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MACHISMO: A VALUE SYSTEM OF A MEXICAN PEASANT CLASS

DISSERTATION

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the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Macho Defined

Nietzsche writes:

...in individual instances in the most various places in the world and from the most various cultures, a higher type of man continuously and progressively appears: one which, in relation to mankind as a whole, is a type of Superman...

Christianity...has made war to the death against this higher type...

In the Mexican state of Guanajuato there is a concept of a "higher man." He is called a "macho." As is the case with Nietzsche's Superman, the Guanajuato macho is not considered a proper member of his community's Catholic church, and he is moreover sometimes verbally abused by the priests. However, in contrast to Nietzsche's Superman, the Mexican macho is not often of the dominant political and social class, but rather he is almost always of the lower social stratum. He is a Superman within the context of what I will call the "macho society."

1Nietzsche's Werke, Vol. II, ed. by G. Stenzel (2 vols.; Salzburg: "Das Bergland-Buch," 1967), p. 972. The original text, of which the above is my own translation, is as follows: "...gibt es ein fortwährendes Gelingen einzelner Fälle an den verschiedensten Stellen der Erde und aus den verschiedensten Kulturen heraus, mit denen in der Tat sich ein höherer Typus darstellt: etwas, das im Verhältnis zur Gesamtmenschheit eine Art Übermensch is... Christen- tum...hat einen Todkrieg gegen diesen höheren Typus Mensch gemacht..."
which is the farming and proletarian stratum in which most males aspire to the "ideal" of the macho personality.

The term "macho" is a word of current usage in Spain and Spanish-speaking America. Crowell's Spanish-English dictionary of general Spanish usage translates the word as follows: "macho m. male, man; male animal; he-mule..." In this thesis I am interested in the word in its sense of "masculinity." In my translations from Spanish dictionaries I will emphasize this meaning. The Diccionario General (Barcelona) says:


An etymological dictionary says that without dispute the word "macho," insofar as it pertains to the masculine sex, is derived from the Latin masculus. It has also had the sense of a sterile female plant. In some contexts it has meant the human penis. The word has been in existence with the general sense of masculinity since at least 1251 A. D.3

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It is thus evident that "macho" is not a specifically Mexican word. The etymological dictionary says: "It is a word of general use in all epochs and common to all Romance languages."\(^1\) However, my objective here is a consideration of the specifically Mexican notion of the macho in the context of Guanajuato peasant society. The idea of macho has received considerable elaboration in Mexico. The Mexican Diccionario General de Americanismos treats the word "macho" at length:

Macho adj. Through the influence of the indigenous (Mexican) tradition in the semantic evolution, this word does not precisely indicate sex in relation to plants and things, but rather to superiority in size, condition, force and other attributes; or it serves simply as a sign to designate affinal species...

...3. adj. v. It is used to describe a man of much and great energy, or one who is very courageous, or of much character.\(^2\)

However, although all Spanish dictionaries contain the word "macho," none of them, not excluding the Mexican dictionary, contains the word "machismo." Machismo, or macho-ism, is a philosophy or viewpoint which advocates the quality of macho or the particular man who most embodies the quality. The fact that the philosophy of macho, or machismo, is not defined in the dictionaries may mean that the word is not yet a correct or polite expression in Spanish usage. Indeed, machismo is a folk philosophy or viewpoint which attributes a special

\(^{1}\)Ibid.

\(^{2}\)Diccionario General de Americanismos, Vol. II (Méjico, D. F.: Editorial Pedro Robredo, 1942). "Por influencia de la tradición indígena en la evolución semántica, esta voz no indica precisamente sexo, con relación a plantas y a cosas, sino superioridad en tamaño, condición, fuerza y otra atributo; o sirve de simple signo para distinguir especies afines... adj. v. Dícese del hombre de muchas y grandes energías, o muy valiente, o de mucho carácter."
worth to a macho or to the quality of macho, hence to masculinity in its meaning of dominance, vitality and courage. "Macho" can be used:

(1) as an adjective. For example, a strong man is macho. In this sense the word is roughly equivalent with the Spanish word "valiente," or "courageous."

(2) as a noun in the sense of a quality. The word suggests valor, courage. Macho is something a strong man has in him that makes him strong. The quality is invariably an ethically positive one, a good or end in itself. It should be noted, however, that the quality is spoken of only with regard to specific beings. One must say that a being is macho (es macho), not that it has macho. On the other hand, when I asked if macho were "something" ("Es macho algo?") those of my informants who saw my point would answer yes. "It is something good." But my question produced the answer. Macho is not referred to in itself in normal conversation.

(3) finally, as a noun indicating a person. For example, a strong man is a macho.

When "macho" is used as an adjective by members of the "macho society," it can be applied to anything that is thought potent, vital and masculine in a general sense. Male babies can be "macho." Even animals can deserve this term. Used as a noun, the word carries the significance of an ideal, an image of what is good and of worth.
Machismo bears comparison with the upper-class Spanish notion of "hombría." The expression "hombría de bien" is defined as "proceder recto, propio de un hombre de honor y estimación."¹ ("...correct procedure characteristic of a man of honor and esteem.") The word "macho," on the other hand, in dictionaries published in Spain, does not have the significance of value but rather indicates merely the fact of male sex. However, my findings in Guanajuato suggest that, if we are referring to an aristocratic value system, it would be incorrect to assume that "hombría de bien" has been transplanted from Spain to the Mexican upper class under the name "machismo." It is important to emphasize the fact that in Guanajuato "machismo" is a lower class ethos of which the upper classes are contemptuous. The upper class considers "macho" a vulgar word to be used sarcastically rather than positively. Only the children of wealthy upper- or middle-class Guanajuatans would affirm the word in any sense, much as American children might admire the ethos of cowboys or firemen, to whom the parents ascribe lower-class status. I will presently argue that the way the word "macho" is used—positively or negatively—can actually be seen to define class stratification in Guanajuato.

Finally, it is appropriate to cite a few instances where the words "macho" and "machismo" have been used in the literature about

Mexico. George Foster says: "The essence of machismo is valor, and un hombre muy valiente, i.e., a macho, is one who is strong and tough, generally fair, not a bully, but who never dodges a fight, and who always wins. Above all, a macho inspires respeto (‘respect’)."\(^1\) John G. Kennedy remarks that stud animals are called machos in parts of Mexico. Machismo, he says, contains an ethos of sexual aggression.\(^2\) May Díaz writes of machismo in Jalisco, a State neighboring Guanajuato: "...machismo...is to be physically strong, careless of consequences and dangers, jealous of one's honor, and able to enforce one's wishes and desires on others."\(^3\) A journalist, Irene Nicholson, writes: "...machismo...is exaggerated emphasis on maleness, toughness..."\(^4\)

These characterizations of the Mexican use of "macho" thus conform, if not in emphasis then in literal definition, to general Spanish usage.

