

### III. CURRENT SCENES

A scene is a higher level behavior stream unit resulting --more correctly, "created" by the observer--from a combination of physical and behavioral criteria. A scene is a specified activity carried on in a specified place by specified actors. The members of almost every serrano household participate in the scenes which will be described here.

When dealing with the behavior sequences terminating in the cropping of a conuco, there are no absolute criteria for stipulating what the breakdown of the whole sequence should be. Indeed, one might conceivably treat the entire sequence as one long nodal chain of interlocked smaller chains, the termination of one being a requisite for the initiation of the following.

The breakdown used here creates a new scene where the place itself--i.e. the mountainside--undergoes drastic physical change by virtue of natural processes (such as vegetative growth) or cultural activities (such as burning). The breakdown followed here is similar to the one Conklin uses for the Hanunóo.<sup>30</sup>

Each of the units isolated as a scene contains activities which each mountaineer family must carry out. But the activities within a scene do not always occur in the same temporal order, nor are all the activities present in all the scenes. For example, sometimes plantains are planted before beans, sometimes afterwards; and not every family

planted plantains in the year I was there.<sup>31</sup> But the scenes themselves, by virtue of the physical requirements of cropping, do maintain their temporal relationship to one another, and in their interlocked totality form what we may term a serial.

In descriptions of scenes, the bedrock data is ideally the observed episode. But the description is made on a higher level, where these episodes are combined into longer chains; and the activities of the scene are described on the nodal chain level. The bedrock data is ideally observed behavior. But because many of the scenes are carried out in months when I was not present in the sierra, I had to resort to verbal elicitation for the description of these scenes. Because I was not primarily interested in actonic exactitude, I feel confident that the behavior plans given by several informants independently provide a roughly accurate description on the nodal chain level of the activities and personnel of the scenes. In the Nature of Cultural Things Harris resorted to the same type of strategy--verbal elicitation (in that case written)--for gathering information on one common scene in American houses.<sup>32</sup>

### 1. Site Appropriation.

Site appropriation is an activity which most adult males in the community perform once a year. That this preliminary event occurs unversally is a result not so much of any logico-physical indispensability it possesses

with regard to the scenes following it, but rather of the social situation, in which confusion and conflict would occur if there were not some mechanism by which, prior to clearing land, general agreement could be reached as to which individual or household would crop which piece of land. This allocation of cropping land is controlled, in many primitive groups, by the elders or headmen in the group. In the case of the Dominican serrano the system works entirely differently.

The site appropriation scene occurs in special-sub-classes of the larger place called the sierra. Thus we need at the outset a relevant taxonomy of the different places appearing in the mountains.

There are at least two important ways in which the different classes of places in the mountains can be categorized. The most relevant breakdown for our purposes is an inventory of places based on the different classes of vegetation present. Because their cropping activities vary as to the vegetation on the site varies, each of these places will have a term in the local terminology as well.

a. Virgin forest. It is a moot question whether many of the forests labelled "virgin" in the tropics are truly virgin in the sense of never having been worked over by man. But we may safely assume that most of the mountain area in Monte Adentro was indeed virgin in this sense before the arrival of the mountaineer migrants from the east. The

pre-Columban Arawak population lived principally in the lowlands and began taking to the hills in large numbers only after the arrival of the Spaniards. But their physical extinction was so rapid that we may doubt whether they ever cultivated a large portion of the mountain area. The mountaineers frequently find zemis, small Arawak stone carvings, on the mountainsides, indicating that the aborigines did definitely go to the mountains. But hunting and fishing were also supplementary elements in their economic repertoire; and excursions of some length were made up into the hills to pan for surface gold.<sup>33</sup> Thus these aboriginal artifacts occasionally found in the sierra do not necessarily indicate that the Arawak had cultivated extensive tracts of land in these parts. The mountains were probably agriculturally virgin when the serranos arrived.

The vegetation on this class of land is lush, green, with a proportionately large number of huge trees (such as amacey, cabirma, yaya, fuguete--all in the class labelled locally palo de monte). In local terminology this type of land is usually called monte, occasionally montería. A further vegetational characteristic of monte, besides rich, verdant ligneous vegetation, is the absence of grass or small weeds. The soil is usually dark, covered with vegetal litter from the climax vegetation covering it.

