–27].

The father of the cloud serpent tells his son that he too went to Huitzilán when he was younger, and brought one of the many storms coming into Huitzilán from the direction of Jonotla (line 16). On line 21, the father tells his son that the ones who shine, referring to the rain gods from Huitzilán who appear as bolts of lightning, are like wasps (*altzimeh*), are guardians (*tapiáni*), and are fierce. In another story, Miguel used more militant language, describing the rain gods of Huitzilán as defending their community with Mausers, World War I era rifles.

Colax described Palatzin's grandfather telling the sugarcane press workers what to expect during the storm and counseling them not to be afraid (lines 36–37, 40–42, 46–47). These lines are a good example of a narrative as a lesson (*neixcuitil*) from the ancestors that Nahuas in Huitzilán try to apply in their own lives. The ancestor in this case is Palatzin's grandfather, who was a rain god's human companion and a wise person who knew things that others do not know (lines 44–45). Colax related how Palatzin's grandfather prepared the workers for the storm that was coming by quoting the grandfather as saying (lines 41–42): "[D]o not be afraid. You see them down below, and it is already cloudy." The grandfather was clairvoyant and knew about the conversation between the boy and his father. As a rain god, the grandfather also knew about the weather and could sense the danger of a powerful storm.

Colax described the storm approaching by referring to the rain gods from Jonotla as bolts of lightning, which "began shining brightly and thundered, they shone brightly and thundered until they lit everything up" (line 51). Colax's description of the storm approaching is like what his younger brother, Nacho, recounted of the battle that took place on Talteno in Huitzilán that contributed to the end of the UCI rebellion. The story of "The Storm" could also be a collective memory of earlier battles such as those Nahuas would have experienced during the French Intervention.

After the storm, the cloud serpents return to Jonotla after first ringing the bell on top of Mt. Cozolin and taking Ahuehuecht with them. Ahuehuecht drops the bell on an island north of Huitzilán in the Zempoala River, and it is now

Mt. San Miguel Atiquizayan (Altequizayan, alternate spelling) (lines 53, 63–64). Colax conflated the bell from the church tower in Huitzilán with the chunk of Mt. Cozolin shaped like a bell, which Ahuehuetl took with him when the rain gods accompanied him to his home in the sea where he can no longer destroy Huitzilán with a flood. (See Appendix.) Colax's brother explained (lines 66–67, 69) that Mt. San Miguel Atiquizayan is in the middle of a pine grove and is the only mountain that does not have any pine trees growing on its side. It resembles the smooth sides of Mt. Cozotepet and the current bell in the Huitzilán church tower.

The Rain God's Advice

The grandfather's advice in Colax's story offers a lesson for how to handle the next rebellion as well as terrifying weather events by controlling fear. The grandfather tells the workers not to be fearful saying: "But no, do not be afraid. We shall see what they will do" (lines 36–37). He repeats this advice as the storm approaches, saying: "They are coming now. But do not be afraid." He advises the workers: "Do not stop being careful. We shall see what they will do" (lines 46–47). After the storm begins with bright flashes of lightning and loud claps of thunder, the grandfather says for a third time: "Do not be afraid. We shall see what they will do" (lines 52–53).

Nacho blamed fear for the many acts of violence carried out by Nahuas in the UCI. He said:

After they killed the head of the UCIs, the one they called Felipe Reyes [Herrera], the time of fear began. There was fear. [The UCIs] started spying [on those they thought were their enemies]. They spied on them. Until they killed even those who did not have any blame. They snuck up on them to kill them. ("Zatepa de quimictiqueh tayecanqueh de ne in UCIs, non monotzaya Felipe Reyes, pues pehuac mauhcayot. Oncaya mauhcayot. Peuqueh mopihpiyah ya. Mopihpiyah ihcon. Hasta que ihcon quintamictiah que mas abmo tei itahtacol. Quichtacamictiqueh.")¹⁵

Things got much worse after Juan Aco allegedly orchestrated the burning of the UCI's corn plants on the Talcuaco pasture around 1979, and Nahuas in the UCI erupted with fury (*cualayot*). Relations among Nahuas were already very tense, as the Nahuas in the UCI were wary of those who stayed on the margins. The death toll probably exceeded 200 victims, mostly Nahuas; it is difficult to come up with an exact figure. (See Taggart 2007: 44.) Suspicions of witchcraft

were rampant and may have contributed to the death of Juan Hernández's mother and the massacre of Nacho's wife, Victoria, and her sisters and brother, who perished as the UCI was imploding in October 1983. Near the end of their rebellion, Victoria's brother was drinking with his UCI companions when they got into an argument about a pistol, which ended in the brother's death. Victoria's sister confronted the killers, threatening them verbally. While the family gathered to mourn their loss, the killers, perhaps fearing revenge by witchcraft, broke into their house and killed them with repeating shotguns, leaving Victoria's infant son attempting to nurse from his dead mother's breast.

How Collective Memory Changes

Nacho and his brothers provided the most complete record of stories from 1970 to 2007, from which I shall offer a model of how they conserved as well as changed their oral tradition. To begin, the Ángel Hernández brothers attempted to conserve their stories by repeating the words of their ancestors exactly as they heard them. The members of their audience, who had heard the stories before, corrected them when they departed from expectations. Colax corrected his older brother, Miguel, for his lapses of memory on several occasions. Colax's daughter did the same for her father when he failed to mention a detail that she remembered him including on prior storytelling occasions. Moreover, Nacho told the story of "The President of Hueytlalpan" in 1978, and his brother Miguel told it again in 2007 with a high degree of consistency. They did not have access to a written or recorded version of this story with which they could standardize their narration over twenty-nine years. Jan Vansina (1985:161) attributed such conservative tendencies in oral tradition to the tenacity of individual memories.

The experiences that led to the creation of the myths of the rain gods' rebellion, recorded during the first and second stage of fieldwork, were fading but not forgotten. The Nahuas were still the subordinate members of an ethnically stratified community, although class relations are changing as more Nahuas marry across former class lines. The elite Mestizo families who owned most of the land before the UCI rebellion continue to be major landowners, and Nahuas are their workers. The Ángel Hernández brothers still told "The President of Hueytlalpan" and "The Water in Ixtepec," which captured these experiences. However, they also told "The *Achane* of Apohpocayan," "The Man from Aychual," and "The Storm," in which they incorporated experiences following the collapse of the UCI rebellion. "The *Achane* of Apohpocayan" expresses what it meant to Nacho to cease working as one with his brothers to cultivate a common *milpa*.

“The Man from Ayequal” captured Miguel’s view of changing interethnic relations during the post-UCI rebellion period. “The Storm” is Colax’s memory of a terrifying cyclone as well as the UCI rebellion.

The Ángel Hernández brothers adopted these new stories in a process that is in partial accord with Maurice Halbwachs’s (1992: 76) theory that change in one’s social position opens one to new memories. Halbwachs offered the example of the Roman wife who acquires new memories when she enters and become a member of her husband’s family. Halbwachs declared: “We change memories along with our points of view, our principles, and our judgments, when we pass from one group to another” (1992: 81). Halbwachs’s example of the Roman wife applies to any change that occurs in the life of an individual or a society that can help explain how some aspects of oral tradition change while other aspects stay the same.

Miguel and Colax Ángel Hernández did not change their residences at marriage, but their social circumstances changed when the elite Mestizo families lost their position of political dominance in Huitzilán. In his story of “The Man from Ayequal,” Miguel captured the meaning of this change by describing an ambivalent relationship between a rain god and an *achane* who are *compadres*. While appearing to love and respect each other, they have an ambivalent relationship, not unlike siblings in many Nahua families. The *achane* is wearing the garb of an ancestor, a narrative device that places the action in an earlier time, possibly before the arrival of Mestizo settlers in Huitzilán. Miguel did not forget what ethnic and class relations were like in Huitzilán prior to the UCI rebellion, because on the same storytelling occasion in 2007 he also told “The President of Hueytalpan,” in which the rain gods organize and carry out a rebellion against the *achane* who is the *tonal* or animal companion spirit of a *municipio* president who takes orders from Spain. In his version of “The President of Hueytalpan,” the rain gods have moral virtue and the *achane* is the animal companion spirit (*coatonalle*) of a *municipio* president who took orders from Spain.

“The Storm” reveals one of the limitations in Halbwachs’s theory, in which the focus is on the social origins of collective memory to the exclusion of other aspects of experience. To borrow from Tim Ingold (2000: 361), Colax demonstrated his skill in weaving experientially based perceptions of water and weather into the fabric of “The Storm.” In 2007, he and his brothers refreshed their memory of the fear they felt during the UCI rebellion of 1977–1984 by describing the fear they felt during storms like the one in 1999 that devastated the town of Totomoxtlá.

Conclusion

The central argument of this book is that the UCI rebellion in Huitzilán was primarily an indigenous development that grew out of the Nahuas' frustration in attempting to live according to the cooperative values of their corn-farming culture. Unlike a number of other rebellions that have taken place in rural Mexico, the one in Huitzilán did not have charismatic leaders with close ties to the local community and experience outside of it, who helped turn local discontent into insurgency. The rebellion put into action fantasies of revenge Nahuas expressed in rituals and oral stories about rain gods attacking the animal companion spirits of bad *municipio* presidents and unwanted non-Nahua settlers. The evidence consists of rituals and related stories from oral tradition that are a discourse on the political events in Huitzilán during the course of my long-term fieldwork in Huitzilán that began in 1968 and ended in 2012. The fieldwork covered three periods in the developmental cycle of the rebellion prior to, during, and after the insurgency.

The Nahuas' rituals and stories in Huitzilán during this period are in accord with James C. Scott's (1977a, 1977b, 1985, 1990) cultural theory of peasant unrest, which asserts that social domination creates shared indignities among members of a subordinate class and fosters unrest and resistance manifest in local culture. Scott and others¹ have wondered about the power of a cultural theory of peasant unrest to explain how everyday acts of resistance and fantasies of revenge turn into organized rebellions. Scott (1985: 341) wrote that "there is no necessary relationship between the small and limited demands typical of a 'reformist' consciousness and the kinds of actions taken to achieve these demands." This caveat holds for the Nahuas, who have organized their response to their experience of being a subordinate group in an ethnically stratified society in different ways. (See Schryer 1990; Sandstrom 2008.) In a retrospective essay, Scott (2005: 401) wrote: "For discontent to develop into rebellion requires a whole set of contingents, mediating factors that are beyond my—and I daresay most others

observers'—capacity to formulate simply." Nevertheless, he made suggestions that are useful for understanding how one might approach this question.

A Necessary Condition

Scott mentioned (1985: 341) that the "typical revolutionary crisis" comes about when "small but essential demands that are experienced by large numbers of people simultaneously" are "thwarted." The Nahuas in Huitzilán, in the years leading up to the UCI rebellion, met this condition in the following way. The ostensible aim of the rebellion that broke out in late 1977 was to obtain land for growing corn. Many Nahuas, interviewed during the first stage of fieldwork, declared that they wanted to grow enough corn to fill their household granaries to last for one year. The concentration of land by the Mestizos made it difficult for many Nahuas to achieve their goal. Most of the land within Huitzilán had become the private property of non-Nahuas or Mestizos even before they had moved into the community during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The Nahuas regained some land through the *ejido* program in the 1940s, but the days of land reform in Mexico ended. Nahuas faced the prospect of working for low wages on the estates of the Mestizos in their own community or looking for work in other parts of Mexico and, more recently, the United States.

Some Mestizos had acquired their land through questionable means, such as demanding land titles from Nahuas who had run up tabs for food and drink in stores. Nahuas who were victims of such practices could not expect a fair hearing if they registered their complaints with the *municipio* authorities, who were powerful Mestizos or agents acting on their behalf. Their best recourse was to appeal to authorities in the former district capital of Tetela de Ocampo, which required making an arduous journey by foot and going to considerable expense without a guaranteed outcome.

The situation in Huitzilán was reaching a crisis and erupted in the UCI rebellion. Some Mestizos hoped that state intervention might mediate or adjudicate the situation. They expressed dismay that none was forthcoming, and a tense situation turned into a tragic one for Nahuas and Mestizos alike. To be sure, state police carrying riot gear appeared every once in a while to chase Nahua insurgents off the Talcuaco cattle pasture. However, these efforts did little to resolve the situation because the fleet-footed Nahua insurgents scurried up and over the ridge bordering Huitzilán on the east, and blended with other Nahuas in Xinachapan working on their corn and bean plots. A Mestizo whose family was embroiled in the conflict reported getting little help from the authorities

when he, and a contingent representing elite families, asked for assistance to drive the UCI from Huitzilán. This man told me that an official suggested that he and others from Huitzilán form their own militia and drive the UCI out of the community. The man from Huitzilán did not want to take this course of action because it would have meant a violent confrontation with a large group of armed Nahuas. Nahuas and Mestizos alike reported that eventually the army became involved and burned down the UCI's cornfield, triggering what one Nahua observer called the rage or *cualayot*. Throughout the rebellion and particularly after the death of the UCI organizer, Felipe Reyes Herrera, and the burning of the Talcuaco cornfield, Nahuas in the UCI turned on other Nahuas who did not want to join in what they regarded as a risky venture. Left to their own devices, Nahuas and Mestizos endured a tense seven years of low-level violence, during which an estimated 200–300 Nahuas and some Mestizos perished. The UCI rebellion ended when the Antorcha Campesina took control of the *municipio* government in March 1984.