However, beyond isolated remarks of which the above are typical, there has been little effort to develop a comprehensive "theory" or "depth analysis" of machismo, or to attempt to derive the philosophy from some psychological or social phenomenon. One exception may be

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Oscar Lewis, who finds in machismo an ethos of sexual aggression. He also ascribes machismo to upper and middle classes. Lewis is interesting for this thesis, since my findings in Guanajuato tend to contradict Lewis on both counts. In Guanajuato, machismo as sexual aggression is overshadowed by other behavior patterns, though sexuality does enter into the value system. With regard to class distinctions, while it might be appropriate to speak of machismo as an upper-class ethos vis-à-vis Mexico or even Latin America as a whole, Guanajuato society clearly reverses this pattern. Machismo here is a lower-class set of values.

Robert Redfield does not mention machismo at all, at least not in his works on the Yucatan. We might therefore infer that the concept is limited to the parts of Mexico most influenced by Spanish culture, that is, the states north of Mexico City. There may be masculine behavior which fits the description of machismo, but in Indian Mexico there is apparently no word "macho."

In sum, all sources tend to confirm my own general working definition of machismo, or the positive evaluation of the quality of specifically masculine dominance and energy, i.e., the quality of macho. The points from which my interpretation tends to depart concern the importance of sexuality for machismo and the attributing of machismo to a particular social class.

Machismo as a "Fact"

Having defined machismo it still remains to classify it in
In other words, what kind of "fact" is machismo? Foster calls for a delineation of the "cognitive orientation" in relation to other orders of cultural phenomena. But in the present work I am talking not merely of ideas but also of social behavior. Even what Redfield calls "world view," or "the insider's total vision and conception of everything," must be related to a social context.

Redfield says, "Of all that is connoted by 'culture,' 'world view' attends especially to the way a man, in a particular society, sees himself in relation to all else. ...It is, in short, a man's idea of the universe." The emphasis here is on the "total" consciousness, without regard to emotional qualities which are often implicit in social interaction. "World view" differs from culture, ethos, mode of thought and national character. It is the picture the members of a society have of the properties and characters upon their stage of action. In short, the world view is of the order of an idea or cognitive content, or a pattern of such contents. In terms of the present research, Redfield's description of world view does not permit

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1 Foster, "Limited Good," p. 308.


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.
easy categorization of data, since it omits contents which are by nature social and are "conscious" only in specific social situations. The study of machismo must include patterned emotional responses as well as ideas.

Foster proposes "cognitive orientation" as a substitute for Redfield's term "world view," asserting that "the average man of any society cannot describe the underlying premises of which his behavior is a logical function..."

In speaking of a cognitive orientation—the terms "cognitive view," "world view," "world view perspective," "basic assumptions," "implicit premises," and perhaps "ethos" may be used as synonyms—I am as an anthropologist concerned with two levels of problems: (1) The nature of the cognitive orientation itself which I see as something "psychologically real," and the ways in which and the degree to which it can be known; and (2) the economical representation of this cognitive orientation by means of models or integrating principles which account for observed behavior, and which permit prediction of behavior yet unnoted or unperformed.1

In other words, Foster does not focus entirely upon the cognitive view per se, as apparently Redfield does, but upon the "assumptions of behavior." Behavior is seen as a concrete pattern from which cognition can be inferred. Cognition is seen both as something "psychologically real" (and hence empirically definable) and as indirectly knowable through behavior. In either case, however, cognition is known to have content that is not entirely conscious but rather "psychological" and even "social." Whether or not the content is partly or entirely conscious in individual minds is a secondary question. Foster's viewpoint is therefore a refinement and improvement of Redfield's and is

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1 Foster, "Limited Good," p. 308.
more suitable for purposes of the present analysis, since machismo is not always a consistent and well-formulated abstract world view apart from or detached from concrete situations, although abstract or rational patterns are implicit in concrete social situations. It is often difficult to determine whether the social situation is derived from cognition or vice versa. In this work I am interested not only in machismo as an abstract philosophy in the sense of Redfield’s “world view,” but also in macho behavior, particularly as it is defined by Mexicans. The categories I use to define this behavior are Mexican, but the behavior exists as an empirical reality to me as well as to the Mexicans.

The suffix “ismo” in the word “machismo” is equivalent to the English “ism” and hence pertains to an ideology. It is a word which outsiders apply to that behavior and thought which relates to the quality of macho. It would be interesting to know whether “machismo” has ever been used by members of the “macho society.” It may be, but, while “macho” was in general use among my informants, I never in six months of field work heard the term “machismo.” Machismo may be a concept of urban Mexican intellectuals, and certainly it is used among outsiders. This is to suggest, in other words, that machismo must be considered as a fact of a different order than macho itself. However,

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machismo is not a self-conscious ethos in the sense, for example, that Christians are conscious of Christianity as opposed to, say, Buddhism. The fact remains that machismo is a pattern of cognition that is implicit in social behavior, rather than a formalized and objective philosophy. We may follow Lévi-Strauss in asserting that, whether or not a pattern of thought is implicit or explicit, it is still thought and, indeed, abstract cognition.\(^1\) But to find this thought it is necessary to look to social behavior that is specified by the people themselves: "There, that is macho behavior."

There is a natural hesitancy to call machismo a "religion," if for no other reason than the vagueness of the word. Moreover, a Guanajuato Catholic Priest does not call it a religion because he thinks that the sole claim to religious authority in Mexico is the Catholic Church. It is also clear that the members of the "macho society" and the apologists of the quality of macho support the priest in this, if only because "machismo," as opposed to macho, is not a concept for them. Other reasons for not calling machismo a religion are: machismo has no sense of a personal divinity, a God or gods; nor are there saints or mythological heroes. That is not to say there are no heroes of machismo. Historical figures such as Zapata and Villa are thought of as **hombres muy machos** (very macho men), and some cowboy movie stars take on qualities of heroes. But these heroes are real men with whom a person can identify, not aloof like the

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}\)
saints. Also, machismo has no church and no priests who conserve an explicit body of doctrine. In Mexico, especially in the communities under consideration, a powerful Catholic Church prohibits, through an influential priesthood and the force of its traditional authority, the formation of a non-Catholic "religious" structure.

It would seem that machismo could be defined in terms of "values" and "norms." If we were to think of religion primarily in terms of ethical values, then machismo would be a religion. The quality of macho is explicitly called good in "macho society" and particular social situations are evaluated in terms of the macho evoked in them or implicit in them. Machismo is a system of values in that the ethical worth of a given action can be inferred from the central concept of macho, which is the primary "good in itself." Likewise, a "norm" may be defined for our purposes as a sequence or pattern of actions in which the value (here, of macho) is inherent.

However, understood as a self-contained system of values capable of being translated directly into action, machismo does not tell us much about Mexican peasant society. Machismo does not allow the prediction of behavior in all situations of interpersonal interaction. For, whereas the conscious ideal is an aspiration toward macho, i.e. masculine dominance, no Mexican community, nor for that matter any community whatsoever, could exist in an atmosphere of unlimited aggression and egoistic self-assertion. An unbridled aggression-directed individualism would shatter a society. Yet the
“Macho society” of Mexico sustains itself as a relatively harmonious whole. We must therefore posit another model which explains or interprets the paradox that the society is relatively peaceful even when it has an ethos or value system emphasizing aggression. This model I will simply call “the universal desire for social peace and stability.” I do not have in mind a “modal personality” such as the patterned temperaments described in terms of the “folk” (Redfield) and “Apollonian” (Nietzsche and Benedict), but rather I am asserting merely that a community must have a degree of peace in order to exist. A society or community is by definition an entity with a measure of stability and harmony within its parts. The question may be raised, then, whether machismo perhaps contributes to the ideal of peace or must be balanced by some opposing ethos. I will show that machismo indeed enforces peace rather than disrupting it.