The class of mountainside called monte is the preferred site for making conucos. The loose, black soil of monte is known to give excellently high yields in the important

crops during the first (and occasionally the second) year; moreover the predominance of massive trees provides the mountaineer with abundant wood for building a sturdy fence-- material which he would otherwise have to fell and drag in from other mountainsides.

At present there are very few montes left in Pino Tumbao. Originally there was much, but it has been for the most part used up.

b. Pine forest. In this region of the Cordillera Central, pine trees cover many hillsides between the altitudes of 1,900-2,500 feet. The history of the pine tree stands are not well known. One version has the pine trees originally limited to higher altitudes, but making their way gradually down to the lower slopes.<sup>34</sup> The serranos give conflicting accounts. Some say that there were more pine trees in previous years; and others say that there were fewer, that the clearing of the pines by the earlier settlers has resulted in a regrowth and a proliferation of new pines. "Las lomas se cierran de pino." But such statements must be viewed in the light of the conflict which exists between the serranos and the Dominican Departamento Forestal, which accuses the shifting cultivators of having seriously damaged the pine forests.

Hills covered with pines are called loma de pino by the serranos, and are not at all popular for horticulture. Before the mid forties and for a brief period following the assassination of Trujillo, the mountaineers dealt with

the pine trees as though they were weeds to be cleared, for purposes of planting, and occasionally sold. But ever since the forestry laws have begun to be enforced, pine hills are felled only by those who are willing to risk fines and imprisonment. But it is recognized that even when all the pines have been cleared from a hillside, the soil is still not very suitable for planting. Yields are low and uncertain in comparison to those on monte. "La hoja de pino es muy caliente; quema la tierra," is the explanation usually given by the mountaineers. "Pine needles are hot and burn the ground."

Not every hill which has pine trees belongs to this second category. Hills which have only a few scattered pines are treated differently for agricultural purposes (and are not called loma de pinos in the folk classificatory system).

c. Savanna. This class of mountainside (called sabana in local terminology) is characterized by a predominance of herbaceous vegetation, as opposed to the ligneous vegetation which dominated the first two categories of land. This type of land predominates on that part of the sierra which is on the south side of the Cordillera Central, on the other side of the dividing ridge to the south-west of Pino Tumbao. It is doubtful whether the savanna found in the sierra before the arrival of the serranos. In many cases the large tracts of savanna are the product of intentional large scale burning of the forests not under cultivation. This was an annual practice before the mid-forties, which

resulted each year in a crop of fresh herbaceous vegetation for the cows which, as has been mentioned earlier, were turned loose to fatten themselves in the sierra. Savanna is recognized as being useless for agricultural purposes.

d. High secondary growth. Land which has been cropped but is no longer so is called botao by the mountaineers. This type of land is now quite common in the sección of Monte Adentro. When land which has once been cropped is left to fallow, with no weeding or planting of grass occurring, within fifteen to twenty years the product will be a hillside covered with the large vegetation called locally broque. (Perhaps a local variant of standard Spanish "bosque.") The principal characteristic of this vegetation is the presence of medium size trees, different in variety from, and less suitable as fencing material than, the trees found on monte. This type of high fallow is called locally botao de palo, in reference to the trees (palos) which have begun to cover it once more.

Such land is now, of necessity, used for the making of conucos, but the yields are extremely low, even on fallow sites in which the secondary growth is well advanced.

e. Low secondary growth. If land is reworked before some 15 years of fallow time, it will be characterized by thin vegetation, brush and brambles. Such vegetation is called locally chaparro, and though occasionally cropped, it

will be the last type of site chosen.

Because the clearing of such sites does not require the felling of trees with axes, but only a slashing (chapear) of thin vegetation with the slashing tool called a colín, such pieces of ground are called locally botao de chapeo.

The preceding classification of hillside places was made on the basis of the vegetation found on the particular site. The vegetational criteria play a central role in determining where the event of site-appropriation will take place.