Indirect Connections

Long-term fieldwork on the developmental cycle of the rebellion revealed indirect and direct connections between the Nahuas' stories of rain gods and water-dwelling animals and the formation of the UCI in Huitzilán. Among the indirect connections are oral stories like those that Scott (1990: 18–19) called the “third realm of subordinate group politics that lies strategically between” what he (1990: 2) referred to as the “public transcript” and the “hidden transcript.” He (1990: 2) defined the public transcript as “a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate.” The hidden transcript (Scott 1990: 7) included accounts of the offensive behavior of the dominant elite that appeared in the stories from Huitzilán, such as “The Land Transaction” and, especially, the “The Kidnapped Wife.” The third realm of political discourse refers to myths such as “The President and Priest,” “The President of Hueytlalpan,” “The Water in Ixtepec,” “The Humble Man's Predicament,” and “Malintzin” that narrators dissimulated sufficiently so that they would not be held to account for their disguised criticisms of the elites' behavior.

Collective Memories

These stories of rain gods, who collectively organized to attack the water-dwelling animals (*achane*)—the companion spirits of bad-acting local authorities and

non-Nahua settlers—are collective memories (see Ricoeur 2006: 119) of past insurgencies in the Sierra Norte de Puebla that played a role in the history of Huitzilán. Miguel Ahuata's story of "The President and the Priest," recounted at least one year prior to the UCI's appearance in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, anticipated and modeled the UCI rebellion. It offered a roughly sketched plan for how the Nahuas could carry out an armed rebellion in the future by taking advantage of their numbers and their collective value of "working for one" to challenge the authority of the less numerous but nevertheless very powerful non-Nahua elite. The UCI rebellion began as an organized rebellion in the sense that thirty to forty Nahuas armed themselves, collectively invaded two intestate cattle pastures, planted several crops of corn, shared the harvest among themselves, and carried out torchlit marches through the town, painting the whitewashed houses of the wealthy non-Nahuas with slogans such as "Death to the rich."

The political importance of collective memory in Huitzilán is consistent with Victoria Bricker's (1981) observation that Maya, in the Highlands of Chiapas and Guatemala and the lowlands of the Yucatan peninsula, conserved and shared their memories of interethnic conflicts in their myths and rituals. Miguel Ahuata's 1975 story and the 1977 UCI rebellion are examples of Bricker's (1981: 179) notion of "myth becoming history," by which she meant that "events conform to their mythological antecedents." It is significant that Miguel Ahuata was a man who was devoted to his church and who was taken seriously by his peers, who nevertheless told a story expressing a revolutionary consciousness. In telling this story, he marked a change in how the Nahuas positioned themselves from opposing the Church to becoming an ally of the priest in a struggle against Mestizo authority.

Direct Connections

The stories of "The Land Transaction" and "The Kidnapped Wife," recast as "Malintzin," described or alluded to behaviors that contributed directly to the UCI rebellion in Huitzilán. This does not necessarily mean that the stories as culture are the cause of the rebellion, but they contributed to forming a collective consciousness favorable to the UCI insurgency. The Nahuas' stories contributed to the rebellion much as Shiller (2019: 3) argues that "popular stories that spread through the word of mouth, the news media and social media" can drive economic events. "The Land Transaction" describes the member of an elite family demanding title to a fourteen-hectare plot in payment for an unpaid tab for food and drink that an elderly Nahua man with a drinking problem had run

up in the elite man's store. In the views of the Nahuas I know, the Mestizo took cruel advantage of the old man's weakness. Other Mestizos also volunteered that this transaction violated local ideas of fairness. The story is becoming a myth commemorating three of the old Nahua man's descendants, who joined the UCI in the hopes of getting the land back.

There is also a direct connection between the events alluded to in the story of "Malintzin" and the decision of a Nahua man, who became a local UCI leader, to invite Felipe Reyes Herrera, the UCI organizer, to Huitzilán. The Nahua turned his house above Talcuaco into the headquarters of the rebellion. Malintzin is a virtuous woman who passes by a spring and bends down to pick up a crying infant. The infant turns into a serpent and pulls her down into deep water, never to be seen again. The story is an allusion to an actual event that took place just before the UCI rebellion, when the son of an elite family kidnapped the wife of a Nahua man at gunpoint. Members of his elite family were also involved in the dispute over the ownership of the Talcuaco pasture in the years leading up to the UCI rebellion. The actual kidnapping took place in April 1977 when the son, along with his cousin, burst into the home of the Nahua man who lived above Talcuaco, and snatched his wife from her marital bed at gunpoint in front of her husband. The husband later joined a contingent of Nahuas that walked over to the neighboring village of Pahuata and invited Felipe Reyes Herrera to form a chapter of the UCI in Huitzilán, ostensibly to protect the Nahuas from their enemies and to carry out their own acts of vengeance.

A Sufficient Condition: The UCI

A sufficient condition for the Huitzilán rebellion was the appearance of the UCI organizers in the southern sierra and particularly in the neighboring community of Pahuata. The organizers came with the aim of persuading the Nahuas and Totonacs to invade intestate lands. The UCI organizers began their campaign by holding a workers' rally in Martínez de la Torre, a destination for many migrant Nahua laborers from communities in the southern Sierra Norte de Puebla that included Huitzilán. This rally took place against a backdrop of what Schryer (1990: 186–189) refers to as the revival of agrarianism on the national political level. The UCI were a catalytic agent, which appeared in the Sierra Norte at a time when the Nahuas in Huitzilán had built up considerable anger against several members of elite families and expressed their sentiments in stories that offered a blueprint for and then mirrored an organized rebellion. Felipe Reyes Herrera led torchlit marches through the streets of Huitzilán,

broadcast speeches from the UCI headquarters above Talcuaco, and probably suggested to the Nahuas how to utilize their greater numbers. However, the Nahuas had raised their own consciousness with stories of rain gods and water-dwelling animals before Felipe Reyes Herrera had appeared on the scene. Miguel Ahuata's story was a good example of what Scott (1977a: 5) meant when he urged for a shift in focus away from "the precipitants of peasant rebellions" and onto "the shared values and goals which find expression through rebellion." In Miguel Ahuata's story of "The President and the Priest," the rain gods strike and kill the animal companion spirit of a *municipio* president who practiced negative reciprocity. One of the most conspicuous shared values in Nahua culture in Huitzilán in 1975 was reciprocity, which was the basis of their value of working for one in the extended family. The Nahuas in the UCI put this value into practice when they cooperatively cultivated a *milpa* in the soil of Talcuaco.

Huitzilán Is an Unusual Case

There are special circumstances in Huitzilán's history and culture that played a role in turning everyday acts of resistance into an organized rebellion. During the first stage of fieldwork, the Nahuas were living in what amounted to a colonial situation in which non-Nahuas had come into their community and established themselves as the dominant group, much as they had in other indigenous communities in the Sierra Norte de Puebla. There is a long history of resisting the settlement of non-Nahuas in the Sierra Norte that dates back to the colonial era. Stories of the rain gods' human companions organizing rebellions trace to Andrés Mixcoatl who, in the sixteenth century, opposed the friars' efforts to convert the Nahuas and other indigenous groups to Christianity. As Serge Gruzinski (1989: 37) recounted, Andrés Mixcoatl practiced divination with grains of corn² and was interrogated in 1537 for being a shaman. He worked as a healer, acted on the clouds and the elements, and used hallucinogens. Some believed him to be a god. From 1533 on, he took up an itinerant life that led him northeast from the Valley of Mexico to the Sierra Norte de Puebla. There is a direct line from Andrés Mixcoatl to the human rain gods like Petra in Huitzilán, who organized other rain gods to expel the *achane* who brought the water that threatened the Totonac community of Ixtepec with a flood.

Ethnic Hierarchy

A comparison of the experience of Nahuas in comparatively egalitarian, mono-ethnic communities and ethnically stratified ones in the southern Sierra Norte provides support for the hypothesis that living under the direct domination of Mestizos radicalized the Nahuas in Huitzilán. While the Nahuas were organizing the UCI in Huitzilán, those in the more class egalitarian community of Yaonáhuac were participating in a bitterly contested but democratic election between the candidates of the PRI and Socialist parties. The Nahuas' political participation in Yaonáhuac was relatively peaceful. At the same time, the stories Nahuas in Yaonáhuac told about rain gods and water-dwelling animals did not manifest the polarization and militancy compared with the ones recorded in Huitzilán at about the same time. Yaonáhuac then was primarily a mono-ethnic community of Nahuas who did not live in daily contact with Mestizos. The situation was very different in the bi-ethnic community of Huitzilán, where Nahuas lived in close association with Mestizos and had far more opportunities to experience indignities and humiliations.

Not all Nahuas in Huitzilán responded in exactly the same way to their subordinate status. One of the most gifted storytellers in Huitzilán expressed a wish to become a wealthy *patrón*, but he was not paralyzed by his false consciousness and did not think his suffering was legitimate (See Scott 1985: 323, 324, 345). He, like other Nahuas, was keenly aware that some Mestizos took advantage of their situation and abused their power by violating a tacit agreement to live according to shared values expressed in *compadrazgo* rituals. Ironically, those Mestizos who attempted to exert their brute dominance over the Nahuas inadvertently promoted a revolutionary consciousness that some Nahuas put into practice when they invaded the Talcuaco and Taltempan cattle pastures and planted them with corn.

After the UCI Rebellion

The UCI rebellion that began with that invasion has become a painful collective memory for Nahuas and Mestizos alike in Huitzilán. The community changed in many ways as a result of that rebellion, some of which narrators express in new stories about rain gods and *achane*. Before and during the early months of the UCI rebellion, narrators described a polarized relationship between rain gods and water-dwelling animals (*achane*) in a moral drama that parallels the contest

between good and evil in the San Miguel dancers' morality play. In the years following the UCI rebellion, Nahuatl narrators described *achane* and rain gods in new ways that are important for understanding the current predicament of Nahuas in Huitzilán following the UCI rebellion. One is the turn away from cooperative *milpa* farming expressed as the disappearing voice of the *achane* of Apohpocayan, and another is a change in the interethnic hierarchy manifest in less polarized and asymmetrical images of rain gods and *achane*.

Nahuas have turned away from cooperative *milpa* farming and turned toward wage labor in part because the UCI rebellion did not result in a significant redistribution of the land Isidro Grimaldo and others had taken from Nahuas many years earlier. Local wealthy elite Mestizos continue to own the bulk of the arable land in Huitzilán, and Nahuas are the workers on their estates. Regarding interethnic relations, Nahuatl narrators have softened or even reversed the polarization and asymmetry between rain gods and water-dwelling animals that characterized their earlier stories. Narrators appear to be responding to a new order in which local elite Mestizos ceased to be a threat after they lost control of local political authority. Nevertheless, the Nahuas continue to live under the authority of other Mestizos who bring orders from outside of their community.

In conclusion, examination of the Nahuas' rain god and *achane* stories recorded during all three periods of fieldwork in Huitzilán revealed how the Nahuas have positioned themselves relative to their ancestors, the Church, and the Mestizos during a turbulent time in their history. Their stories are collective memories, social commentary, and an inspiration for taking political action. They are a record of the Nahuas' long struggle to live according to their values. They are a connection to their ancestors, whose lessons have helped them cope with powerful forces of weather and politics over which they have little control.

Appendix

“Ahuehuet,” 1975

By Juan Hernández

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1. He used to live on Mt. Cozolin [Cozoltepet].
2. Ahuehuet used to live on Mt. Cozolin.
3. And that is where he made his home.
4. And that is where he made his home.
5. One day at dawn, the rain god decided, “This Ahuehuet, he is living here.
6. Because he is living here, he will soon finish off the town.
7. Well, as for what we must do, it would be better to take him far away so that, even though there might be a big flood, nothing will happen because he will be far away.
8. And if he is close by, soon all will perish.”
9. They say they decided, “Good,” and one of the rain gods asked, “But how shall we take him?”
10. And another replied, “How shall we take him?”
11. We shall take him as a rain god because he is like a god.
12. Ahuehuet is like a god.”
13. And Ahuehuet is called called Juanito.
14. And the rain gods wondered, “Well, how shall we take him and we do not know the name of his saint?”
15. One of the rain gods said, “We’ll name him Juanito now.”
16. “Good, but how shall we take him?”
17. “We shall take him and we shall do it this way.
18. It would be better to take him far away.
19. We shall take him far away so that he will not finish off the town.
20. We shall trick him into thinking there will be a dance and we shall invite him to go and eat.”

21. They say that they placed him in a ravine in case he were to cause a big flood.
22. In that ravine they put some big arches but they put big arches like the ones that people put [on their houses].
23. And they say that some did not like it.
24. Then they decided it would be better if they were rainbows.
25. They started putting rainbows across the ravine but they made them look like arches.
26. Across the ravine they made an arch of rainbows.
27. And the rain gods decided, "Now that the arches are in place, let us go talk to Ahuehuet."
28. The arch of rainbows was put into place, and the rain gods decided, "Let us bring him now."
29. The rain gods went to Cozolin and said to Ahuehuet, "Now, will you please go with us to a different place."
30. They invited you to a feast.
31. Let us go now because they told us it is important that we bring you with us because they have already killed the turkeys for the feast.
32. They are going to hold a dance.
33. You are going to be a *compadre*.
34. It is important that you go with us now."
35. And Ahuehuet said, "Well, I cannot go now because I cannot bring my things."
36. The rain gods replied, "Yes, you can."
37. You can bring everything but they told us you should particularly bring your house.
38. They told us you should bring your house.
39. Do not come empty-handed."
40. Then Ahuehuet said, "I am to go there to stay."
41. I shall not come back."
42. They took him in the evening.
43. "Well now," Ahuehuet said, "wait a little while for me to bring my house."
44. Ahuehuet cut off the top of the mountain, he cut off the top of the mountain, he cut it out of the same mountain [Mt. Cozolin].
45. He cut it and decided to take it, although the rock was as heavy as the church tower in the center of Huitzilán.