The present discussion serves to point out that machismo cannot be considered a “fact” of one specific order or level of analysis; nor can it be unequivocally defined with a single word such as “religion” or “value.” In its dimension of a plan for conscious action it directly contradicts the premise upon which any society must obviously be based, namely some degree of social peace. This assertion simply pays tribute to a long standing principle that one should not talk about explicit or conscious behavior without recognizing its implicit assumptions. Lévi-Strauss has said there are logical cognitive assumptions implicit in human social structure. I acknowledge this, but it seems true that, conversely, there are also social assumptions in
cognitive behavior. To reduce a study of machismo to one level of facts would be to oversimplify the problem.

**Theories of Machismo**

Machismo is mentioned in isolated contexts in a variety of ethnographic accounts of Mexico. But to my knowledge there has never been an entire book or dissertation devoted to the formulation of a "theory" of machismo (in contrast, say, to the many theories of totemism). By "theory" I mean an attempt to derive one set of facts (here a value system) from another stratum of facts, whereby the derivative set becomes comprehensible. A theory of machismo would presumably mean the reduction of the value system to features of a psychological or social system. Such a theory of machismo is now overdue, since the idea of macho is appearing with regularity in the literature on Mexico and Latin America. It may be assumed that as the literature on Mexican peasants grows and moves towards more theoretical formulations, more attention will be given to the special areas of peasant life, thus requiring a more careful account of the special relations between these areas. As machismo is described in greater detail, it will be set in a correct perspective.

Oscar Lewis attempts to derive, if not machismo per se, then macho-like behavior from the male's jealousy of his wife, whom he suspects of illicit sex relations, and from his authority to constrain her. Behind this male jealousy and consequent desire for dominance is the psychological mechanism of projection. The peasant, in order to uphold his image as a strong, aggressive male, seeks sexual adventures.
In a social climate of sexual competition he is likely to attribute the same adventurousness to his wife, and he is likely to abuse her for it. On the other hand, the woman is expected to give free rein to her husband, even when he requires money for his love affairs. His male image is at stake. Lewis asserts that the mutual suspicion and tension between the sexes generate the ethos of machismo. However, he says, the woman is by no means entirely submissive: "They (the women) readily admit to the superiority of the men and tend to admire a man who is macho or manly, yet they describe the 'good' husband as one who is not dominating but relatively passive."¹

Lewis' "psychological" explanation of machismo emphasizes the factor of sexuality. Machismo becomes an ethos primarily of sexual aggression. A man's worth depends on whether he can enjoy a number of women and yet maintain the faithfulness of his own wife. My own data from Guanajuato suggest that Mexican men do in fact value sexual exploits—at least their conversation suggests they do—but I would tend to define machismo more generally than sexual self-assertion. I have expanded the role of machismo to dominance relations in general. Macho can be seen working in a wide range of social situations. My own account could be called "sociological" insofar as I see acceptance and non-acceptance of machismo accurately following lines of social

cleavage. The class structure of the towns can be analyzed by determining which people do and do not speak approvingly of the quality of macho.

George Foster's isolated remarks on machismo merit a brief consideration. His data are derived from a town, Tzintzuntzan, which is less than two hundred miles from the focal point of the present study and should share a basis of culture. He asserts that the people of this community do not admit of anyone being particularly macho, since it is characteristic of their world view to see everything as existing in limited quantity. Likewise macho is in limited supply. If Foster is right about Tzintzuntzan, there is a radical break in outlook between his community and mine. I do not believe such a breach exists. It has been my impression of Foster's theory of the "limited good" that he extends it to include too much. I do not mean to suggest that Foster's entire theory should be thrown out. But my investigation of machismo has led me to the inescapable conclusion that machismo is by its very nature a viewpoint of extravagance. A strong man is always referred to in superlative terms as having an unbounded amount of what it takes to be a man. He is never merely macho but rather muy macho (very macho). Without ever having been to Tzintzuntzan, it seems to me difficult to understand how, assuming the communities to be culturally related, Foster could have come to

1Foster, "Limited Good," p. 308.
his conclusions. Machismo seems to be evidence that the concept of the "limited good" cannot be stretched to encompass every aspect of Mexican culture. In Guanajuato the word "macho" invariably excites great enthusiasm because it is one thing a strong Mexican can have even if he has nothing else. If the people of the community studied by Foster have the word and the concept of "macho," it would appear to me that they would have to see it in extreme terms. Otherwise it would not excite such hearty approval. My own experience led to the conclusion that it would contradict the nature of the concept not to believe that macho can be possessed in great abundance. If the people of Tzintzuntzan did not believe in the availability of macho, they would not have the word or the idea.

A "theory" of machismo that impresses me and is useful for the present work is that of May Diaz. Diaz finds in machismo the implicit assumption of "power divorced from responsibility," which she says derives from the image of the father. The boy knows the father only in the capacity of a disciplinarian. The father has arbitrary power to punish the boy, who nevertheless seldom sees that the father must also work to support the family. The father, unseen by the boy, is a servant of the family just as the boy is subject to the father. The image of the father as one with unlimited power is objectified as an image of masculinity to which the boy aspires. Since Diaz's conception supports much of what I will say about machismo, it would be appropriate to quote her at length:
What is seen as the attribute of power and of the male role, of the father the child wants to be like, is power divorced of responsibility. In all societies, the child probably first learns the authority role in respect to the obvious attributes of his father: he smokes or he can stay up late... But this view is overlaid by other considerations as the child grows in understanding and adds to his knowledge of what father does: he works, he supports the family, he makes decisions. But if what goes on within the walls of the house is patterned in such a way that the small boy does not see these responsibility attributes of the authority figure in action, he tends to make the equation: authority = power without responsibility. In this instance the father does not undertake actions within the walls of the house; as the person responsible for the nuclear family unit in a larger context, he is completely absent, distant, or removed from what the child is allowed to see...

Two factors contribute heavily to the stereotype of authority that the child learns. The first of these is the distance relationship with the father... The second factor has to do with the structure of the family itself...; the father tends to be seen as a free agent rather than as the representative of a nuclear family in reference to the outside world. Solidarity with men in general or with one's leisure companions may have preference...

As a consequence of these factors, the child sees authority as power shorn of responsibility and clothed in the outward symbols of the male role—machismo if you will; to be physically strong, careless of consequences and dangers, jealous of one's honor, and able to enforce one's wishes and desires on others. Power is seen as unpredictable, based on personal whims, shaped by voluntad (will); the powerful person can bring gifts or mete out punishment, but which he will choose to do cannot be foretold.