But the decision is influenced not only by the vegetational category into which the hillside falls, but also by considerations of another nature: the status of the hillside as being claimed by another man or not. In a legal sense, none of the land in the hills belongs to any of the cultivators. They are legally landless, and their horticultural activities are being carried on on land which legally belongs to the Dominican government. But in no period of Dominican history has any government been able to exercise effective control over all of the terrain within its national boundaries. The mountains have always been the refuge of fugitives from authority on the plains. And the northwest part of the Dominican Republic, into whose limits Monte Adentro falls, has been the historical hideout of bandits and revolutionaries.<sup>35</sup> Thus the Dominican government is the legal owner of the hills, but the serranos are dealing with



it--appropriating it, selling and buying it, passing it on to their children--in the same fashion as those who have legal rights to their land in other parts of the country.

There are a set of fairly well defined rules by which the mountaineers abide; no conflicts were seen or reported with regard to access to given plots of land. The land scarcity has never reached the point where particular cropping sites were fought over. The conflicts that occur in the hills center mostly around the question of damages done to one farmer's crops by the animals of another farmer; the question of land tenure evokes no conflict between neighbors.

Thus there are two categories into which a given plot of land may fall, over and above the vegetational categories listed earlier; claimed by others or not claimed by others. The defining criteria by which a plot is placed in one or the other of these categories is quite clear generally. A plot is claimed by another if:

- a. There is a fence surrounding it.
- b. There are fruit bearing trees--such as coffee, mango, coconut palm--planted by the claimant. Coffee trees also establish ownership.
- c. The plot is in proximity to a bohío.

Any one of these criteria suffices to establish the plot as being out of bounds to another mountaineer. Ordinarily land is fenced only for the making of conucos; but there are scattered instances where fairly large tracts (usually less than 10 acres) are surrounded by one or two strands of

barbed wire, placed there by a mountaineer who wished to secure this plot of land for himself, though he had no immediate need for it. Such appropriation is looked upon as selfishness by the mountaineers; the current version is that "Dios hizo la tierra para todo el mundo." Because livestock raising is important, and the mountainsides are the foraging places of the animals, land appropriation which is not connected to cultivation is frowned upon. But not enough cases of this have occurred for it to have become a serious problem.

Up until present, the mechanism by which this informal land tenure has worked has been agreement between neighbors. In response to the question as to why nobody else has moved in on this or that plot of land, the usual answer is "me lo respetan." This mechanism, labelled by the serranos as respeto, has functioned adequately. This respeto must be seen in the light of the low population density of the hills: 40 persons per square mile. The local population has not increased to the point where conflicts would arise and more complicated and formalized criteria would be established. It

This is not to say that there is abundance of cropping land in the sierra. Quite the contrary: there is land in the sierra to which the mountaineers desire access, and there is conflict. But these desired sites are not the fallow of neighbors, but the as-of-yet unworked hillsides where the

forestaes now protect the pine trees. Thus the conflicts that arise are between mountaineer and forest ranger, not between mountaineer and mountaineer.

Two sets of classificatory criteria have been presented now; five vegetational criteria and two tenure criteria, giving ten possible types of "places" in which site appropriation can occur. Of these ten classes of land, only three are currently selected as cropping sites. In the order of preference:

- a. monte unclaimed by others.
- b. High fallow unclaimed by others.
- c. Low fallow unclaimed by others.

A fourth must also be listed; pine hills unclaimed by tothers. But this is done relatively infrequently, and is very dangerous. The forest rangers patrol the hills constantly and large numbers of the serranos have been fined and jailed for felling pine trees. Those pine hills that have been felled are not hills claimed by other serranos by virtue of proximity to their bohío or prior fencing. Rather they are hills guarded only by law. The mountaineers respect each others' claims, but do not always respect the claims of the forestry department.

The order of preference was given above. The order of occurrence is somewhat different. High fallow is the type most frequently cleared now. And this fallow is usually within bounds formerly cleared and cropped by the same individual who now clears it again, or by this individual's father.