46. They say he decided to carry the rock; the rock was big, and he decided, "Well now, I am going to bring my burden."
47. I am going to bring my burden."
48. He cut a piece out of the mountain and brought it with him.
49. They say Ahuehueht carried it and carried it until he saw a beautifully adorned place that he liked.
50. "Oh," he said to himself, "it is true they invited me to something that is adorned and beautiful."
51. Well, they say that he left in the water the burden he had brought with him.
52. That is, in the big waters [of the Zempoala River].
53. He thought to himself, "Well good, and it is almost dawn, and now that the sun is about to rise, I shall not arrive in time [if slowed by carrying this heavy load]."
54. And he asked if it is still far away.
55. The rain god said, "Well right now, we still have a long way to go because we have not traveled halfway.
56. We have a long way to go.
57. And you carry a heavy load," the rain god said.
58. Ahuehueht agreed, "Yes, I have a very heavy load."
59. Well before it dawned, Ahuehueht dropped his load as he passed by [the Zempoala River].
60. The load was a piece of the same mountain where he had made his home.
61. And it is true that he left a piece of the mountain he was carrying in the water.
62. It is still there.
63. I also know where it is.
64. It is below Tuxtla.
65. Yes, that is where it is.
66. And they say that Ahuehueht took it there.
67. It is his same load.
68. When it dawned, he dropped it as he passed by after [the rain gods] had carried him through the night.
69. They had carried him through the night.
70. When they were about to arrive, he dropped his suitcase in the water.
71. They arrived dropping him off where he would remain.

72. The rain gods said to him, “We are here already, right here is where they invited you [to attend the feast and the dance].
73. Now wait for us to bring some musicians so you can dance.”
74. So the rain gods went away, and they went away tricking him and they went away from there.
75. Another rainstorm began, it was a big one, and when the big rain began, the water rose where Ahuehucht was left waiting.
76. But he did not die.
77. He is in charge [of the rain] even today.
78. “Good, well now you will not return to Cozolin.
79. You are here now,” the rain gods said.
80. They say he is in charge.
81. The rain gods exerted a great effort to leave him there.
82. They were the same rain gods who had taken him.
83. They are the same ones (who did this) so he would not stay on Cozolin.
84. They removed him from Cozolin, taking him far away so that he would not bring an end to the community.
85. That is how it was.
86. They removed him [and] took him to another place.
87. And from there they say that the rain gods fled from him, and then Ahuehucht started to cry.
88. Ahuehucht started to cry.
89. “Why did you go away, and just as a big rainstorm started?” he thought to himself.
90. That is how they left him there.
91. He is always crying.
92. He always cries that way.
93. He has remained there up until today.

NAHUAT TRANSCRIPTION

1. *Catca yetoya tech in Cozolin [Cozoltepec].*
2. *Yetoya itech in Cozolin yebha no nen Ahuehucht.*
3. *Huan ompa chanchihuaya.*
4. *Huan ompa chanchihuaya.*
5. *Ce tonal quinemiliqueh cuando tanecic que quitmoliab quiyauh-teomeh, “Bueno nihin Ahuehucht, xe nican chanchihuaz.*

6. *Pero ta nican chanchihua, niman quinpoloz tech in pueblo.*
7. *Pos axcan para ticchihuazqueh, pos axcan mejor ticuicatih huehca para mazqui no mochihuaz in at huei pero abmo tei pasaroz porque huehca yetoc.*
8. *Huan ta cerca pos, niman tamiz."*
9. *Pos quinemiliqueh quit, "Bueno," quibtoa, "huan," quihtoa [ce] in quiyauhsteomeh, "huan nin . . . queniuh para ticuicazqueh?"*
10. *Huan occe quibtoa, "Pos queniuh ticuicazqueh?"*
11. *Ximacacan cuenta queniuh ticuicazqueh porque quiyauhsteot quemeh ce dios.*
12. *In Abuehueht quemeh ce dios."*
13. *Huan monotza in Abuehueht, monotza Juanito.*
14. *Huan quitmolia, "Pos queniuh ticuicazqueh, huan abmo ticmatih toni nisanto?"*
15. *Pero axcan," quitquilia, "tictalitih 'Juanito.'*
16. *Pero," quitmolia, "bueno, quenin ticitazqueh," cequin quihtoah.*
17. *"Ticuicazqueh pero ximacacan cuenta quenin cuicazqueh.*
18. *Pos axcan mejor ticuicatih huehca.*
19. *Ticuicatih huehca para abmo niman polihuiz in pueblo.*
20. *Pos axcan ticacayahuatih que quichihuatih ce baile huan tiquiinvi-tarozqueh ma yohui ta tacuati.*
21. *Pos quitaliqueh quit ca in atahuat [atabuit¹] quemeh den achto ma ya mochihuac in at huei.*
22. *Pos itech in atahuat quitaliqueh huei, huei ihcon ma ya quitaliqueh cequin arcos pero nohon arcos ma ya quitaliqueh quit tacat.*
23. *Huan yehha quit occequin abmo cuellitaque.*
24. *Entonces quinemiliqueh motaliti mejor nohon cozamalomem.*
25. *Cozamalomem peuhqueh motaliqueh tech in atahuat pero quemeh arco mochihuac.*
26. *Huan itech in atahuat mochihuac quemeh arco nohon cozamalomem.*
27. *Huan quinemiliqueh, moliah quit, "Pos axcan mochihuac ya nen arco, pos axcan tyohueh ticnotzatih ya."*
28. *Mochihuac den primero arco den nen cozamalomem huan quitmoliah, "Axcan," quitmoliah, "ticuicatih."*
29. *Yahqueh quiyauhsteomeh campa Cozolin huan quitquilia, "Axcan," quitquilia, "xun abmo ticchihuaz favor techcehuicaz neppa.*
30. *Mitzinvi-taroqueh ma ta tacuati.*

31. *Tyohueh porque importa technahuatiqueh que xitechcebuica porque yetoc huebuebxo timictiqueh ya.*
32. *Mochibuateh baile.*
33. *Tebha tiquizati de compadre.*
34. *Pos axcan importa que tyohueh."*
35. *Huan quihtoa nen Ahuehueht, "Pos axcan ahmo nibueliz nyaz porque ahmo hueli nicuicaz notamamal."*
36. *Quiliah in quiyauhteomeh, "Pos quenahmo hueliz.*
37. *Hueliz ticuicaz nochi pero technahuatiqueh xicuica mochan.*
38. *Technahuatiqueh xcuica mochan.*
39. *Ahmo iuhqui."*
40. *Entonces quihtoa, "Pos nyo nimocahuati.*
41. *Ahmo nyo nimoquepati."*
42. *Tayohuac quicuiaqueh.*
43. *"Pos axcan," quitelia, "pos nechchiyacan tepitzin ma nicui nochan."*
44. *Quicuatona ce pedazo in tet in Ahuehueht, quicuatona ce pedazo in tet, mismo tepet quicotonac.*
45. *Quiteic huan quinemili cuicati porque mama in tet huei como quemeh torre nombon.*
46. *Quinemili quit quimama in tet, huei in tet huan quitmolía, "Pos axcan," quitmolía, "nicuicati nomaleta.*
47. *Nicuicati nomaleta.*
48. *Pos quicotonac in tepet huan cuiac.*
49. *Ihcon quit cuica huan cuica ihcon quit hasta ihcon nochi tachixti [tachizti]² por tahueliztiuh³ Ahuehueht que cualtzin tachihchiutoc.*
50. *"Ah," quitmolía, "pos melaub," quitmolía, "nechinvaroqueh cualli huan pos ne tachihchiutoc," quitmolía.*
51. *Pos ihcon quit cuica ihcon tamama huan cabcito tech ce at.*
52. *Ma ya huei in at.*
53. *Quitmolía, "Pos bueno," quitmolía, "huan tanecic," quitmolía, "huan tanecic ya," quitmolía, "huan ahmo hueli tiabcih."*
54. *Huan ma tataniz cox huebcauh.*
55. *Quilia, "Pos yequintzin hasta ahmo tabco in obti huebca tiyetoqueh.*
56. *Huebca tiyetoqueh.*
57. *Pos axcan huan tieti ya," quitquilia.*
58. *Quilia, "Quemah, tel nieti ya."*
59. *Pos antes de taneciz, pos tech in at quicautiquiz nimaleta.*
60. *Mismo in tepet.*

61. *Huan melaub quica[hua]to in tepet.*
62. *Hasta axcan yetoc.*
63. *No nicmatoc campa yetoc.*
64. *Yetoc campa nen Tuxtla para tani . . .*
65. *Quemah yetoc.*
66. *Huan quihtoa ca yehha cuicuiac in Abuehueht.*
67. *Mismo yeaxca.*
68. *Cuando tanecic, ompa quicautiquiz porque catca cuiaqueh yobuac.*
69. *Cuiaqueh yobuac.*
70. *Cuando ta quit ihciuhca ahciqueh quicautiquiz tech in at ne maleta.*
71. *Ahciqueh quit nen caxiuqueh [taxiuqueh]⁴ campa mocahuatiuh.*
72. *Quitquilia, "Nican ya," quitquilia, "zayoh nican ya," quitquilia, "mitzinvitaroqueh," quitquilia.*
73. *"Yequintzin," quitquilia, "pos techyaca," quitquilia, "para nicuiti cequin musico para timihtotiz," quitquilia nen Abuehueht.*
74. *Pos yahqueh nen quiyauhteomeh huan yahqueh ma ya cacayautih huan nican yahqueh.*
75. *Pehuac occe quiyahuit, telcenca huan den pehuaco cequin quiyahuit telcenca por mohueichihuac in at huan ompa mocaub.*
76. *Pero ahmo miquic.*
77. *Hasta axcan tamandaroa.*
78. *"Bueno," quilia, "pox axcan ahmo timoquepaz oc.*
79. *Axcan nican ya."*
80. *Pos ihcon quit non tamandaroa.*
81. *Ma ya para quicaubqueh, mochihuiliqueh ya.*
82. *Pero mismo quiyauhteomeh cuiaqueh.*
83. *Mismo yehhan para ahmo [macamo] caxiuhqueh tech in Cozolin.*
84. *Huan caxiuhqueh in Cozolin huehca quichihuac para ahmo iziuhca tamiz in pueblo.*
85. *Ihcon.*
86. *Para caxiuhqueh ompa cuiaqueh.*
87. *Huan de ompa quit nohon quicholohuiliqueh huan después pehuac choca quit.*
88. *Pehuac choca Abuehueht.*
89. *"Bueno," quitmolía, "pos ne quenin tyaz," quitmolía, "huan telcenca pehuaz in quiyahuit?"*
90. *Pos ihcon ompa quicaubqueh.*
91. *Nochipa choca.*

92. *Nochipa choca ihcon.*
 93. *Pos ompa za mocabuac hasta axcan ompa yetoc.*

“The Drunk”

by *Mariano Isidro*

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1. Well, there was a drunk who got drunk, and he got drunk [and] arrived in front of the presidential palace.
2. He gave a wild shout.
3. A policeman came and grabbed him.
4. He said, “Well man, why are you going to eat me?”
5. What are you doing?”
6. The drunk replied, “I am drunk and gave a wild shout.
7. Don’t you see that you have a need?
8. It has not rained for some time.”
9. “But how am I to blame?” [the policeman asked].
10. [The drunk] replied, “It has not rained because you are stupid.
11. I want it to rain in three days.”
12. “Really?”
13. “Yes.”
14. “Well, get out of here now.”
15. They lifted him [from his bed so he would leave].
16. But the next day the policeman went to speak to him.
17. He said, “The president wants to talk to you.”
18. [The drunk] replied, “Well, I do not have anything to take [say to] him.”
19. [The policeman] replied, “But nevertheless, I came to take you to him.”
20. “Good, well let’s go.”
21. [The drunk] arrived.
22. [The president] said, “You declared we are stupid.
23. That you want it to rain in three days.
24. Well now, you want it to rain, and if it does not rain, we are going to kill you and burn you so you will know not to be a fool.”

25. "But is there anyplace you can see from where I am going to bring the rain?"
26. "That is not our job.
27. May it rain, and if not, we are going to kill you."
28. "All right," [the drunk] says, "give me three days, and if it has been three days, and if it does not rain, well then so be it, kill me already."
29. "Well then, go."
30. So then he went.
31. He said to his wife, "Make me my lunch.
32. I am going away.
33. I am going away in a hurry.
34. The official there is going to kill me."
35. "All right."
36. She made his lunch, and he went away.
37. He traveled for one day [and] came to a wilderness.
38. And he traveled the next day, [and] in the evening, he came to [another place] after another day's journey.
39. He arrived at a grassy place, in that wilderness.
40. It was a grassy place.
41. He found our mother sweeping a small hut.
42. "What are you doing, grandmother?"
43. "Well, nothing, son.
44. Where are you headed?
45. Where are you headed?"
46. He said, "I am going to a place where god will help me.
47. But it is late for me [to continue traveling].
48. Would you give me lodging here?"
49. "Here, of course.
50. Sit down over there.
51. I'll finish sweeping in a short while and you can go inside."
52. "Good."
53. So then that was the house of the rain gods.
54. He had arrived at the rain gods' house.
55. Our mother was their mother.
56. So then our mother finished sweeping and said, "Come inside, son."