Diaz thus explains where the source of discipline is and why the conception of the discipline is so idealized, i.e. in machismo. These considerations confirm my observations in Guanajuato, where the father is feared by his sons, who nevertheless have a limited view of his life.

The Argument of this Work

In the preceding pages I have defined "macho" as 1) the

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1Diaz, Tonalá, p. 92.
quality of masculine dominance and self-assertiveness; 2) the man (or sometimes woman or animal) who possesses a high degree of this quality; and 3) the state of being macho. I have suggested that machismo is the viewpoint which attributes value or ethical worth to macho.

A Guanajuato peasant village can be understood in terms of three themes, as outlined above: 1) machismo, the ethos of male aggression; 2) Catholicism; and 3) an underlying desire for peace. Both Catholicism and machismo are ideal standards of behavior, and in the views of their apologists each claims absolute validity. In the sphere of social ethics, Catholicism makes a claim for its code of humility and charity; whereas machismo represents the ethos of aggression and courage, impulses which are judged frankly "bad" from the Christian viewpoint. Logically speaking, the two codes are in direct opposition to one another. Given this logical opposition, the society which expresses these codes would seem to be inwardly divided. But this is not the case. Catholicism and machismo regulate different spheres of behavior. Catholicism is viewed by the "macho society" as pertaining 1) to economic affairs insofar as they are influenced by God and the saints, and 2) administration of the total community in collaboration with the resident members of the Mexican Government. In neither instance does Catholicism conflict with the ideals of machismo as seen by members of the "macho society." From the point of view of the priests and even upper-class ricos ("rich ones"), this limitation of the dominion of the Church is regrettable.
However, within the "macho society," which includes the broad base of peasants or farmers, no conflict of values is seen. The peasants remain ethically if not politically independent.

Machismo governs social relations within the "macho society." "Christian love" does not apply to this community. The problem that must be solved, then, is why an ethos of aggressiveness, unchecked by any compensating ethos of "love," does not split the society asunder. The community is to all appearances a well-ordered one. It does not at any rate present a more chaotic appearance than a typical United States town where Christian love is preached and regarded as the dominant ethos. On the contrary, it would seem that Redfield's concept of a pacific "folk" is to some extent appropriate. The paradox of the apparent contradiction between the aggressive ethos of machismo and the fact of a degree of social peace is explained by an assertion by George Foster: "Since a macho, a strong man, discourages exploitation, it is clear that this personality characteristic has a basic function in peasant society."²

Finally, the way the word "macho" is used—positively or disparagingly—follows class affiliation. For people of the middle and upper classes, a macho is an offensive bully and one who scoffs at

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¹Redfield, "The Folk Society," in Papers, pp. 231-54.
²Foster, "Limited Good," p. 313.
Christianity. Although the upper-class male has real power at his disposal and may indeed exercise such power, in his ideological viewpoint he holds to Christianity with its affirmation of charity and meekness. He supports the priests when they admonish the machos to give up selfish, rough behavior. For the lower class, on the other hand, there is neither real wealth nor real power in relation to the upper classes. A lower-class male has power only with regard to those of his own class. Yet those attributes of personality are affirmed which would apparently characterize a "superman." The macho is "beyond good and evil." He is outside the Catholic belief particularly in its moral sphere. For him, not Christian love but its apparent polar opposite, power, is the supreme good. It is of no concern to the man of the "macho society" that the upper classes as well as the priests scorn the quality of macho. He upholds the quality in the face of their disrespect. His indifference to their estimation of his values and beliefs is apparently genuine.

This orientation with regard to macho is characteristic even of those poor peasants who consider themselves Christian. One belongs to the "macho society" if one would prefer to be macho. Men who cannot be macho themselves nevertheless admire the macho in other men. Young boys, weak and old men, openly say they are Christian not out of preference but out of necessity. Christianity is a departure from their ideal forced on them by virtue of their inferiority. They say, however, that during the best years of their life they will be or were macho, and consequently un-Christian.
CHAPTER II

CONDITIONS AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

Location of Research

Research was focused in San Diego de la Unión, Guanajuato, Mexico. San Diego is a peasant town of about 4100 inhabitants, 105 miles from Guanajuato, Capital of the state of Guanajuato. The precise location of San Diego is 101 degrees, 7 minutes of longitude, 21 degrees, 27 minutes of latitude. I carried on field work in San Diego and in an area of north central Guanajuato defined by a triangle whose northern point is San Diego, whose western point is Guanajuato, and whose eastern point is San Miguel Allende.

My decision to locate in San Diego was based on the fact that I could find living accommodations there, and yet the town was small and somewhat isolated. The nearest large town, Dolores Hidalgo (12,500 population), lay 30 kilometers to the south and could be reached by a 1 hour 45 minute bus ride. The trip to San Luis Potosí (140,000 population) was about 80 kilometers and took 2 1/2 hours. The relative isolation of the town was due to the fact that the distance, mostly over dirt roads, discouraged the people of San Diego from commuting daily to larger towns. In my experience in the city of Guanajuato I found that many people commuted to the city daily by bus. San
Diego was not isolated in the sense that there was no bus service or telephone connections, but rather that few people commuted to other cities to work. A man of my acquaintance commuted to San Luis once a week to sell magazines, but he was an exception.

While this relative isolation explains why I selected San Diego at a time in my study when I was attempting to find a spatially well-defined community, I would at the present time frankly hesitate to claim that this isolation had significant implications in my study of machismo. As far as the verbalization of values was concerned, I found informants in the larger towns somewhat more articulate. However, I had a chance in San Diego to witness the behavior dimension of machismo in the rhythm of community life. I tended sometimes to collect some of the more theoretical information from articulate informants in San Miguel or Guanajuato and test this information by injecting it into conversations in San Diego. On the other hand, I derived most of the purely external data of social behavior from observations in San Diego. Thus the advantage of being spatially isolated from other communities gave dimension to the study.

**Duration of Field Work**

I lived in north central Guanajuato, Mexico a total of 165 days from June 28 to December 21, 1967, not including a twelve day trip to the U.S. during this time. On July 11, after preliminary reconnaissance trips to villages in the area, I established myself as a resident of San Diego de la Unión by finding quarters and making the necessary personal contacts. My residence in San Diego proceeded
according to a routine which would allow a consideration of the community in its wider spatial context. I remained in town for two week or ten day periods, between which I would make two or three day trips to neighboring villages and towns. Or I would go whenever there was a fiesta or some event of interest in the environs. I spent 13 days in Guanajuato and San Miguel de Allende recovering from intestinal sickness and two bouts with the flu. I also spent a period of 15 days in San Miguel during which I did not visit San Diego. I terminated my stay in San Diego on December 19.