The site appropriation usually takes place in December. It is of significance that the criterion of slope, so frequently an inhibiting factor in selecting a particular site in other communities where shifting cultivation has been ethnographically reported, here has no relevance. The vast majority of sites cropped in the sierra have a steep incline which would have caused them to be rejected as agricultural sites by shifting cultivators with access to flat terrain. But given the topography of the sierra, the mountaineer has little choice in the matter, and the criterion of slope has vanished from consideration.

The first ~~observable~~ action involved in site appropriation involves the mountaineer and the forest ranger. Each zone in the sierra is under the supervision of one of the forest vigilantes living in or near La Sabanita. Before clearing land, the serrano must approach the forest ranger in charge of the zone where his potential site is and ask him to come out to look at the site. Verbal permission is needed from the forestaes before any clearing can be done. The forestal rides out (on mule) to the site with the cultivator, looks it over, and says yes or no. If the hill has too many pine trees, permission will be refused. If the pines are sparse, permission will be granted, with a warning not to fell the pines or allow them to be damaged by the flames or the smoke from the fire.

Many mountaineers have angrily accused the forestaes

of withholding land that could have been cropped without damage to the pines. But in 1970 the forestaes had been liberal in allocating sites. Several informants saw a relationship between this liberality and the upcoming political campaign, in which it was definitely to the interest of the forestaes that Balaguer, the man in power, remain in power. A change in president would most certainly have resulted in a change of many of the forestaes--this is one element behind the intense involvement of the government employees in the political campaign of early 1970. This political reality resulted to the benefit of the serranos in 1970, as sites had been allocated more liberally than is the custom.

Once permission has been secured, the final step in the appropriation of a site (if it is not already within the territory formerly cropped by the individual and recognized as being "his,") is the clearing of a narrow path around the perimeter of the site. This pathway (called locally trocha or callejón) not only serves as an announcement that the site has been appropriated, but also serves as a guideline of the outer limits of the site when the actual task of clearing begins.

This operation of slashing a trocha is performed with a long thin slashing instrument called the colín. In most other parts of Latin America this tool would be called a machete. But in the sierra the word machete is tagged to a tool of different size and shape, and the name colín

has been preserved from the English word Collins, which used to be the brand name of these tools when they were imported from the U.S. The operation of slashing is done by males, usually by the head of the household, occasionally with the aid of adolescent or post-adolescent subordinate males (normally sons of the head) living in the same household.

What is the size of the site appropriated? In comparison to the shifting cultivators reported on in Amazon Town and Chan Kom, the Dominican mountaineer makes very small conucos. The unit of land measure typically used in the Dominican Republic is the tarea, which is equivalent to .1554 acres and .063 hectares. (This tarea has no connection with the lexically similar tarefa reported in Amazon Town. The latter contains 3,906 square meters, while the Dominican tarea contains only 629 square meters. The word tarea means "task" in Spanish, and the tarea was originally the amount of land that a team of oxen could plow in one day.)

The maximum size conuco that one man alone could handle nowadays was generally agreed to be about 10 tareas, that is .63 hectares or one and a half acres. This is confirmed by specific figures collected on over 30 households. The households which have only one adult male tended to clear about 8 tareas, and the average conuco size was some eleven

tareas. This is much less than the figures reported for Chan Kom. Redfield estimates that about six mecates, or a quarter of a hectare, are cleared per year per person. The serrano average would be less than half of that, taking the modal household size as 5.9. In Chan Kom it would come out to 2,500 square meters per person, and in Monte Adentro about 1,240. The maximum perhousehold average in Monte Adentro would be about 7,500 square meters, which is also quite a bit less than the 10,155 square meters (2.6 tarefas) reported in Amazon Town.

Without attempting to delve at length into the reason at this juncture, one of the obvious differences between the technology reported in Amazon Town and Chan Kom, and that of Pino Tumbao, is the time consumed in building elaborate fences in the latter. No fences are reported in Amazon Town, and very primitive fences consisting of upright poles with brush snagged in-between are made in Chan-Kom. (In Tepoztlán the ethnographic report is confusing. In the text Lewis mentioned only "enclosures of rocks and brush,"<sup>36</sup> but in his tables he mentions only "fencing with poles."<sup>37</sup> Moreover he measures land not in terms of area, but in turns of cuartillos of corn planted, which makes it difficult to compare area cleared in Tepoztlán with area cleared in Pino Tumbao).