57. He went inside, and she said, "I am going to cover you because my children are very unruly.
58. They are very unruly.
59. So they will not hit you.
60. Uh hu."
61. [The narrator gets ahead of himself]. It appears one arrived, and asked him.
62. "What happened to you?"
63. He said, "Well . . ."
64. [The narrator returns]. So then, that mother of ours picked up a *petate* and stretched him out with his down in one of the corners of the hut where he lay with his head covered.
65. The children arrived, there were two of them, they were small, just like these children, but they had curly hair [narrator points to children].
66. They arrived, [and] one of them said, "I have come, Mama!"
67. She replied, "Good, son."
68. The other one said, "I have come, Mama!"
69. "Good, son, will you eat something?"
70. One of them said, "Well, I am very tired.
71. I shall not have any supper."
72. "Well," she said, "how about one taco?"
73. One little taco?"
74. The boy replied, "Well, all right.
75. She said, "There is a boy over there who came from afar, and he is running away [because] a bad thing will befall him."
76. One of the boys asked, "What happened, Mama?"
77. She said, "Well, he is running away.
78. They want to kill him."
79. [The boy] asked, "And who are they and why are they going to kill him?"
80. She explained, "He got drunk."
81. [The boy] says, "Well, let's talk with him."
82. "He is lying over there."
83. She opened the *petate*.
84. And then [the drunk] told them, he said, "Well, it has been a while since it has not rained in my town, and I got drunk and shouted a savage cry, and they threw me in jail.

85. And I told them they are stupid.
86. And I wanted it to rain in three days.
87. But where am I going to get the water?
88. And for that reason, the next day they sent someone for me, the president sent for me [and declared that] if it does not rain in three days, I will have made [and lost] a wager, [and] he was going to kill me.”
89. “Uh hu,” the rain god said.
90. “That is right,” [the rain god] explained, “it has been some time since we have gone there.
91. We have not gone there for this reason.
92. Because we used to work there regularly.
93. Regularly we worked [there].
94. But then they cursed us and started tossing insults at us.
95. Well, then we stayed away.
96. It was better not to go because so they would not swear at us [for bringing rain].
97. Now we work on other things farther away.
98. Where they do not say anything to us.
99. We work on the question of plants.
100. [And] on the question of things requiring water.
101. So the plants [might grow] better.
102. We do not go to do a bad job.
103. And we involve ourselves and, we support [farmers where], we go.
104. We take ourselves [to those places].”
105. [The drunk] asked, “And do me a favor, [but] I do not have any money.
106. But do me the favor [of bringing rain, and] I shall wait for you there.”
107. “Of course.”
108. [The rain god] said, “Let’s go to your home, and you buy a candle and adorn a table.
109. Decorate it with flowers.
110. Light that candle and [place] chairs [around the table].
111. [Put] chairs all [around] it.
112. Just like when you are hosting a *padrino* at that table, so we can rest.
113. And we work quickly.”

114. [The drunk] replied, "If you do me the favor, sure."
 115. [The rain god] went on, "And warn the president to warn the others not blame us for working again.
 116. Do not punish me anymore, eh.
 117. Well good [if you agree], then we shall go there in a few days, eh.
 118. And in the meantime adorn [the table] and we shall be there soon."
 119. [The drunk] really did return home.
 120. He told the president, "Well, wait a little bit until such and such day when the [rain] workers will come.
 121. They want everything to be ready."
 122. "Really?" [the president] said.
 123. "If not, we are going to kill you."
 124. [The drunk] replied, "No man, I want to make things right."
 125. "Good."
 126. "Correct, is this [what you told us] really true?"
 127. On that day they adorned the table.
 128. He came to tell them to adorn the table, to adorn it completely.
 129. They lit the candle, and clouds began arriving.
 130. Thick ones.
 131. They arrived already.
 132. Then the bolts of lightning began to appear.
 133. They lit up the sky, eh, [along with] claps of thunder.
 134. So then they released a downpour, but a good one.
 135. To beat the band.
 136. And the [rain gods] sat around the table, they were all around it.
 137. All at once there they were, all very small.
 138. They gathered around the table, and it was raining very hard.
 139. They were there at great cost, eh.
 140. From there, the [rain gods] warned [the people] that at once they would release a wall of water, eh.
 141. They came warning them [that they would release the water] at once, and [then] they left, eh.
 142. From then on it has rained there on par ever since, eh.

NAHUAT TRANSCRIPTION

1. *Pos ne borracho mobuinti, huan de mobuinti, abci ne palacio ixteno.*
2. *Cuauhtzahtzi.*

3. *Huitza in policia huan quitzquiya.*
4. *Quilia, "Pero hombre, que ye tinechtacuati?"*
5. *Toni ticchiuhtoc?"*
6. *"Nihuintitoc huan nicuauhtzabtztoc," quibtoa.*
7. *"Xa ahmo tiquitta toni necesidad ticpiya?"*
8. *Quipiya tiempo ahmo quiyiuhoc."*
9. *"Pero neh ton culpa nicpiya?"*
10. *Quibtoa, "Que ahmo quiyuihui [quiyahui Huitzilan spelling] porque namehbhuan nantontos.*
11. *Pero neh nicnequi," quibtoa, "de que a tres dias quiyuihui."*
12. *Quibtoa, "Pero de veras?"*
13. *Quibtoa, "Uh hu."*
14. *"Pos ahora ximologaro."*
15. *Quihualtiqeh.*
16. *Pero imoztica occe yohui in policia huan quinotzato.*
17. *Quilia, "Mitznotza in presidente."*
18. *Quilia, "Pos ahmo tei nicuiquilia."*
19. *Quibtoa, "Pero por todos modos," quibtoa, "nimitzcuico."*
20. *"Bueno, pos tyohueh."*
21. *Abcic.*
22. *Quilia, "Teh tiquihtoc porque titontos.*
23. *Que teh ticnequizquia quiyuihui a los tres dias."*
24. *Quibtoa, "Pos axcan," quibtoa, "ticnequi ma quiyuihui," quibtoa, "huan ta ahmo quiyuihuiz, timitzmictiti huan timitztatati para ticmatiz ahmo tixolopi."*
25. *"Pero ahmo canah ticati [tiqui[tt]ati]," quibtoa, "de que forma nicu-iti in quiyuihuit?" quibtoa.*
26. *"Tebhuan ahmo totequiuh.*
27. *Ma quiyuihui, huan ahmo, timitzmictitih."*
28. *"Bueno," quibtoa, "nehcabualican tres [dias]," quibtoa, "huan a las tres días," quibtoa, "huan ahmo quiyuihui," quibtoa, "pos cuah-cobn," quibtoa, "nehmictican ya."*
29. *"Bueno, pos, ahora xyo."*
30. *Entonces yahqui.*
31. *Quilia ni cibuatzin, quilia, "Nechtali nolocnhi.*
32. *Neh nyo."*
33. *Quilia, "Neh nyo de pelada.*
34. *Nehmictiti ompon in autoridad."*

35. "Bueno."
36. *Talic nilonchi huan yeh yobui ya.*
37. *Quichibhuac ce tonal, cabcito cuauhyoh.*
38. *Huan imoztica, tiotac, ahcic in occe viaje tiotac ya.*
39. *Ahcic tech ce ixtahuat, ne cuauhyoh.*
40. *Ce ixtahuat.*
41. *Cabci ce tonana, ce xacaltzin tzictzin, tachpantoc.*
42. "Toni ticchihua abuelita?"
43. "Pos ahmo tei hijo."
44. *Can tyo?*
45. *Can tyo?"*
46. *Quihtoa, "Neh nyo," quihtoa, "a ver campa dios nechpalehuia."*
47. *Quihtoa, "Pero nimotiotaquili ya.*
48. *Nechmaca posada nican?"*
49. "Quenamo nican."
50. *Nican ompon ximotali," quihtoa.*
51. "Nitamitachpanati huan al ratito ticalaquiz."
52. "Bueno."
53. *Entonces in ichan ne rayos.*
54. *Ichan ne rayos ahcique.*
55. *In tonantzin ne nimama.*
56. *Bueno entonces, entonces tamitachpana tonana huan quilia, "Xcalaqui hijo."*
57. *Calaic ne huan quihtoa, "Nimitztzontzacuati porque nopilhuan cemi malitos.*
58. *Cemi malitos."*
59. *Quihtoa, "Mocan [macamo] mitzmacaqueh."*
60. "Uh hu."
61. [Narrator jumps ahead] *Nez que ne ehoc ya huan quinonotzaz.*
62. "Toni mitzpasaroa tehhu?"
63. *Quilia, "Bueno . . ."*
64. [Narrator returns] *Entonces, quicuic ne petat ne tonana huan quitzontzohuac⁵ tech esquina, ompa tzontzactoc ya.*
65. *Ehoqueh ne in pipil, omeh yeh chiquititos, quemeh hin, pero chinos.*
66. *Ehoqueh, quilia, "Nihualla mama!"*
67. *Quilia, "Cualli hijo."*
68. *In occe quilia, "Nihualla mama!"*
69. "Bueno hijo, nancenarozqueh?"

70. *Quihtoa*, "Pues *neh cemi niciuh*toc.
71. *Abmo nicenaroz*."
72. "Bueno," *quihtoa*, "a ver ce *taquito* si *quiera*?"
73. *Ce taquito*?"
74. *Quihtoa*, "Pos *bueno*."
75. *Quihtoa*, "Ompon *yetoc ce muchacho que huitza de huebca*," *quihtoa*, "*huan yohui*," *quihtoa*, "*quipasaroz ce mal*."
76. *Quihtoa*, "*Toni quipasaro mama*?"
77. *Quihtoa*, "A ver," *quihtoa*, "*pos yohui de pelada*."
78. *Quinequi quimictizqueh*."
79. *Quihtoa*, "*Huan hon aconimeh por toni quimictitih*?"
80. *Quihtoa*, "Pues *mobuinti*."
81. *Quihtoa*, "A ver," *quihtoa*, "*ticnonotzacan*."
82. *Abi*," *quihtoa*, "*tzontzactoc*."
83. *Quitizontapoa in petat, eh*.
84. *Huan entonces ompa quinilia, quilia*, "*Pos quiپیya tiempo que abmo quiپیuh*toc *nopueblo*," *quihtoa*, "*huan neh nimohuinti*," *quihtoa*, "*huan nicuauhtzabtzc huan nechtamotac carcel*."
85. *Quihtoa*, "*Huan niquinili que por tantos*."
86. *Quihtoa*, "*Neh nicnequi que a las tres dias quiپیuhui*."
87. *Huan nebhua can nicuiti in at*?"
88. *Quihtoa*, "*Huan por hon*," *quihtoa*, "*nechtatitaniqueh imoztica nechtatitani in presidente que ta abmo quiپیuh a los tres dias, nitanic in chance, nechmictiti*."
89. "*Uh hu*," *quihtoa*.
90. *Quihtoa*, "*Hon eh eh*," *quihtoa*, "*quiپیya tiempos ompa abmo tiyactoqueh*."
91. *Quihtoa*, "*Por abmo tiyactoqueh por hin forma*."
92. *Quihtoa*, "*Porque tebhuan ompa titequitiah parejo*."
93. *Parejo tequitiah*."
94. *Quihtoa*, "*Pero después*," *quihtoa*, "*tebhuihuicaltiah⁶ huan peuc techtamotiliya descomunios*."
95. *Quihtoa*, "*Pos entonces timoquetzqueh*."
96. *Mejor abmo tyohueh porque techhuicalticozqueh⁷*."
97. *Quihtoa*, "*Axcan titequitih*," *quihtoa*, "*occe cosa, cachi huebca*," *quih*toa, "*tyohueh*."
98. *Quihtoa*, "*Pero ompa abmo tei quihtoa*."
99. *Tebhuan tequitih*," *quihtoa*, "*en cuestión de plantas*."