**Conditions of Research**

My study was financed by private funds. This and the fact that my wife and young child did not accompany me into the field influenced my decision to locate in San Diego, in that I wanted to avoid the expense of equipment necessary to live in a smaller village; and I wanted to spare myself the time and tedium of cooking. I therefore lived at the hotel in San Diego and thereby minimized the practical details of everyday living in order to maximize my time for doing direct research. As it turned out I profited from mealtime discussions with other residents of the hotel. It was centrally located off the square, and from my final room (I changed rooms twice), a second-story room overlooking the square, I could observe the rhythm of life at the center of town. My observations of group patterning from that lookout contributed to my understanding of wider social processes. Moreover, since among the most enthusiastic informants concerning macho were young single males, I had ample opportunity to interview them in the hotel.
Altogether my stay at the hotel was satisfactory from the standpoint of research, and I suspect that if I had rented a house I would have been cut off from the exposure that has so greatly contributed to my thesis.

The residents of the hotel were somewhat in my own situation. They were not married or were not living with their wives during the weekdays. This gave me something in common with them and I frequently joined their group to visit fiestas and other functions. Two of the residents were teachers at the local primary school, and in order to mitigate the boredom of life in a little town we would talk long hours into the night. This bachelor status, for the purposes of my study, was both an advantage and a disadvantage. Although I had relationships with families in town, and was invited in from time to time, these relationships were formal and not particularly rewarding in terms of ethnographic interest. Generalizing from my own situation in San Diego, I would say that, even if it is the purpose of the ethnologist to immerse himself as completely as possible in community life, he will not enter all phases of this life with equal facility. However, I fortunately chose a subject which not only interested me but interested the informants to whom I had access. Moreover, the subject of machismo was easy to study once people understood what my interest in the town was. The subject did not embarrass anyone but, on the contrary, everyone seemed anxious to talk about it.

Listed below are ten typical and actively participating informants. They were young unmarried men between the ages of 14 and 22.
The group that assembled at my hotel in San Diego regularly changed membership, and it has been difficult to appraise their individual contributions. In all, I would say 40 young men came more than once to my hotel, although I did not get biographical data from all of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arturo</td>
<td>Guanajuato</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomas</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>odd jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>Santa Rosa</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>picking fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>San Miguel</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>gardening, walking dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>schoolteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomas</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>shoeshine, dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuel</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>farmwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martín</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these young men I talked at length with Sr. Manuel Flores, Superintendent of the San Diego schools; Msgr. Manuel Morales, priest of the San Diego barrio church; Artemio Walter Venebedes, Professor of Sociology at the Instituto Tecnología of Monterrey, whom I met in Guanajuato. These men influenced my general point of view through their wide reading as well as their first hand knowledge. I do not count them as "informants," since they were no more part of the "macho society" than I was.
CHAPTER III

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF MEXICO

General Considerations

The literature on central Mexico is largely historical and travel literature. The ethnological writing on Mexico began most notably with the work of Robert Redfield, who conducted work in the Yucatan and areas south of Mexico City. This area has been given first attention perhaps due to the fact that it was relatively unimportant historically and has retained more of its Indian heritage. Southern Mexico is presently an exciting laboratory for the study of culture change, which is coming to pass with the infusion of modern and Spanish culture. Oscar Lewis has followed Redfield's example with a restudy of Tepoztlán, originally studied by Redfield. It was only with the work by George Foster on Tzintzuntzan that attention was significantly drawn to the mestizo culture of the Central Plateau.

3George Foster, Empire's Children: The People of Tzintzuntzan (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1948).
Since the area of the present study, the State of Guanajuato, has always been in the center of modern Mexican history, it has been assumed that a historical approach would suffice to explain the culture of the area, and anthropologists have passed Guanajuato by, concentrating instead on the southern and more primitive areas. Although the culture south of Mexico City does present a challenge, it cannot be judged whether the northern areas have in fact attained the "progress" which the south aspires to without investigating the north. If we assume a cultural "revolution" in one part of contemporary Mexico, we can expect the end result to resemble areas which have already experienced the revolution. Unless the north serves as a model for future progress in the south, the anthropologist working in the south can have no standard for, and hence cannot talk about, social progress.

A Brief Comparison of the Conditions of George Foster's Study and the Present Work

Foster's latest book on Tzintzuntzan concerns a location in the state of Michoacán, which adjoins Guanajuato. About two hundred miles of highway separate Foster's community from San Diego de la Unión. The factor of spatial proximity suggests that a comparison between Foster's study and my own is warranted, particularly with regard to features of world view.

Tzintzuntzan is primarily a farming community with a

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supplementary income from pottery making. San Diego is almost exclu-
sively a farming community with no manufactures for trade at pre-
sent. Tzintzuntzan is smaller than San Diego, with only 1877 people in
1960. The population of San Diego, about 1100, supports a more clearly
defined upper class consisting of government workers, shopkeepers, 2
doctors, and 5 priests. In Tzintzuntzan, 10% of the people speak an
Indian language besides Spanish, while in San Diego Spanish is the only
language. Tzintzuntzan has been more directly exposed to the influ-
ence of Spanish urban culture, being nearer to Pátzcuaro (1½ kilometers)
and Mexico City (100 kilometers). An educational program was estab-
lished by the Mexican Government and has brought many gringo and Mexi-
can professors and social workers to the town. In addition many Amer-
ican and Mexican tourists come there to see a famous church.

San Diego, on the other hand, is well outside the area of tour-
ist interest and the area of socially experimental programs, being
located 16 kilometers from any paved highway and 30 kilometers (by dirt
road) from any large population center (Dolores Hidalgo). So far as
I could discover, I was the first American to come to San Diego since
a Protestant missionary was killed there ten years ago. (Occasion-
ally a Mexican-American would come to San Diego to visit relatives,
however.)

Finally, Foster's concern with the "cognitive orientation" of
Mexican peasants overlaps with my own study of machismo. Foster
develops the thesis of "the idea of the limited good," wherein the
peasant regards all commodities of life—material goods,
experiences, personal qualities, and even macho—as existing in limited, finite quantity. However, although Foster is concerned with the peasant world view, he sees world view in relation to the economic basis of the community. The "limited good" is a concept which derives from the peasant's never-ending economic struggle. On the other hand, machismo, as I understand it, is a personal and social philosophy, as opposed to an economic one, and relates only indirectly to economic factors. This difference between the economic and social perspectives should be emphasized, because it is reminiscent of Lewis' critique of Redfield. A misunderstanding could be avoided at the outset. The critique, as Lewis himself concedes, is largely due to the fact that he approaches the community from the standpoint of economics whereas Redfield orients himself more toward general factors of culture such as ritual, values and the cognitive aspects of religion. I want to avoid the appearance of asserting that machismo is the most comprehensive feature of the world view of San Diego, when in fact world view, if looked at from different perspectives (for example, in relation to economic and political affairs) becomes vastly complex. Undoubtedly there is much to be said for Foster's idea of the "limited good" as a model for understanding the world view of San Diego, although it would be dangerous to push this model too far. As I will presently show, this danger exists particularly with regard to machismo.