I believe the time spent in fence making is probably the crucial limiting factor in land area. This will be discussed more at length below. It is often arrace between

the termination of the fence and the onset of the rains in Monte Adentro. The mountaineers place the difficulty of building an adequate fence as the top limiting factor preventing them from clearing more land. Following that is the difficulty of weeding on fallow land. And finally there is the growing scarcity of land; but this is more easily gotten around (still, thanks to the low population density) by clearing several small sites, than are the first two limitations.

One might ask: why can't they begin their clearing earlier? One of the principal economic supplements is the growing and harvesting of coffee. This activity was at its height when I returned to the field in late December of 1970. The termination of coffee harvesting must precede clearing new land, for the simple reason that coffee is one of the greatest sources of income, both for the owner of the land, and the pickers who are paid daily wages. To reduce one's time in coffee picking would be to cut into one of the principal seasonal sources of earnings. Thus no clearing can begin until mid- or late January.

To sum up: the site-appropriation scene begins when a mountaineer selects from a series of categories a site for potential cropping, appears at this site with a forestal, and returns with a colin and perhaps another male from his household to blaze a thin trail around the perimeter of a site which averages some 11 or 12 tareas (or three quarters of a hectare) per household.



Scene 2: Clearing.

The second scene involves a series of cutting activities which result in the removal of unwanted shade from above the site to be cropped, the covering of this site with a mat of flammable vegetal debris (which the firing will convert into fertilizing ash), and the felling of wood which may be used in the construction of a sturdy fence around the perimeter of the site.

The timing of the onset of this scene is very important. Because the climate of the sierra is subject to annual seasonality, and because the principal crops are seed grains--which depend much more strongly on adequate moisture at the time of planting, and planting at the proper time of the year in terms of sunlight and heat than the vegetatively reproduced root crops--it is crucial that the site be ready for planting at the onset of the rainy season in later April or early May.

But there is nonetheless great variety in the onset of the clearing. Most of the farmers begin this phase in January, when the nortes, the cold drizzling rains that fall at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new, have begun to subside. But some wait until as late as March. This latter is a risky course of action, as there may not be enough time for adequate desiccation of the vegetal debris prior to burning before the rains come. In the Spring of 1969 very many serranos suffered because they felled too late. The rains came weeks earlier than expected, and a large number of the mountaineers had not yet burned their

sites. The result was a scarcity of crops during the subsequent year, as the unburned sites could not be planted until the following year.

The exerting series of activities which result in the clearing of the site can be broken down into different sub-sequences. The first operation is the slashing of all the vegetation on the site except the thick trees which must be felled with axes--excluding, of course, the pine trees, which nowadays must be left standing, and which are subject to a different sort of pruning operation. The slashing of the thin vegetation (chaparro and breña) is done with the colín, already referred to. Beginning at the bottom of the slope, the cultivator slashes off this vegetation as close to the ground as possible and spreads it around to form a as uniform a mat as possible. This operation is usually performed by the cultivator himself and males above 14 or 15 who live in his household. The men will come early in the morning, having nothing but a cup of black coffee in their stomachs, and a breakfast of boiled root crops will be brought to the site about 8 A.M. by a younger member of the family. Both boys and girls are recruited for this type of errand.

The work will continue until about noontime, and those working will return to the family bohío for the noontime meal. Sites are generally chosen close to the family bohío, within an hour's walking distance. The man returns to the site about 2 P.M. and continues working until sundown.

The man hours involved in the slashing down of the thin vegetation (la tala is the local name given to this operation) will vary, of course, with the thickness and prevalence of this type of vegetation on the particular site. Working on primary growth monte, where heavy trees predominate, a man working by himself could cover four or five tareas in one working day. But on secondary growth sites, where underbrush and thin saplings constitute the larger part of the vegetational cover, the time involved per tarea is much greater. One informant who cleared such a site covered less than a tarea per day.