100. *Cuestión de cequin cositas,*” *quihtoa,* “*para in at ma oncac.*
 101. *Ne plantas ma yetoz de mejor.*”
 102. *Quihtoa,* “*Abmo tyobueh titequitih por ticchibuatih mal obra.*”
 103. *Quihtoa,* “*Huan tebhuan,*” *quihtoa,* “*timocomprometen, huan como ticsosteneros,*” *quihtoa,*” *tyobueh.*
 104. *Tyobueh tebhuan mismo,*” *quihtoa.*
 105. *Quihtoa,* “*Huan necchihuilia in favor,*” *quihtoa,* “*neh ahmo nicpiya centavos.*
 106. *Pero nan nechchuili[c]an in favor,*” *quihtoa,* “[*ni*]namechchiya ompa.”
 107. “*Ta can ahmo [quenamo].*”
 108. *Quihtoa,* “*Tyobueh mochan,*” *quihtoa,* “*huan ticoa,*” *quihtoa,* “*ce cerita, huan ticadornaro in mesa.*
 109. *Ti[c]talia,*” *quihtoa,* “*xochit.*
 110. *Ticprenderoa,*” *quihtoa,* “*ne velita huan nin asientos,*” *quihtoa.*
 111. “*Nin asientos nochi ne.*
 112. *Como cuac ce padrino ticnamiqui,*” *quilia,* “*ne tech in mesa,*” *quihtoa,* “*para tebhuan timochehuizqueh,*” *quihtoa.*
 113. *Quihtoa,* “*Huan tequititihueh rapido.*”
 114. *Quihtoa,* “*Como nan nechchihuilia in favor, quenamo.*”
 115. *Quihtoa,* “*Huan tanahuati in presidente que ma quinahuati los demás, que ma ahmo quemah techhuicaltican por titequitizqueh occe viaje.*
 116. *Pero ahmo,*” *quihtoa,* “*nechcastigaroa [techcastigaroa] un porquito más, eh.*”
 117. *Quihtoa,* “*Pos bueno,*” *quihtoa,* “*entonces ompa tyobueh nihin tonalmeh, eh.*”
 118. *Quihtoa,* “*Hin tonal titachihchihua,*” *quihtoa,* “*huan ompa tiye-toqueh,*” *quihtoa,* “*rápido.*”
 119. *Melauh hualla.*
 120. *Quilia in presidente,* “*Pos motachaa tepitzin oc todavia hasta tal día huallazqueh in tequitineh.*
 121. *Que quinequih arreglaro ya,*” *quihtoa.*
 122. “*De verás?*” *quihtoa.*
 123. “*De ahmo, timitzmictitih.*”
 124. *Quihtoa,* “*Abmo hombre,*” *quihtoa,* “*nicnequi nicarreglaro,*” *quihtoa.*
 125. “*Bueno.*”
 126. “*Correcto, de verás?*”

127. *Chibchihuac in mesa ten tonal.*
 128. *Quilico, chibchihuac in mesa, nochi bien adornada.*
 129. *Quixoltalti in cerita huan pehuac huitza in mixti.*
 130. *Duro.*
 131. *Huitzeh ya.*
 132. *Entonces pehuac quizacoh in rayos.*
 133. *Tatecuiniaya⁸, eh, ne truenos fuertes.*
 134. *Entonces quicahuili ce aguacero, pero bueno.*
 135. *Que se entiende!*
 136. *Huan zance moyohuallocob tech in mesa, parejito nochi.*
 137. *Ceppaza nochi tzictzitzin.*
 138. *Nochi moyohualtihuetsi tech in ne, huan ne quiyihutoc fuerte.*
 139. *Ne yebhuan mociuhuitoqueh [moihuhuitoqueh], eh.*
 140. *De ait, se viaje quinahuatituzqueh⁹, quixtiquizqueh pero rollo de at yactoc, eh.*
 141. *Ceppaza quinahuatituzqueh ne huan yahqueh, eh.*
 142. *Quemah de ahí continuamente quiyihuaya parejo, eh.*

“The Drunk” II

by Juan Mauro

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1. Once there was a drunk who lived in the tavern.
2. He lived drinking in the tavern.
3. And then someone was collecting a contribution to pay for a Mass.
4. [The contribution] was to pay for the priest to say a Mass to bring rain because it had not rained in the town.
5. It had not rained.
6. So then many joined together and collected a contribution for the Mass.
7. It was so the priest would say a Mass so it might rain.
8. And that drunk drank, he drank, and he drank.
9. Well, one of the many [collecting for the Mass] said to him, “You, man, don’t you attend Mass?”
10. Won’t you give a small contribution so the priest will say a Mass?

11. You are hindering us.”
12. [The drunk replied], “Uh.
13. Now you want rain.
14. Remember how it was when, yes, it really rained.
15. And you scolded the rain.
16. You made them stop [the rain].
17. Because you [wanted] them to stop the rain, the lightning bolts got angry with you.
18. That is why they no longer bring us rain.
19. The rain gods got angry because you scolded the rain.
20. Do not feel hurt by this now.
21. Rain [or] no rain is all the same to me.”
22. So then they got angry.
23. They went to tell the authorities.
24. They said, “Fulano there scolded us saying that we, who knows when, scolded [the rain], that we are to blame because we scolded the rain gods.
25. Then the rain gods became angry [and] stopped bringing us rain.”
26. “He scolded you?”
27. “Yes, he scolded us.”
28. “All right, send the police to bring him and put him in jail.”
29. They went to get the drunk.
30. They put in him jail.
31. There he was in jail.
32. The comandante said, “Pay your fines and you will get out.”
33. Pay your fine to get out.”
34. “I have nothing [with which to pay a fine].”
35. They went the next day to ask him, “What happened, did you or did you not come up with the money for your fine?”
36. “No,” he said, “but get me out of here now, and it will rain tomorrow at noon.
37. And if you do not get me out, there is going to be more sun.
38. It is going to get hotter.”
39. “All right, I must go tell Señor Presidente.”
40. [The comandante] went [to tell the Presidente].
41. The comandante said, “Señor Presidente, that prisoner told us to release him now, and it will rain tomorrow at noon.
42. And if they do not release him, it will get hotter.”

43. "Damn, it would be better if we burn him in a fire.
44. Well go on, bring him."
45. They went and removed him from [jail].
46. "What do you have to say?"
47. "I do not have anything more to say.
48. Set me free now, and it will rain tomorrow at noon.
49. And if you do not set me free, it will get hotter."
50. "Well, if it rains tomorrow, then you will go home."
51. As for what that little man did [after they released him on his promise it would rain tomorrow], he packed his bag with clothes and left [home].
52. He went on and on and on.
53. Until he came to a forest.
54. It was getting dark.
55. He came upon a woman.
56. She asked, "Where are you going, my good man?"
57. Where, my good man, are you going?"
58. "I go without any purpose because where I live they locked me up because I scolded them because they wanted to collect money to pay for a Mass so it might rain.
59. And I told them, 'Now you cry because it does not rain.
60. When it rained, you scolded the rain.
61. So since you scolded the rain, the rain gods became angry and stopped bringing us rain.'
62. So that is why they locked me up.
63. And now I left [after saying that] tomorrow it will rain.
64. And it will not rain, [and] I cannot do anything about it.
65. So I left right away.
66. I fled."
67. Then the woman said, "Do not run away anymore.
68. We shall go to your home and talk tomorrow.
69. Let us see what you will do."
70. She took him, she took him, took him to her house.
71. She was the mother of the rain gods.
72. In a little while he heard thunder and saw lighting and heard more thunder.
73. And then there was a week of wind.
74. And a week of wind came.

75. A little boy came.
76. He was an angel.
77. He had bloody wounds all over, he was hurt all over from banging into the mountains, the rocks, the trees, the thorns, since he was one of the wind persons.
78. And in a little while came the brother of the wind.
79. He was a water person.
80. They were rain-men.
81. The other little boy was an angel who was cleansed by the water.
82. He was a rain god [*quiyuhuitzin*].
83. One [of the little boys] said, "Mama, it appears a Christian is here from earth."
84. "Yes, my children.
85. He passed through here."
86. "Oh good, anyway we shall talk to him."
87. They spoke the next day.
88. [One of the little boys] asked [the drunk], "What happened to you, sir?"
89. "They locked me up because I scolded the ones who were taking up a collection to pay for a Mass so that it might rain.
90. And I told them, 'Now you cry because it does not rain, and when it rained you scolded the rain.
91. Since you scolded the rain, the rain gods got angry.
92. For that reason they do not bring us rain.'
93. For that reason they put me [in jail].
94. Now they are in a bad way.
95. Rain or no rain is all the same to me.
96. So then they locked me up, and I tricked them [by saying] 'Let me go, and it will rain now at noon.'
97. And they let me out [of jail].
98. And I wanted it to rain today at noon.
99. And where can I go?
100. I do not know of anywhere [I can go]."
101. "Ah well, do not worry.
102. Go home right now."
103. He only knew they pushed him in the face when he realized he was in his patio.
104. His wife said to him, "What did you bring?"

105. You went far away and what did you bring?
106. The *federales* looked for you to kill you.
107. What if it is noon, the sun is shining noon and it does not rain?
108. You just tricked them.
109. [You just said]. 'I'm going.'"
110. But those [rain gods] brought him and told him, "They must place a table decorated with flowers and they must light a candle where they were going to burn you.
111. And [there must be] an incense pot, an incense pot with *copal*, for filling the middle of the plaza with incense where they were going to burn you.
112. Place these things [in the middle of the plaza] at twelve o'clock sharp, and then we shall arrive lighting [up the plaza] as we come."
113. That is what the rain gods told him.
114. Those men, who were the winds, were rain gods [*rayitos*].
115. "There, in the middle of the plaza, place that table decorated with flowers and light a candle, and with that we shall arrive lighting up the place with a rocket, bolts of lightning, and thunder.
116. And those who live in the valley should do this.
117. And as for those [living] on in the hills, they may stay where they are.
118. As to where the flash flood will take [those in the valley], if you do not tell them what to do, the flash flood will wash them away, it will wash them away.
119. So you go tell this to Señor Presidente.
120. 'Señor Presidente, what is going on?
121. It is noon already.
122. It is not raining.
123. But wait a little bit.
124. Issue an order to those who live in the valley telling them what to do.
125. And [they must] immediately place [in the middle of the plaza] a table adorned with flowers, and a lighted candle and an incense pot smoking with *copal*.
126. Come also with flowers, light a rocket, but do it quickly before it is too late.
127. By noon on the dot."

128. [Señor President] went with the order to warn [the people of the town who lived in the valley].
129. The inspector [said], "Prepare for a big rainstorm that is coming here."
130. "Who said?"
131. "Fulano, that crazy drunk."
132. "It is not true, it is not true."
133. "Oh good, then I will not issue the warning to you."
134. On the dot of noon there was a windstorm, a whirlwind, and clouds, and all at once bolts of lightning flashed, there was lightning.
135. And there was no incense and there was no lighted candle.
136. There was a downpour, but a real downpour.
137. The storm washed away Christians, cattle, dogs, [and] pigs where they did not do what they were supposed to do.
138. Only those who lived in the hills survived.
139. The ones who remained in the hills, they are alive.
140. As for those who were not living in the hills, the water took them away, that flash flood did.
141. That cyclone.
142. This little old drunk, who was not worth anything, he was nothing special, he was like anyone else.
143. Since he did a favor for the rain gods, they helped him.
144. He earned a lot of money.
145. There it ended.

NAHUAT TRANSCRIPTION

1. *Ce viaje ce borrachito zayoh nemia tech in cantina.*
2. *Por cantina zayoh tabuantinemia.*
3. *Huan entonces ne aqui¹⁰ quinechicohuaya nilimosnita para quixtabuazqueh misita.*
4. *Para quixtabualizqueh in señor curita para ma quichibua misita para ihcon hin ma quiyihui porque melac ahmo quiyihui tech in ne pueblo.*
5. *Ahmo quiyihuiyaya.*
6. *Entonces ne mocentalizqueh ne miaqeh huan quinechicoa, quinechicoa limosnita para quixtabuazqueh misita.*

7. *Ma quichihua in señor curita misa para ma quiyuhui.*
8. *Huan ne borrachito quitanahuia, quitanahuia, quitanuahuia.*
9. *Bueno, ce de tanto quilia, "Tebhua no hombre, tebhua ahmo timisa caqui?"*
10. *Tebhua ahmo titemaca niyo limosnita para ma quichihuati misita in señor curita?*
11. *Xa teh titechzalarotoc.*²¹
12. *"Uh.*
13. *Axcan nanquinequih ma quiyuhui.*
14. *Xiquelnamican ihcon quemah den melac ne quiyuhua.*
15. *Huan nancabhuaqueh*¹² *quiyuhuitzin.*
16. *Nanquitatamiliqueh.*
17. *Nan, como tatamiliqueh quiyuhhuatzin, entonces in rayitos cualanqueh.*
18. *Por eso axcan ahcmo techcualcuilia in quiyuhuitzin.*
19. *Yeh por nancabhuaqueh in quiyuhuitzin, cualanqueh in rayitos.*
20. *Es que axcan ahmo xmoicococan.*
21. *Para nebhua quiyuhhuiz, ahmo quiyuhhuiz, neh igual."*
22. *Entonces ne cualanqueh.*
23. *Entonces yahqueh huan quiliah autoridad.*
24. *Quiliah, "Fulano nepa techabhua que ahmo, que tehhuan, quien sabe cuando ticabhuaqueh, que tehhuan ticpiyah culpa porque ticabhuacui quiyuhuitzin.*
25. *Entonces cualanqueh in rayitos por eso ahmo techcualcuiliah quiyuhuitzin."*
26. *"Namechabhua?"*
27. *"Eh he, techabhua."*
28. *"Ándale, ma yahcan policias ma cuiti, ma calaquiti in carcel."*
29. *Cuitoh ne borrachito.*
30. *Calaquitoh in carcl.*
31. *Por ompa yetoc ne carcel.*
32. *Quilia comandante, "Xiconsequiros in mocorrectivos para tiquizaz.*
33. *Consequiros momulta para tiquizaz."*
34. *"Ahmo tei nicpiya."*
35. *Oceppa yahqueh imoztica, quilia, "Ton pasaroa, timoconsequiroa para momulta o ahmo timoconsequiroa?"*
36. *"Ahmo," quihta, "pero xinechquixtacan axcan huan mozta a las doce quiyuhhuiz.*