The works of Lewis and Redfield on Tepoztlan, in their social

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more than their economic implications, are relevant to the present study in that they have discouraged me from making statements about "modal personalities" in peasant society. Redfield emphasizes the pacific and stable qualities of the people of relatively isolated traditional farming communities, which he calls "folk" societies. But it should be noted that Redfield was concerned primarily with religious and ceremonial aspects of peasant society. This perspective apparently led him to overstate the pacific qualities of peasants.¹ For instance he says, "...in Tepoztlán, crime almost does not occur..."² Lewis found just the opposite: "Our findings...would emphasize the underlying individualism of Tepotocan institutions and character, the lack of cooperation, the tensions between villages within the municipio, the schisms within the village, the pervading quality of fear, envy, and distrust in interpersonal relations."³ Yet Lewis, who seems to me also to overstate his case, was biased on account of his primary concern with economic factors, in which there is likely to be much tension.

However, with regard to machismo in San Diego, antagonism is only indirectly related to this world view. Machismo is an ideal of behavior, not behavior itself. This is not to say ideals do not


²Redfield, Tepoztlán, p. 186.

³Lewis, Life in a Mexican Village, pp. 428-29.
influence behavior, but they exert influence in a subtle way rather than directly. Lewis saw in the expression of macho qualities the attitude of aggression, although my own observation suggests that there is more in machismo than a tendency toward violence. It would be misleading to call machismo aggressive behavior. Whatever the case, if one speaks of a "modal personality" it ought to be specified in which level of society or in which specific situation the behavior or personality traits are appearing.

The Significance of the Present Study for Mexican Ethnology in General

The most significant single discovery in my field work in San Diego was that the word "macho" could be understood as a key for tracing the outline of horizontal class stratification in a peasant village. In the peasant class, all men, women and children subscribe with varying degrees of enthusiasm to the ethos of machismo. On the other hand, those belonging to the upper class, which consists of shopkeepers, government officials, professional people and priests, are contemptuous of machismo. They ostensibly adhere to the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Or, if they are professed atheists, they are at any rate loath to speak well of the machos. In other words, the way "macho" is used suggests class affiliation.

It would probably be a mistake to assume that the entire picture of the class structure of a peasant village can unfold through following the application of a single word. Yet the emotional import of "macho" among the villagers would suggest that a facet of belief that has profound consequences in collective life is involved. I am
convinced that this significance is structurally meaningful. Machismo reflects a pride that the peasant feels in himself in the face of a wealthy, dominating and sometimes interfering upper class.

My contribution to the ethnology on Mexico, besides adding to the general information on the Mexican world view, is therefore as follows: I have considered a key concept whereby certain crucial features of social class stratification of the Mexican village can be described. This is not to say that machismo is of such fundamental significance in all areas and towns in Mexico, but at any rate the concept might be applied to towns similar in certain external features to San Diego.

Also this is not to say that other areas of Mexican peasant culture can be accounted for in terms of machismo. No claim can be made concerning kinship. Male relationships of the order of "macho friendships" do not follow any kinship lines. Indeed, these personal relations are non-structural in this sense. Also, economic concerns are largely outside the domain of machismo. While machismo may be indirectly related to kinship or economics, other models would be more successful in dealing with them. Accounting for the whole range of peasant culture in terms of one model or theme, as George Foster did with his "idea of the limited good," is perhaps a dangerous matter.

It was suggested earlier that Mexican ethnology, which has hitherto concentrated on concrete descriptive surveys of peasant
culture, will tend in the future toward more theoretical formulations. My own work may be regarded as a step in that direction.
CHAPTER IV

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE GEOGRAPHY
AND CULTURE OF GUANAJUATO AND SAN DIEGO

Guanajuato

Guanajuato is a Mexican state about 280 kilometers northwest of Mexico City, between the parallels 19 degrees, 55 minutes and 21 degrees, 45 minutes of latitude; and between 0 degrees, 35 minutes and 10 degrees of longitude. "Guanajuato" originally meant "mountain of frogs" in the indigenous Otemac language. The average altitude of the state is 6500 feet, the climate is mild with warm days and cool nights the year around. Rainfall (20-30 inches per year) comes mostly in the summer. Although this rainfall is sufficient for productive agriculture, the productivity is lessened by the fact that the land, especially in the north of the state, is eroded and rocky.1

San Diego de la Unión

San Diego is a farming town in north central Guanajuato.2 The town has a population of 4135 by the 1960 census.3 This compares

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2For the precise location, see page 22.

with 2500 inhabitants at the 1950 census.\(^1\) The increase is consistent with an overall increase in México. According to some of the leading citizens, the town has declined in population in the last two years due to drought and various hardships arising from drought. I did not organize my own census, but it is safe to say the population was about 4000 at the time I was there.

The altitude of the town is 1891 meters. The mountainous geography and cool climate is representative of the rest of Guanajuato. The town produces corn, beans, wheat and red pepper. At one time there were tin mines in the area, but these are not operating now.

The town was originally called San Diego de Alcalá, although no one seemed to know why the name was changed. The town was a defined population center (población) in 1819. However, the earliest recorded date of the town's vicinity is 1719, carved in stone in the oldest masonry of the San Diego barrio (neighborhood) church. Other than this date there is no definite record of the remote past beyond what can be inferred from a general history of the Guanajuato area. The townspeople say Zapata visited the town in the Revolution of 1910. Some people say they personally remember this event. There were no recorded battles in or near San Diego during any of the revolutions, although Dolores Hidalgo, 30 kilometers to the south, has a voluminous history. Dolores was where Padre Hidalgo, a revolutionary priest, made his famous "Cry" for revolution in 1810. San Diego, however, was too

\(^{1}\)Enciclopedia Universal, passim.
far from population centers, silver mines and main roads to be in the
center of historical events. In pre-Columbian times San Diego is said
to have been a small Indian village, although this is a local tradi-
tion without support in written records available to me. The village
falls in the Olmec Indian culture area.

A Description of San Diego

In order to reach San Diego, traveling north from Dolores, one
may most conveniently take a bus, a 30 kilometer ride over a dirt road
at an average speed of 10 miles per hour, the trip taking about 1 hour
and 45 minutes. As one proceeds north, the mountains, which at the
start of the journey are separated by wide plains, eventually begin to
close in on the road, and the valley comes together in a funnel with
San Diego at the northern end.

The soil of the valley, although it is better than that of the
cropless hillsides, is nevertheless poor. Stones must be removed to
the sides of the fields where they are piled to make fences and
animal enclosures. Beyond San Diego, in the hills on the northern
side of town, crops are grown only on occasional level spaces. The
fields here are separated by rocky land suitable for little more than
goat pasture. The fields are lined with cactus, maguey plants (from
which alcoholic drinks are made) and rocks. Except for a variety of
cactus species and grasses, little vegetation grows without being
cut away as soon as someone notices it. Mesquite trees, or small
deciduous trees which grow individually in the fields, are mostly
deprived of their lower branches, which are sacrificed to the cooking
fires of San Diego. Little trees on hillsides and in communal grazing lands are cut away as soon as they are noticed by a scavenging peasant. Hillsides are so eroded that they do not hold even the cactus plants that grow on level ground. A word might be said here concerning the deforestation of the San-Diego area, since deforestation is so indicative of the economic plight of the area. The deforestation of Guanajuato and Mexico in general is the subject of controversy in the newspapers. In the district of San Diego, although laws exist to prevent cutting the trees, there is no other source of cooking fuel and so the custom of poaching trees and branches continues. In the morning as one looks out over the village, heavy grey smoke pours from kitchen fires, indicating that everywhere green wood is being burnt. The economy is marginal to such an extent that the peasant cannot even wait for his wood to dry but must burn it immediately. The practice of trimming the branches until the trees die is the primary cause of continuous deforestation.