Another operation which is performed on some, but not all, sites is the pollarding of the pine trees which are on the site. All of the branches and verdure of the pine tree is lopped off, save for the crest at top. This operation has three results beneficial to the cultivator; a source of unwanted shade is removed, more vegetal material is provided for the firing of the site, and the pine tree itself is protected from damage during the firing. When the mat of vegetal debris is being spread out over the site, a wide space is left bare around the base of the pine tree. It is a punishable offense not only to fell a pine tree, but also to permit it to get singed during the firing (chamuscarse, and frequently marearse). The operation of pollarding is often performed by local specialists, who are known to possess skill in performing this operation on the pines. They are usually paid for their services.

The third of the operations is the actual felling of the large trees: la tumba. This operation is performed only by adult males, with axes (hachas). In cases of monte, where there is a predominance of ligneous vegetation, the tumba is a very time consuming and physically exhausting phase of the pre-planting preparations. This is the first phase at which a man or a household will typically reach out to recruit additional workers to assist them. Though informants speak primarily of work groups called juntas, there are four distinguishable techniques by which a man can get others to assist him on his site:

1. The junta. The junta is an informal work group (called convite) in other parts of the Dominican Republic in which several members of the community go on a specified day to help one household in some phase of the conuco making process. The head of the household in question announces informally to different neighbors that on such and such a day he is going to juntar gente. On the announced day each invited household will send at least one male member to the site of the man making the junta. The work begins early in the morning and the host must provide those who come with breakfast, usually of boiled root crops and eggs. The group usually works together on one part of the site, instead of spreading out to different parts of the site. The junta is typically a time of singing and joking and boisterous conversation.

If it is a tumba (felling) that is being made, the group starts at the bottom of the site. In the case of a very large tree, four men (called a yunta, "yoke") will surround the tree and alternately, in groups of two, chop away. The work is done at the rhythm of the cantos de conuco, antiphonal songs in which one man sings the lyrics and the others respond with an antiphon.

At noontime the host must provide a meal for the workers--who number anywhere from six to a dozen. Rice and beans will form the staple. If no meat is available (as is often the case in the sierra) or if the host can't afford it, the rice and beans is served with spaghetti, bought at the local bodega. The meal is prepared and eaten at the bohío of the host if it is near to the work site; if not, the women of the host household bring the cooking implements to the site and prepare the meal under a nearby tree.

Work resumes about 2:00 P.M. and continues until around 4:30, at which time the host offers coffee to the workers, and the junta has finished.

If the host cannot afford to supply a large number of workers with breakfast and dinner, an alternate variety of the junta is available to him, called here a burricá. In this case the invited work only during the afternoon, after they have eaten at their own homes. The host need only supply coffee after the work is finished.

When a man calls a junta it is understood that he will

have to work in juntas called by the men who come to work for him. There are many households who reported having neither called nor worked in juntas. If a peasant recruits workers by the mechanism of the junta, he will become involved in a group whose members frequently find themselves working together at different sites. This phenomenon has its ideological representation in an ethos of neighborliness, by which the serranos frequently characterize themselves to the outsider. "Here we are una sola masa. We are all poor, but we help each other out. Here it's not like in other places. Here the neighbors help each other."

2. The second manner of recruiting help concerns only two individuals. It is similar to the junta in that the work is done without salary, and in that the person requesting the help must provide the food for the invited person. But it differs in that the mutual exchange of labor is more specific. On being asked to come to a junta, an individual could say yes, he'll come, but not show up and make some excuse, without disrupting the work of the group. But an individual who is asked by another to work with him alone must give a definite yes or no; and if it is yes, show up. Moreover a man can call a junta at which twelve people show up, without necessarily having to work at twelve juntas himself. Some of the people who show up may not call juntas themselves. But a man who asks another individual to help him on some specific task is getting involved in a relationship where the economic exchange is more specific. The men who

establish this sort of relationship are not necessarily relatives or compadres. This is not a formally recognized arrangement; it is not represented in the local terminology by some special term, as the junta is. If the people are asked about informal neighborly help, they usually refer only to the juntas and burrिकास. But observation isolates this other labor-recruiting strategy.