37. *Huan den abmo nechquixtiah, cachi más tonati.*
38. *Cachi mas totonic oncac."*
39. *"Bueno, ma niqiliti Señor Presidente."*
40. *Yahque.*
41. *Comandante quilia, "Senor Presidente, quihtoa ne preso quimaquix-tican axcan huan mozta a las doce quiyiuhuiz.*
42. *Huan de abmo quixtia, cachi totonic."*
43. *"Putá pos cachi timiquitih más de tit.*
44. *Pos ándale, xcuiti."*
45. *Quixtitoh.*
46. *"Toni tiquihtoa?"*
47. *"Abmo tei más niquihtoa.*
48. *Nechcabcahuacan axcan huan mozta quiyiuhuiz a las doce.*
49. *Huan de abmo nechcabcachua, cachi más totonic huitza."*
50. *"Bueno, si tacan quiyiuhuiz mozta, xyo mochan."*
51. *Toni quichihuac ne tacatzin, cuihcuiquixic¹³ nimaleta de tazal huan yahque.*
52. *Yohui huan yohui huan yohui huan yohui.*
53. *Hasta de cuaubtah.*
54. *Tayohuatoc.*
55. *Quinamic ce cihuatzin.*
56. *Quilia, "Can tyo buen hombre?"*
57. *Can tyo buen hombre?"*
58. *"Neh nyo zan elihuiz porque ne tal parte nechtzactoya porque niqinabhua porque nicnequia [quinnequiah] ma quinmacan limos-nita para quixtahuaunqueh misita para ma quiyiuhuiz.*
59. *Huan neh niquinilique, Axcan choca por abmo quiyiuhui.*
60. *Cuando quiyiuhua, cahhuaqueh quiyihuitzin.*
61. *Entonces quemeh cahhuac quiyihuitzin, cualaniqueh rayitos huan abcmo techcuililyah quiyihuitzin.'*
62. *Entonces por hon techzactoyah [nechtzactoyah].*
63. *Huan axcan niqincacahua por mozta quiyiuhuiz.*
64. *Huan abmo quiyiuhuiz, neh abmo tei nicchiuhque.*
65. *Entonces ahorita nyo.*
66. *Niccholoti."*
67. *Entonces quihto ne cihuatzin, "Abmo xicholoti.*
68. *Tyohueh mochan huan mozta timononotzah.*
69. *A ver tiquittazqueh quenin ticbihuaz."*

70. *Cuiyac, cuiyac, cuiyac ne ichan.*
71. *Ta ca mama de rayitos.*
72. *A poco ratito caqui taticuini huan tapetani, taticuini [tatzini]¹⁴ huan tapetani ihcon, ichon.*
73. *Hasta huallaz ce semana de ehecatzin.*
74. *Icuin hualla ce semana de ehecatzin.*
75. *Hualla ce oquichpiltzin.*
76. *Ce angel, vaya.*
77. *Nochi tacococol nochi za ezti, nochi tacocol momacatihualia tech tepe-meh, tech tetzin, tech cuaubtzin, tech huitzti momacatihualia pues yeh in ehecatzin tacah.*
78. *Bueno a poco ratito huitza occe hermano de ehecatzin.*
79. *Huitza ya ompa atzin.*
80. *Quiyiuhuitzin tacah.*
81. *Occe oquichpiltzin angelito chipactzin ya in atzin.*
82. *Yeh quiyiuhuitzin.*
83. *Quilia, "Mama, nez ompon yetoc ce taltcipac cristiano."*
84. *"Eh he hijitos.*
85. *Icuin quipasaro."*
86. *"Ah bueno, todos modos tebhuan timonotzah."*
87. *Imoztica quinonotzah.*
88. *Quihta, "Toni mitzpasaro señor?"*
89. *"Icuin nechztactoya porque niquinabhuaac nen aquin quicentalia in limosnita para quixtabuazqueh in misita entonces para ma quiyiuhui.*
90. *Huan neh niquiniliqueh, Axcan choca por ahmo quiyiuhui huan cuando quiyiuhua cabhabuiah quiyiuhuitzin.*
91. *Ihcon quemeh quiabhuaqui quiyiuhuitzin entonces in rayitos cualanqueh.*
92. *Por eso ahmo techcuiquilia in quiyiuhuitzin.*
93. *Ca hon [ahmo] techcualcuilia.*
94. *Axcan pos mojerocan.*
95. *Quiyiuhuitz, ahmo quiyiuhuitz para neh igual.*
96. *Entonces por nechztacuaqueh huan nihin [niquin-]cabcayauhqueh que axcan hin a las doce quiyiuhui huan ma nechquixtia.*
97. *Huan nechquixtilique.*
98. *Huan nicnequi axcan quiyiuhuitz a las doce.*
99. *Huan can nyaz?*

100. *Abmo tei nicmati.*"
101. *"Ah pos abmo xicpiya cuidado.*
102. *Ahorita tyo mochan."*
103. *Zayoh quimatican que icuin quixcatopeuqueh¹⁵ icuac yeh quimac cuenta yeh yetoc tech ipatio.*
104. *Quilia nicibauh, "Ton ticuico?*
105. *Tyaca ya huebca huan toni ticuito?*
106. *Nican mitztemoab in federales, mitzmiqititih.*
107. *Que tal a los doce tonatoc huan abmo quiyihui?*
108. *Ciyoh tiquincacayahtiuh.¹⁶*
109. *[Tiquilia], 'Ahorita nyo."*
110. *Pero ne cual[cu]jiliqueh huan quibtab, "Campa mitztatizquia¹⁷ ma quitalikan ce mesa xochillo huan ce velita ma xotato.*
111. *Huan ce popoxcaxit, popoxcaxit ca copaltzin ma popocato ne tabco plaza campá mitztatazquiah.*
112. *Ma motalikan al punto a las doce, huan entonces tebhuan tiabcizqueh tixxotacotiahci."*
113. *Ihcon que quihtoqueh in rayitos.*
114. *Tacah in ehecat rayitos.*
115. *"Ompa ne tabco plaza ma quitalikan nihon mesita xochillo huan velita xotatoz huan por si ompa tebhuan tiabcizqueh tixxotaltitatih ce cohetito, relampago huan trueno.*
116. *Huan lo que ten viviroa, calyetoloc atahuit ma chichihuacan.*
117. *Huan lo que den loma, ompa ma yetocan.*
118. *Ta can quincuica creciente¹⁸, abmo tiquilizquizque ma chihuazqueh, ma quihuican creciente, ma quihuican.*
119. *Ihcon tiquilitiahci¹⁹ Señor Presidente.*
120. *'Señor Presidente, toni pasaroa.*
121. *Las doce ya*
122. *Abmo quiyihuih.*
123. *Ma nechchacan tepitzin.*
124. *Ce xtali ce mandadito lo que viveroa tech in atahuit, ma chichihuacan.*
125. *Huan talican inmediatamente ce mesita xochillo, huan ce velita ma xotatoc, huan ce popoxcaxitzin popocatoc ca copaltzin.*
126. *Huitza no xochihuatzin, quixotaltitecozque²⁰ ce in cohetito, pero rapido, antes de panoa in hora.*
127. *Al punto de las doce."*

128. *Yahque ce mandado nepa nahuatito.*
129. *Ce inspector, "Xmachihuacan nican huitza creciente."*
130. *"Aconi quihtoa?"*
131. *"Fulano, loco borracho."*
132. *"Ahmo melac, ahmo melac."*
133. *"Ah bueno, neh ahmo namechnahuatia."*
134. *Pos apunto a las doce, moformaro ce ehecat, ce malacaehecat huan mixti, huan zanceppa tapetanico, ompon yetoc in relampago.*
135. *Huan ta que ahmo tei popoxtzin huan ahmo tei vela.*
136. *Ce aguacero pero aguacero.*
137. *Cristianos, cuahcuehmeh, itzcuimeh, pitzomeh campa ahmo ma chihqueh, quinhuiac.*
138. *Zayoh mocauhqueh libre tech in loma, lo quen ten viviroaya.*
139. *Ompa lo que can calyetoya tech in loma, yehhuan mocauhqueh libres.*
140. *Huan lo que ten ahmo, quinhuiac in ne at, ne creciente.*
141. *Ne ciclon.*
142. *Nihon catca pobrecito borracho, que ahmo tei valoraya, cualquiera catca, como cualquiera.*
143. *Como yahqueh a favor de rayitos, quipalebuiqueh in rayitos.*
144. *Quitanic miac tomin.*
145. *Ompa tamic.*

Notes

Chapter 1

1 See Friedrich (1970, 1986) and Schryer (1990).

2 Schryer (1990: 47) reported that poor Nahuas, who had “access only to a badly eroded hillside, invaded a pasture belonging to the richest Nahua family in Pepeyocatitla.” See Collier and Quartiello (1999: 15–52) for a history of land struggles leading up to the Zapatista rebellion that erupted onto the world stage on January 1, 1994. Elio Roberto Masferrer Kan (2006: 245–252) describes a wide variety of political and religious movements that took place in the Sierra Norte de Puebla following Mexico’s Independence from Spain.

3 See Canger (1988) for a review of how scholars of historical linguistics have interpreted the relationship between the *t* and *tl* dialects of Nahua languages. Harold Key and Mary Ritchie de Key (1953) compiled a dictionary of the *t* dialect of Nahua near Zacapoaxtla, which Karttunen (1992: xxi) considers an invaluable source for compiling her own dictionary of Nahua languages.

4 Simpson ([1941] 1966: 372) defined an *ejido* as: “A common allotted to a village for crops or grazing; specifically in México, land allotted to a peasant for farming; also a state-operated, cooperative farm.”

Chapter 2

1 Bernardo García Martínez (1987: 165–164, 169) found evidence, in the colonial archives, of Nahuas in Huitzilán around 1600 resisting the efforts of Church and civil authorities to resettle or congregate in a neatly laid out town.

2 D. Interview, June 29, 2005, pp. 1–5.

3 D. Crecencio Bonilla, July 28, 2005, p. 1.

4 D. UCI, June 29, 2005, pp. 1–5.

5 D. UCI, June 29, 2005, pp. 1–5.

6 D. Notes on *ejidos* in Huitzilán from the Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios y Colonización, Archivo Central, recorded on September 9, 1969.

7 D. UCI, June 29, 2005, pp. 1–5.

8 Fulana is a pseudonym.

- 9 *-toc* = postposition, adjacent to, close to (Kattunen 1992: 308).
 10 D. UCI, March 15, 2004 C, pp. 45–46.
 11 D. UCI March 15, 2004 C, p. 47.
 12 D. UCI, March 15, 2004 C, p. 48.
 13 D. UCI, March 15, 2004 A, p. 2. See also Taggart (2008: 195).
 14 *quechilia* = applic. *quetza* (Karttunen 1992: 206). *Quetza* = to stand up; to stop someone or to raise someone or something (Karttunen 1992: 209).
 15 D. UCI, March 15, 2004 A, p. 2.
 16 Taggart (2008: 194).

Chapter 3

- 1 D. Religion (January 6, 1969), p.5.
 2 D. Religion (August 23, 1969), p. 34.
 3 de la Fuente Farres (1897: 64).
 4 Zapotecs in Mitla gave Parsons (1936: 350) a different interpretation of the scale, saying that San Miguel used it to sort out those who went to heaven and those who went to hell. Those who weighed more than one ounce went to the latter destination.
 5 The association between San Miguel and the rain gods is widespread among contemporary indigenous speakers in Mexico. Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934: 108, 115) reported that the Maya of Chan Kom regarded San Miguel Arcángel as the “chief of the chaacs (rain gods).” See also Sandstrom forthcoming, p. 13. Broda (1971) presented an interesting interpretation of the ancient Nahuas’ theory of water.
 6 One basis for associating rain gods with San Miguel is that the saint’s date in the Catholic calendar is September 29, the season when the people of Huitzilán experience the heaviest rainstorms. See Santopedía, <https://www.santopedia.com/santos/san-miguel-arcangel>.
 7 D. Quiyauhteomē quemēh San Miguelmēh, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100039, p. 670.
 8 D. Quiyauhteot nexicol, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100040, p. 677.
 9 D. Ahuehucht, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 20, 2012, LS100053, p. 628.
 10 D. Coatonalle huan Quiyauhteotonalle, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS1000042, p. 689.
 11 D. Coatonalle huan Quiyauhteotonalle, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, LS1000042, April 18, 2012, LS1000042, p. 689.
 12 D. Coatonalle huan Quiyauhteotonalle, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS1000042, pp. 686–694, p. 689.
 13 D. Ahuehucht, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 20, 2010, LS100053, p. 628.
 14 D. Quiyauhteot nexicol, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100040, pp. 677–680, p. 679.

15 D. Coatonalle huan Quiyauhteotonalle, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS1000042, p. 690.

16 D. Quiyauhteot nexicol, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100040, p. 680.

17 D. Coatonalle huan Quiyauhteotonalle, by Nacho, Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS1000042, p. 691.

18 D. Coatonalle huan Quiyauhteotonalle, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS1000042, p. 691.

19 Maffie (2014: 214) defined the *tonalli* (Nahuatl spelling) as including: “Solar heat, energy, or power; solar radiation, life force sensed and transmitted as heat; a day, day sign, day name; a person’s fate, destiny or birth-merit (*macehualli*) as determined by her day sign; personal and calendrical name; animating energy, soul, spirit; and vigor, character, or temperament.” Bassett (2015: 91–92) found “more than 1,600 occurrences of *teotl* in Sahagún’s Florentine Codex,” from which she “compiled a list of approximately twenty-five pairs of words” with a range of meanings.” Her work revealed “a cluster of five *teotl* qualities” one of which was that a *teotl* has a *tonalli*.

20 D. Quiyauhteot nexicol, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100040, pp. 679–680.

21 D. Miquiliz, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 24, 2008, Tape 17b, pp. 545–569, p. 550.

22 D. Miquiliz, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 24, 2008, Tape 17b, pp. 545–569, p. 545.

23 van’t Hooft (2007: 156, 161, 168) reports that the Nahuas of the Huasteca of Hidalgo named three different terrestrial water animals: crayfish (*xili*), water snakes, and fish.

24 D. Quiyauhteomeh-San Miguelmeh, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100039, p. 674. See also van’t Hooft (2007: 170), who writes: “The tale of two water creatures inundating the land is very well known throughout the southern part of the Xochiatipan municipality [in the Huasteca]. . . .”