Sheep, goats and large cattle, herded by young boys and girls, are seen from the bus window. Oxen and mules pull iron plows, while donkeys with front feet tied together wait for their masters. Occasionally men and women may be seen resting on their blankets on the roadside. Little automobile or truck traffic passes on the long dusty road. On most trips one sees only one bus passing in the opposite direction. The bus stops frequently to take on or let off passengers. As the bus travels from Dolores passengers get off, until the once-crowded bus is almost empty. Then as the bus approaches
San Diego, people begin to get on. By the time of arrival it is once more packed with returning peasants, along with grain and small domestic animals.

On first impression, San Diego presents a pleasing picture. Trees thickly surround the town, with houses gradually rising on the side of a hill to the north, a church shimmering on the hill beyond the houses. In all, three large churches dominate the cityscape. Slowly winding to the center of town, the bus stops in the square. Government offices, located in San Diego in accordance with its status as the county (distrito) seat, stand across the square from the largest church. A government-built theater serves as a "town hall" and, three days a week, as a movie theater. The streets throughout most of the town are laid out in a fairly regular gridiron fashion, and all the streets are lined on either side with adobe walls of houses and courtyards. Off the paved area in front of the central church and the government buildings is a garden planted thickly with trees and surrounded by a sidewalk and benches. The sidewalk serves as a promenade in the evenings, although this practice is not so regular or so colorful as it is in larger towns.

To some citizens of San Diego this pleasing external aesthetic aspect of the town is a matter of indifference. They consider the town impoverished. At the present time only about 15 homes have indoor plumbing, the water coming mostly from faucets located at five points around the town. Most of the 4000 residents must haul water for cooking and washing over distances from 100 feet to 100 yards.
Yet the installment of faucets was thought an advantage over mere fountains, since now the water can be turned on with force or turned off. The water is not processed. It comes from a dam about two miles north of town. The people are also conscious of the poor electrical system in the town. I was told by many people that the system is inferior to those of other places. At night the lights both in homes and on the central square are dim. In the gloom of late evening hours people are only shadows as they stand in groups on the square. They state continually and clearly that they do not like the dim lights. During cold spells there is usually no electricity at all, since everyone who has an electric heater plugs it in immediately and the overload at the electric plant causes a blackout. So every house has a good supply of candles on hand.

A more conspicuous sign of poverty is the deteriorated adobe huts which are seen through fallen walls along the streets. The houses have been built and rebuilt so often that they give the impression of caves rather than houses, and indeed they invariably seem damp and crowded inside. Most houses have no bed, and those that have beds have only one per family. The majority of any peasant family sleeps on patates, or straw mats, on the dirt floor. A house is generally furnished with wooden chairs, a handmade table (made usually in Dolores and bought at the market there), sometimes a double bed, jars and pottery and perhaps a trunk or wooden closet. Also each house has a wall shrine and a few pictures of saints, movie stars or landscapes on the walls. The kitchen is separate from the house and is constructed with spaces around the roof to
allow the smoke to pass out, although cooking is always a smoky operation. A pile of thin green sticks lies in the corner for firewood. The average peasant is so pressed financially that he must burn the wood he has on hand.

The town is poor and the people themselves say the town consists mostly of pobres, or poor people. The average man who does not own land is usually only a few pesos away from forced emigration to a larger city. He regards his town often as triste, sad. However, landowners and most women seem to find some satisfactions in San Diego. It is thought by them to be more beautiful than other towns in the area. It is difficult to separate my own feeling on the matter from that of the people themselves, but it seemed to me that there was less squalor in San Diego in the sense of crowding and dirt than in larger towns. If the people think their town is poor they also are aware of the hardships of living in larger cities. It is not correct to assume the men of San Diego leave their small "boring" town for the "glitter and excitement" of the cities. Life in the cities is squalid. The poverty of San Diego consists of the simplicity of belongings but without the cruelty and violence of life which Lewis described in larger towns. It is doubtful that San Diego meets precisely the description of the "culture of poverty" as reported by Lewis.¹ Some individuals say they are satisfied because, if the

The present year is hard (and 1967 was a hard year), then perhaps the next year will not be so lean and will bring a slight surplus. A few extra pesos is not too much to expect, and the expectation takes the sting off of poverty. Poverty is not considered a "way of life"; it is believed to be something people fall into often but can occasionally transcend.

Besides the mass of poor there are several extended families who are thought by themselves and by others to be comfortable. About twelve nuclear families supported by regular work in the government are fairly well-off. These people are lumped by the peasants into the class of "ricos." I could get no precise information on the income of these people, except to observe that their "standard of living" (an American concept and for most purposes artificial) consisted of wealth in furniture, the size of their house, the repair of the house, occasionally a refrigerator, occasionally an auto (3 private autos in town), a courtyard with a luxuriant garden, a modern bathroom and so forth. It would be safe to say, however, that the ricos, even the wealthiest among them, were not better off in terms of dollars and cents and were not more prosperous than the average income group in America (schoolteachers, for example).

Clothes are mostly factory-made. The trend which Redfield saw south of Mexico City¹ has come to pass in the last 15 years in the

Central Plateau. Although sandals made in the larger towns by craftsmen are worn commonly by most boys and peasants when they work in the fields, factory-made shoes are worn in the evening by young men wishing to make an impression. Shoes are not worn when the men are working in the fields, but only the youngest children are without sandals. The peasants generally wear levis or khaki-type pants.

White rancho-type hats, brims turned up on the sides and with a little tassel hanging in back, are universal among the men. When a boy first starts working regularly in the fields he buys such a hat, and it distinguishes him from the younger boys. No shoeshine boys, for instance, wear such hats. The hat means an independent source of income. The men occupied in government work or in private shops and businesses do not wear hats. Rather they wear pressed wool pants, sport shirts or white shirts and ties. Dark colors in suits are preferred.

It is interesting to note with regard to hats, that children, women and men of the upper classes are always or nearly always hatless. The boy of the peasant class buys a hat as soon as he starts working regularly. It is a symbol, as far as he is concerned, of virility. It typifies men who are eligible to be machos, and it sets them off from the others, the ricos and other non-machos. Boys who are marginal, that is, who are older but feel forced rather into the class of "Christians" do not, in my experience, wear hats. If any single aspect of dress can be said to define the male "macho society," or those who live according to the macho ideal, it is the white rancho hat.
Occasionally a farmer drapes a sarape, or wool blanket, over his shoulder. The blanket is worn as an outer garment on cold days or in the morning and evening. Men who are away from home and expect to sleep outside also carry a sarape. The blanket is a mark of a man away from home.