3. Cooperation between consanguineally and affinally related households. Mention has earlier been made of the household clusters that tend to form when children build their houses near that of their parents. Most of the heads of these households are males, as the sons usually settle near the father, whereas the daughters go to the area where the parents of their husband are located. d But I did see cases where the opposite was true; a man built a house near the house of his wife's father.

Between the males of these households there is much exchange of labor. What distinguishes this arrangement from the preceding one is the concomitant exchange of food and other domestic services--such as washing, cooking--which takes place between these households, but not between the households of the men involved in the arrangements mentioned above.

4. The fourth fashion of recruiting help is to pay labor. This arrangement is used less often in the tumbas and more often in the harvesting, especially of rice (and coffee,

which is not a conuco product). The going rate is between 80 ¢ a day, plus breakfast and the noontime meal. When questioned as to whether they had worked on other men's land as day-laborers, many farmers answered "Gracias a Diós, no." Thank God, no. The junta or mutual aid form of labor is an acceptable form of cooperation between equals. In the case of paying help, the person who is paid is called a peón, and there is an element of social degradation involved in working under this arrangement for a neighbor. As will be discussed later (under rice harvesting) a local strategy has been developed for maintaining the best of both arrangements: the dignity and equality of the neighborly help as well as the cash exchange of the wage contract.

I have just given four devices which are locally available to the serrano who wishes to recruit help for the clearing of his land. At this stage of the process--the clearing--and at this point in the history of the community, the most commonly used device is device no. three, cooperation between consanguineally or affinally related males whose houses are in close geographical proximity to each other.

When the tumba, the felling of the trees, has been terminated the result is a clearing on the mountainside in which no standing vegetation is left (except for the untouchable pine tree). The man hours involved in this stage of the process are, of course entirely dependent



on the nature of the vegetation which originally covered the site. On primary growth ~~climate~~ forest, where a large percent of the terrain is covered by thick palos de monte, one man alone could do perhaps one tarea a day. Many of the clearings made in 1970, however, were done on secondary growth ~~high~~ fallow where there were no thick trees and where all the vegetation was removed in the first clearing operation, the slashing (tala) with the colín.

Despite the gradual diminishing of the time involved in the tumba as contrasted with the growth of the importance of the tala, the name tumba is still applied to the plot of land cleared on the mountainside. It is not called a conuco until it has been fenced and planted.

But the clearing phase has one more operation: the desganche. The branches of the felled trees must be lopped off with the colín, and spread about the conuco, to insure an adequate burn. Mediocre burns are frequently attributed to the failure to perform this operation carefully. At the end of the desganche, what greets the eye is a disorderly tangled jumble of green slashed and chopped vegetation, called by the mountaineers tumba verde.

At the termination of these operations, the physical characteristics of the place have been drastically altered, and the absence of standing vegetation renders physically impossible the activities which constituted the episodic criteria of the Clearing Scene. Thus one scene has ended

and whatever happens from here on in is a new scene.

But before the next scene, the burning, can take place, the felled vegetation must dry out. For this reason it is important to perform the clearing of the tumba during a period of time when there is no frequent rainfall. The period of time when there is no frequent rainfall. The period of time necessary for the proper desiccation of the tumba varies with the type of vegetation that initially covered it. The average length of time is between a month and six weeks. In Mexico, the ~~falling~~ and ~~partial~~ planting take place in approximately the same months as in Pino Tumbao, but in Chan Kom the clearing occurs months earlier and the felled vegetation is given three months to dry out. In Amazon Town the clearing takes place in June, July, and August; and as in Pino Tumbao from a month to six weeks are given for the drying out of the vegetation.

During the weeks in which the vegetation is drying out, the farmers busy themselves with other tasks away from the tumba. Though each family clears one tumba each year, the tumba from the preceding year will still be producing root crops and this requires attention, both in the form of weeding and keeping the fences in condition. Thus the period following the clearing of the tumba is not necessarily one of inactivity for the people of Pino Tumbao