25 D. Interview, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 19, 2012, LS100044, p. 681.

26 D. Interview, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 19, 2012, LS100044, p. 682. Shape-shifting occurs in a number of indigenous cultures in Mexico and elsewhere. See John Monaghan (1995: 347–353) on the Mixtecs in Oaxaca.

27 See interesting accounts of ritual specialists known as *graniceros*, *tiemperos*, or *quiatlaz* in Tlaxcala (Robichaux 2008: 405, 406, 410) and *abuaques* in the State of Mexico (Lorente Fernández 2011), who are struck by lightning and acquire their abilities to predict the weather and practice rituals to manage weather events.

28 See van’t Hooft (2007: 234–242) for an interesting description of the Huastecan Nahuas’ mermaid, *la Sirena*, a water-spirit who assumes human form.

Chapter 4

1 D. Religion, July 8, 1969, p. 19.

2 *tamic* = something finished, a complete measure of twenty/*veinte mazorcas de maíz o de cosas semejantes, acabado* (Karttunen 1992: 282).

3 *ye* = suppletive verb to be in the sense of Spanish *estar/estar, o ser* (Karttunen 1992: 335).

4 D. "Tacat quimati quemanyan quiyahuiz," by Juan Hernández, Tape 17, pp. 2270–2274 (1975).

5 This is in accord with Maffie's (2014: 21–31) interpretation of the meaning of *teotl*.

6 See Knab (1991).

7 *Cosas* refers to offerings of chicken or turkey, bread, aguardiente, candles, and incense for the rain gods.

8 D. Quiyauhteomeh, by Manuel Castillo, October 14, 2007, Tapes 10A and B, pp. 289–314, p. 292.

9 See Vogt (1969: 446–455) and Sandstrom (forthcoming: 12). Sandstrom (30) also notes: "Among the Nahua of northern Veracruz, and probably the other groups as well, people do not hold rituals to ask directly for more rain or for the end of a threatening downpour. Rather, they ask for balance in relations between human beings and the spirit realm. The purpose of the rituals and all of the sacrifices and offerings held throughout the year is to maintain or re-establish the harmony and balance between humans and the forces of nature represented by the spirit entities (see Sandstrom 2008: 25)."

10 For example, those who cleaned the springs were neighbors, some of whom were related by kinship. D. Religion, May 6, 1969, p. 15.

11 D. Quiyauhteomeh quemeh San Miguelmeh, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2011, LS100039, p. 673.

12 D. Quiyauhteot nexicol, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100040, p. 678.

13 D. Corrections, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, Tape, April 23, 2008, Tape 17A, p. 537.

14 D. Corrections, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, Tape, April 23, 2008, Tape 17A, p. 537.

15 D. Corrections, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 23, 2008, Tape 17A, pp. 533–534.

16 D. Quiyauhteot nexicol, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100040, pp. 677–680, p. 679.

17 D. Ahuehuet, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 20, 2010, LS100053, p. 627.

18 D. Quiyauhteot nexicol, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100040, p. 679.

19 D. Ahuehuet, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 20, 2010, LS100053, pp. 626–627.

20 van't Hooft (2007: 198) also reports that the Nahuas of the Huasteca regard St. John the Baptist "as a spirit of thunder and lightning" who has little human-like helpers called *auetziltiani* [*ahuehtziltiani*].

21 D. Quiyauhteomeh, by Juan Hernández, December 14, 2007, Tape 14A, pp. 460–464, p. 462.

22 D. Quiyauhteomeh, by Juan Hernández, December 14, 2007, Tape 14A, pp. 460–464, p. 463.

23 D. Quiyauhteomeh, by Juan Hernández, December 14, 2007, Tape 14A, pp. 460–464, p. 463, p. 464.

Chapter 5

1 D. Religion, January 28, 1970, p. 48.

2 *tictenetoya* = *estabas mencionando* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

3 *panoltiquizaz* = *sale subiendo* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

4 *quincuitiquih* = *los pasó de traer* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

5 *ixtia* = *vrefl*, vt. to keep watch, to observe; to face someone/*atalayar* o *asechar*, *advertir* y *mirar diligentemente*, *hacer rostro a los enemigos*, *se asoma* (Karttunen 1992: 120).

6 D. “Presidente Huan Cura,” by Miguel Ahuata, 1975, Tape 14, pp. 2171–2178.

7 D. Religion, August 23, 1969, p. 34.

8 See Tiedje (2002) for a case involving the Nahuas in the Huasteca. See also MacEoin (2002) on the relationship between the Zaptistas and Bishop Samuel Ruíz.

9 D. Religion, July 25, 1969, p. 23.

10 D. Religion, March 9, 1969, p. 10.

11 D. Religion, January 1, 1969, p. 1; January 5, 1969, p. 4; January 6, 1969, p. 5.

12 D. Religion, August 15, /1969, p. 28, p. 29; D. Religion, August 18, 1969, p. 31; August 24, 1969, p. 37.

13 D. Religion, March 9, 1969, p. 10.

14 D. Religion, July 25, 1969, p. 24.

15 D. Religion, July 25, 1969, p. 23–24.

16 Maffie (2014: 359) used the example of weaving, which “unifies warp and weft in reciprocal agonistic tension. Weaving thus creates a new middle space of mutual tension, a space that exists only to a degree that such mutual tension exists, and only to a degree that warp and weft co-exist in reciprocal agonistic balance with and against each other.” Burkhart (1989: 28–29) explained that to tangle one’s weaving is to fall into a state of disorder or *tlatlacolli* and commit a fault.

17 See also Taggart (2007: 99).

18 Taggart (2007: 116, 128).

19 D. Tzopec-chichic, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, July 15, 2009, p. 593.

20 D. Interview, by Gabriela, November 4, 2007, Tape 12A, p. 358.

21 D. Interview, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, May 31, 2003, p. 10.

22 D. Tazohtaliz, by Teresa Carrillo y Manuela Esteban, May 25, 2007, Tape 4A, pp. 68–89, p. 77.

23 Taggart (2012).

24 D. Icuac huallacah UCIs B, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, March 17, 2004, Tape B, pp. 108–109.

25 *ilcabua* = to forget something (Karttunen 1992: 103).

- 26 *tacayot* = *humanity* (Karttunen 1992: 253).
 27 *hueloa* = to be dislocated, to consume, to undo, demolish something (Karttunen 1992: 86).
 28 *ihihtoa* = to criticize, slander someone (Karttunen 1992: 97).
 29 D. Icuac huallacah UCIs B, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, March 17, 2004, Tape B, pp. 105–117, pp. 105–107. See also Taggart (2007: 77).

Chapter 6

- 1 D. Religion, July 24, 1969, p. 22.
 2 *nenqui* = resident of some place, someone who lives/*morador de alguna parte, el que vive*. Derived from *nemi* (Karttunen 1992: 168).
 3 *arena del mar, una isla de arena* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).
 4 *caquizti* = to sound, to be heard clearly/*sonar, o oírse bien el que habla o cuenta*. From *caqui* (Karttunen 1992: 25).
 5 *tapani* = for something like pottery or eggshells to break into pieces/*quebrarse algo, quebrarse vasijas de barro, tecomates, o otras cosas delicadas* (Karttunen 1992: 290).
 6 *tapana* = vt. to break or split something open, to break something open, to hatch chicks/*quebrar algo, sacar pollos las aves, o descascarar mazorcas de cacao o de cosa semejante* (Karttunen 1992: 289). *ixtli* = face, surface, eye/*la haz o la cara o el nudo de la caña, faz, rostro, ojo* (Karttunen 1992: 121). *Se aparte el cuerpo* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).
 7 *ayoc* see *aoc* = no longer, not anymore/*ya no* (Karttunen 1992: 11, 16).
 8 *cuitco* = anus; *cuitat* = excrement, residue, excrescence/*mierda, fiemo, inmundicia, residuo, llaga, tumor, absceso* (Karttunen 1992: 73–74).
 9 *mota* = to stone someone, to throw a rock at someone or something, to hunt something/*dar pedrada a otro, tirar con piedra, cazar* (Karttunen 1992: 153). *mota-motqueh* = they were thrown out (of the *achane's* body).
 10 *Nos estaba dando tristeza* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).
 11 D. “El Presidente de Hueytlalpan,” by de la Co Ayance, 1978, Tape 30-2, pp. 1804–1808.
 12 D. Juan’s complaints 1973, pp. 25–26.
 13 Google Maps estimated the trip by foot from Huitzilán to Tetela de Ocampo would take twelve hours and fifty-one minutes. <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Huitzilán+de+Serd%C3%A1n,+Puebla,+Mexico/Tetela+de+Ocampo,+Puebla,+Mexico/>
 14 D. “El Presidente de Hueytlalpan,” by Nacho Ángel Hernández, 1978, Tapes 33-1, 33-2, pp. 1869–1876.
 15 *tanahuatil* = someone cited, charged, or dismissed; a notice, order, regulation, or law/*citado, mandado, despedido, o licenciado, noticia, aviso, ley, mandamiento, mandato* (Karttunen 1992: 283).

16 D. Corrections, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 23, 2008, Tape 17A, p. 530.

17 D. UCI B, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, March 16, 2004, p. 62.

Chapter 7

1 D. Religion, July 24, 1969, p. 22.

2 Taggart 2007: 70.

3 D. Tzopec-chichic, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, July 15, 2009, pp. 588–593.

4 *talcuatipa[n]yetoqueb* = *están encima de un bordo* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

5 *ihhqui* = *nada* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *ihhqui* = thus, in such a way, like/*semejante o así o de esa manera*. Often misleadingly spelled *yuhqui* (Karttunen 1992: 109).

6 *taxicaya* = *goteaba* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *ixica* = to run, drip, ooze, bleed/*resumarse o salirse la vasija, se escurre, sangrar*. See *ihxica* (Karttunen 1992: 114). *ihxica* = for something to leak, ooze, trickle/*resumarse o salirse la vasija* (Karttunen 1992: 102).

7 *rayo* (Nacho).

8 *quitabtauhtiquih* = *le vienen a rogar* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *tataubtiya* = *vrefl*, vt to pray; to pray to someone or implore someone for something, to plead with someone/*ruega, orar, hacer oración o rezar, rogar por otro* (Karttunen 1992: 299).

9 *actoc* = within/*metido adentro* (Karttunen 1992: 3).

10 *tamatque* = *sabio* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *tamatqui* = someone wise, prudent/*prudente, sabio, listo* (Karttunen 1992: 281).

11 *tiquihcuizqueb* = *vamos a comenzar a agarrar* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *ihcuiya* = *vrefl*, pret. *ihcuix* = to wrap or coil oneself, to coil one's hair up/*coger o revolver los cabellos la mujer a la cabeza, o ceñir la culebra por el árbol o por el cuerpo de hombre* (Karttunen 1992: 97).

12 *maxitiqueb* = *mahciticah* = something whole, something unadulterated/*cosa entera, fina, o pura*. See *ahci* (Karttunen 1992: 130).

13 *tatatzinilot* = *truenos* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

14 *hueicua* = *ihcuiya*. See note 11.

15 *quihualchiyatoh* = *fueron a esperar* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

16 *chi ca* = *es que* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

17 *iyoh* = only/solo. verb. *iyoa* = preterit-as-present verb; pret: *iyoh* = to be alone, to act alone/*solo* (Karttunen 1992: 123).

18 *tacuotamatic* = *confió* (*ta cuaquimatic* = knew the head of someone) (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

19 *chancauh* = *paisano* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

20 *meya* pret. mex = to gush, bubble up/*manar la fuente o cosa semejante* (Karttunen 1992: 145).

21 D. "Ocuilin itech at de Ixtepec," by Nacho Ángel Hernández, 1978, Tape 33-1, pp. 1860–1865.

22 D. Quiyauhteomeh quemeh San Miguelmeh, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 18, 2012, LS100039, p. 670.

23 On some maps, what the Nahuas in Huitzilán call the Río Zempoala appears as the Río Tecolutla.

24 There is a tendency in some societies to reckon ethnicity and kinship in similar ways. (See Keyes 1981 and Schneider 1984).

25 Taggart 2008: 187, 226.

Chapter 8

1 *piyalia* = vt. to keep something for someone, to care for something for someone/*guardar algo a otro* (Karttunen 1992: 199).

2 *tatoc* = something planted, sown, buried/*cosa enterrada, plantada, o sembrada* (Karttunen 1992: 300).

3 *abmo xmonemili* = *no te preocupes, no te pienses* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

4 *telaja* = *piedra grande* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

5 *ixquep[a]* is the Z variant of *ixcuel[a]* (Karttunen 1992: 118). *ixcuel[a]* = vrefl, vt. to lose one's way and get confused; to deceive someone, to turn something inside out or upside down/*errar el camino o andar descarriado, embaucar o engañar a otro, volver lo de dentro a fuera, la trabuca, lo pone boca arriba, le tiene dos caras* (Karttunen 1992: 113).

6 *tiontachaa* = *devisa de lejos* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *on* = prefix for verbs primarily indicating direction of action away from the speaker; sometimes used for formality without literal directional sense; *on* = distal particle/adj. *que indica la distancia, la lejanía* (Karttunen 1992: 179).

7 *ayoh* = something that contains water/*cosa aguada, como vino o miel* (Karttunen 1992: 16).

8 *itonal* = sweat/*sudor* (Karttunen 1992: 107). *itonia* = vrefl, vt to sweat, perspire/*sudar* (Karttunen, 1992: 108).

9 *ciabui* = to get tired/*cansarse* (Karttunen 1992: 33).

10 *temactia* = vrefl, vt to surrender; to hand something over/*se rinde, se entrega* (Karttunen 1992: 221).

11 *cuihuicaltiya* = *lo maldice* (Nacho Ángel Hernández); *cuicuitahuiltia* = vt. to force, persuade someone/*aconsejar, convencer, obligar a alguien, seducir, violar* (Karttunen 1992: 71).

12 *timaltican* = *nos bañemos* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

13 *xixilia* = applic. *xix(a)* = vrefl to urinate/*orinar* (Karttunen 1992: 327–328). *xinia* = vt. to sprinkle, water on something/*lo esparce, lo riega*. *xitinia* = synonymous with (Karttunen 1992: 325).

14 *tetzahu[i]* = to condense, thicken, congeal/*queda espeso, se espesa* (Karttunen 1992: 236). *tetzahuit* = something extraordinary, frightening, supernatural; an augury, a bad omen/*cosa escandalosa o espantosa, o cosa de agüero* (Karttunen 1992: 237).

15 *quiebhualtique* = *ebuaticah* = to be seated/estar asentado, *ehualtia* = altern. caus. *ehua* (Karttunen 1992: 76).

16 *tecpan[a]* = vrefl, vt. to line up; to line something up, put something in a queue, set something in order/*fila*, *poner en orden la gente*, *poner algo por orden y concierto o establecer o ordenar algo* (Karttunen 1992: 217).

17 *quiehcoltiab* = *lo hacen arrivar* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

18 *temohuia* = vt to lower something/*descender o abajar algo* (Karttunen 1992: 223).

19 *teezzo* = someone well-born/*hijo o hija de nobles caballeros, bien nacido* (Karttunen 1992: 218).

20 *cuehmoloa* = vrefl, vt to become disturbed, worried, upset; to bother, upset, disturb someone/*se preocupa, se turba, se trastorna, lo molesta, lo alborota, lo trastorna, lo distrae* (Karttunen 1992: 69).

21 D. “Tacat quihtoa quemanyan quiyahuiz” by Antonio Veracruz, 1978, Tapes 19-2, 20-1, pp. 1518–1530.

22 Antonio Veracruz [Huitzilán] and Mariano Isidro [Yaonáhuac] used the word *cuicuitahualtia*, which I translated as “swear at someone,” based on definitions a native Nahuatl speaker provided when helping me correct my transcriptions. Nacho Ángel Hernández defined this word as *maldice*, which means “put a curse on, put a spell on, to wish harm to, wish evil to, insult, revile, abuse, curse.” Karttunen (1992: 77) defined this word as “to force, persuade someone.”

23 *nancabhuaqueh* = they, you [plural] scolded.

24 *tahtama* = to hunt or fish, to take captives in war/*pesca o caza algo con redes, cazar o cautivar en la guerra* (Karttunen 1992: 264). *tama* = to go hunting, to take game, to make captives/*cazar o cautivar algo* (Karttunen 1992: 278).

25 D. UCI B, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, March 16, 2004, p. 62.

Chapter 9

1 *tetziloa* = vt. to twist something ropelike/*torcer mucho cordel, sogá*, etc. (Karttunen 1992: 237).

2 D. “Malintzin,” by Miguel Fuentes, 1978, Tapes 33-1, pp. 1856–1857.

3 *tacamachia* = altern. caus. *tacamat[i]* = to be rich and prosperous, to obey someone/*ser rico y próspero, obedecer a otro* (Karttunen 1992: 252).

4 D. “The Kidnapped Wife,” Tape 7A, October 1, 2007, pp. 161–162.

Chapter 10

1 D. Tachcuapan 1, April 19, 2012 LS100046, p. 683.

2 D. UCI quinequi quicuih Tachcuapan, April 19, 2012, LS100047, p. 295.

3 D. Tachcuapan 2, April 19, 2012, LS100046, p. 684.

4 *tahtani* = to ask questions, to inquire/*preguntar* (Karttunen 1992: 265); *tani* = to order, to wish, or request something, to aspire to something, to work to bring something about/*mandar, desear, pedir* . . . *pretender lo que el precedente verbo significa* (Karttunen 1992: 285).

5 *Me gustó el lugar* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *tahuelitta* = to hate someone/*aborrecer y mirar con enojo a otro* (Karttunen 1992: 269). *huelitta* = vrefl, vt to enjoy oneself, to find something pleasing and good, to approve of something/*se goza, se regocija, agrardarme y parecerme bien alguna cosa. huel, itta* (Karttunen 1992: 86)

6 *pano, panoc* = to ford, cross a river/*pasar el río a pie, o nadando, o en barca* (Karttunen 1992: 187).

7 *Hicieron un drenaje* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *tenantia* = to wall something in, to encircle something with a wall or trench/*cercar de mura la ciudad o hacer albarrada* (Karttunen 1992: 224).

8 The rich man *habló con el hombre que tuvo el tonal del coatonalle para pedir permiso para poner su casa en Tachcuapan. Después apreció el agua arriba tal vez porque el achane quiso comer los animales* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). See “*Ce Xochiteco*” and “*Ce Tepanqueño*,” in D. *Quihauyteomeh*, October 11, 2007, Tape 9B, pp. 253, 255.

9 *pan-tli* = row, wall, *muro, línea, hilera, grupo* (Karttunen 199: 187).

10 *cobcotona* = to pluck, shred, crumble something, to cut, pinch, wound someone/*desmenuzar o despedazar pan o cosa semejante, pellizcar a otro*. redup *cotona* (Karttunen 1992: 40).

11 D. *Quiyauhteomeh quemeh San Miguelmeh*, April 18, 2012, LS100039, p. 674.

12 D. *Tachcuapan 1*, April 19, 2012, LS100044, p. 682.

13 *nenquen* = right away, immediately/*inmediatamente, prisa, apurado, aprisa* (Karttunen 1992: 168). *Nenqui* = resident of someplace, someone who lives/*morador de alguna parte, el que* (Karttunen 1992: 168).

14 *chihualiz* = something feasible/*cosa factible, trabajo* (Karttunen 1992: 51).

15 *tapatabua* = to withdraw/*se aleja, se retira* (Karttunen 1992: 290).

16 D. *Tachcuapan 2*, April 19, 2012, LS100046, p. 683.

17 *nehuan* = both together/ *ambos a dos o juntamente amos a dos* (Karttunen 1992: 163).

18 *ye* = suppletive verb to be (in the sense of Spanish *estar*)/ *estar, o ser* [*yetz-* is used in the causative derivation *yetztia*] (Karttunen 1992: 335).

19 D. *Cuahcuemeh*, April 19, 2012, LS100051, p. 629.

Chapter 11

1 D. *Ocuilli huechauh*, by Nacho, April 19, 2012, LS100045, p. 658.

2 *tahuiltequi* = he lights, shows or cuts a path. *tahuiia* = to light a candle, to light the way for people with tapers or torches/*alumbrar la candela, alumbrar a otros con candela, alumbrar a otros con candela o hacha*. (Karttunen 1992: 269).

- 3 D. Ocuilli huehcauh (achane cihuat), by Nacho, April 19, 2012, LS100045, 656–659.
- 4 *cacalameh* = tortillas of an *achane* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *caca* = toad, frog/*sapo* (Karttunen 1992: 18), *calat* = frog/*rana* (Karttunen 1992: 21).
- 5 *ecabuil* = *sombra* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).
- 6 *atabuit* = valley, canyon, gully/*valle*, *cañada* (Karttunen 1992: 13).
- 7 *pet(a)-t* = woven mat, *petate/estera generalmente, petate* (Karttunen:1992: 192).
- 8 *toloa* = *tragar* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).
- 9 *xiani* = *hubiera sido* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).
- 10 D. Quiyauhteomeh, by Miguel/Colax, October 11, 2007, Tape 9B, pp. 246–248.
- 11 D. Corrections, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 23, 2008, Tape 17A, p. 524. The narrator used the word *pintocoton* for the garment worn by C, the Nahua man who gave up Tachcuapan to pay a tab in a store. D. Tachcuapan 2, April 19, 2012, LS100046, p. 683. The word *itapachcoton* is probably a combination of *i+tapach+coton*. *tapachoa* = *vrefl. vt.* to cover oneself; to cover something, to roof something over/*cubrirse con algo, cubrir a otro* (Karttunen 1992: 288). *cotona* = *vt.* to cut something, to break something off, to wound someone/*cortar o despedazar algo, o coger la fruta del árbol con la mano, o coger espigas, o abreviar algo, pellizcar* (Karttunen 1992: 42).
- 12 D. Corrections, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, April 23, 2008, Tape 17A, p. 527.

Chapter 12

1 References to floods are found in ancient and contemporary ethnographic sources. Van't Hooft (2007: 142) notes that the Codex Vaticano A mentions that Chalchiuhtlicue unleashed a flood. Ichon (1973: 130) reported that Totonacs in the northern Sierra Norte de Puebla expressed their fear of heavy rainstorms in stories about those who fell into rivers during the rainy season and became workers for the water spirit digging out the riverbed. Contemporary Nahuas in the Sierra Norte de Puebla (Taggart 1983: 189–199) and in the Huasteca (van't Hooft 2007: 107–154) tell many stories of a flood destroying a prior era of creation.

- 2 Palatzin = Francisco Pasión [*ya difunto/deceased*].
- 3 *quiyahuat* = rainstorm/*lluvia, aguacero* (Karttunen 1992: 213).
- 4 *milaquini* = *milini + aquin* = those who shine
- 5 *tepozcal* = church tower (Nacho Ángel Hernández).
- 6 *centapal* = on, belonging to one side/*de un lado, o del un lado* (Karttunen 1992: 31).
- 7 Nacho Ángel Hernández: “He is not Palatzin of Calyecapan. He lived behind the house of Doña Concha Bonilla. I did not know him. They say he had a lot of money that he buried but no one knows where. He was a rich man.” (“*No es Palatzin de Calyecapan. Vivía atrás de doña Concha. No lo conocí. Dice que tenía mucho dinero que lo enterró pero no sabe donde. Era rico.*”)
- 8 Lomen Chepa or Sevais Chepa “was the granddaughter of Palatzin” (“*Lomen Chapa o Sevais Chepa era la nieta de Palatzin.*”) (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

9 *tamatini* = wise person, sage, scholar/*sabio*; *tamatilia* = to calm down, to grow quiet, to calm, quiet someone, something/*se calla, lo calma, le hace callar, lo pacífica, lo sosiega* (Karttunen 1992: 281).

10 *Lo está haciendo [terminando de llegar]* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *tay[e] cohtoc = tayecoa* = to finish, conclude something/*concluir o acabar obra* (Karttunen 1992: 337).

11 *Tuzamapan para abajo*.

12 *ninequepia = me regreso* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

13 *un punto* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *huitzi* = thorn, spine/*espina grande o puya* (Karttunen 1992: 91).

14 D. Quiyauhtomeh, by Miguel and Colax Ángel Hernández, October 11, 2007, Tape 9B, p. 256–260.

15 D. UCI A, by Nacho Ángel Hernández, March 17, 2004, p. 98. See Taggart (2007: 72).

Chapter 13

1 See, for example, Gutmann (1993) and Sivaramakrishnan (2005)

2 Brad Huber (1990) describes how Nahuas in the southern Sierra Norte still practice divination with kernels of corn.

Appendix

1 *atabuit* = valley, canyon, gully/*valle, cañada* (Karttunen 1992: 13).

2 *tachiya* = to see, to look or gaze/*mirar o ver* (Karttunen 1992: 255).

3 *tahueliztiuh = lo va a gustar* (Nacho Ángel Hernández).

4 *caxiuhqueh* or *taxiuqueh = quitaron* (Nacho Ángel Hernández). *taxilia* = vrefl, vi to abort, to cast something off, to throw something away from someone, to cause someone to abort/*abortar, desharcerse de algo, dimitar de un cargo, hacer abortar una mujer* (Karttunen 1992: 303).

5 *zohua* = to stretch or spread out, to extend (Karttunen 1992: 347). Francisco Aparicio, a native speaker from Yaonáhuac, translated *quitonzohuac* as “*lo tendió [de cabeza]*.” [“She stretched him out with his head down.”]

6 *techhuihuicaltiah = “nos maldicen”* (Francisco Aparicio). Antonio Veracruz used *cucuitahualtia* for *maldice* in line 187 of “The Humble Man’s Predicament” (Chapter 8).

7 *techhuicaticozqueh = “nos llevaron de correr”* (Francisco Aparicio).

8 *tatecuiniaya = tronaba* (Francisco Aparicio). *tecuiltia* = to set something afire, to light something/*prender fuego* (Karttunen 1992: 307).

9 *quinahuatitiuzqueh = lo dejaron avisados* (Francisco Aparicio).

10 *aquí* does not refer to the protagonist (see line 89).

- 11 *titechzalarotoc* = *nos está poniendo obstáculo* (Francisco Aparicio).
- 12 *nancabhuaqueh* = you [plural] scolded.
- 13 *cuibcui* = to get ready, to be prepared/*se dispone, se prepara* (Karttunen 1992: 71–72).
- 14 *tatzini* = to make explosive sound, to thunder, to sizzle/*sonar algo reventado así como huevo cuando la asan o cosa semejante, truena* (Karttunen 1992: 301).
- 15 *topehua* = to push (Francisco Aparicio).
- 16 *tiqincacayauhtih* = you left them deceived (Francisco Aparicio).
- 17 *mitztatizquia* = *te habían de quemar* (Francisco Aparicio).
- 18 rainstorm or flood that sweeps away everything in its path.
- 19 *tiquitiabci* = *lo llegas a decir* (Francisco Aparicio).
- 20 *quixotaltitecozque* = *lo van a prender* (Francisco Aparicio).

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