The women and girls wear cotton dresses, their shoulders being draped also with a robozo, a long, narrow and light piece of cloth larger than a scarf. This cloth is universal among women of all classes, although the robozos of the ricas tend to be more elaborate. The robozo supports the infant under the mother’s breast. The infants are carried in this sling-like garment until they are almost two years old. In the cold morning air the robozo is drawn up across the mouth, since morning air is considered harmful, especially if one is already sick with a cold. Many women and almost all unmarried girls have white and lacy dresses and fancy robozos for church and fiestas. Most women (as most men) sleep in their work clothing at night.
CHAPTER V

THE MACHO AND THE "MACHO SOCIETY"

What is the Quality of Macho?

Macho is the quality of masculine energy or dominance. This energy exhibits itself in the aggressive self-assertion of the male. Macho does not equate directly with masculinity in terms of the possession of male sexual characteristics. It means rather the inner quality wherein the masculine characteristics become potent and display themselves in a particular kind of aggression. Since macho is something different from the merely physiological characteristics of masculinity, and is a quality by its own right, it is attributed by Mexicans to: (a) some men more than others, and (b) some beings (and things) other than human males. The energy of macho is displayed to the highest degree in the dominant male, and most males are macho in greater measure than other beings. But some women have small amounts of macho, as well as some animals and even, to a very limited extent, some plants.

Macho is an energy or vitality that is considered to be of supreme value or worth. It is an end in itself. The worth of a man is determined by his possession of macho. Implicit in what the Mexicans say about macho is the view that the purpose of society is
the generation and display of macho. Thus, besides being an energy, macho is, in itself, a worth that is central to the value system of the Mexican. The concept of macho has social application. It constitutes a central idea in a value system governing and setting standards for interpersonal relationships. In its capacity as a core value in a total social value system, macho is of interest to the present study.

To avoid confusing the idea of macho with some other concepts in the Mexican world view I will propose the following distinctions. Macho is not to be confused with the soul (alma), which is thought of in Catholic terms as specifically human and immortal. In the view of the peasant, the soul is equated with symbolic thoughts (pensamientos). The peasant boys receive this equation in their training by the Catholic priests. Whereas macho is regarded as a blind and unconscious energy, the soul is thought rational. There is an indication, however, that the rational soul gives a human being's macho more direction and effectiveness. Otherwise, talk about the soul is vague in Guanajuato. The soul is thought to belong to the domain of Catholic ritual in that, whereas macho makes a man sceptical of religion because it gives him something higher than religion, the soul leads him to be a Christian. The soul is saved in the life after death. As I will point out later, the subject of immortality is not of particular interest to the farmers. Therefore, the idea of the soul is of concern to the farmer only insofar as it is conceived as the principle of rationality, which implies cunning and
makes a man’s macho more effective in fights and dominance relations with men and animals, even though animals may in certain instances have more macho than individual men. The soul and its thoughts are subordinate to, not identical with, macho in the macho value system, even though this order is reversed in the Catholic theology.

The Use of the Word "Macho" in the City and Rural Areas

The use of the word "macho" varies from class to class and from the city to the countryside. For purposes of this thesis I will define the "lower class" (the class is a "caste" insofar as it is mostly endogamous) as the class of peasants, landed or landless, and unskilled urban workers. The upper class may be synthesized from skilled craftsmen, shopkeepers, government workers, teachers, as well as those who are distinguished on account of wealth. The upper-lower class dichotomy is justified here on the grounds that in San Diego and other medium-sized Guanajuato towns, the class structure is relatively simple. The upper class thinks of itself as primarily Catholic and aspires to a Catholic ideal of life, whereas the lower class comprises what I have called the "macho society," the community which, although its women, children and old people accept Christianity, nevertheless aspires to the ideal of machismo. For the upper, "Catholic" classes the word "macho" is used to express contempt and disapproval. For the "macho society" it is a word of intense approval and admiration.

At the outset of my study I talked frequently with two
brothers living in the city of Guanajuato. They were "upper class" in that, not only was their father a tailor, but he also played the French horn in the university orchestra, a sign of educational and class accomplishments. The father also called himself a Catholic, i.e., a Catholic as opposed to a macho. The brothers found nothing blameworthy in the fact that their father was "not macho." The brothers therefore reflected an urban upper-class viewpoint. However, in contrast to other non-machos, the boys actually professed a lower-class or macho point of view, since they did admire the quality of macho. Their avowal of machismo may have been much the same as young American boys admiring cowboys and firemen. Nevertheless, their advocacy of the philosophy of macho gave me an interesting perspective. The very word "macho" excited enthusiasm among them. As intelligent students they were articulate, but their account of machismo was decidedly different from that of the farming areas, where the value system is not only believed but also lived. The brothers admired the qualities of macho but lived, insofar as they could, the Catholic ideal.

Their view followed the view I found in San Diego, in that they defined "macho" as masculine worth as expressed in valor, or personal courage. This courage is possessed mostly by men but also to some extent by special women. A woman who defends herself against her drunken husband is also macho. Professions in which a high degree of valor is required are said to be judo wrestling, bullfighting and even perhaps painting in a high place. In short, jobs
that are dangerous require macho. The man who performs these jobs is admirable on that account. However, the brothers themselves aspired to be doctors or lawyers. They said frankly that, as much as macho is to be admired, they would not undertake the dangerous occupations.

The Guanajuato boys, although they were voluble on most subjects, did not elaborate on the philosophy of macho, and there were points of vagueness and inconsistency in their accounts. The main theme, according to them, was that the macho (the man) does not have fear (no tiene miedo). Some examples of situations where courage could be shown were.

1) In a fight with a knife
2) Facing a bully
3) In a fight with a lion or leopard
4) Facing bandits (ladrones, banditos)
5) In warfare.

It is significant that in most of these examples, in fact in all but possibly no. 2, facing a bully, there was no immediate application to the boys' everyday life. I objected that there were no lions in Mexico, to which they replied by substituting wolves, dangerous dogs, snakes and scorpions. Even so, it was not the boys themselves who had to face the danger of these animals but rather it was the peasant. "The peasant is most macho of all, because he must face the snakes with his knife." Also it was stated that the
city of Guanajuato was relatively peaceful (pacifico). The boys did not carry knives and would have been terrified if they were threatened by knives. They said a larger degree of macho was required to live in larger cities such as Monterrey and San Luis Potosí. There, and also in the rural areas (it was said), the machos carry pistols and knives.

Other examples of situations demanding valor were taken from the movies, of which the boys were enthusiastic fans. Indeed, similar examples were taken from movies by the San Diego boys as well. The bandits exist in the imagination of most Guanajuatans, young and old, rural and urban. The bandits are an example of the romanticism surrounding the idea of macho, particularly in the cities where the bandits could never threaten. In Mexican movies, of which I saw a number, the raiders were always challenged by a masked horseman, one who remained a sedate citizen during the day but donned a mask and black garb at night to fight the enemies of the peasants. This masked rider is said both by city boys and sons of peasants to be the macho par excellence. Another aspect of the romantic conception of machismo is the horse itself, which the city boys have no occasion to ride and the peasant boys have no money to buy, but which nevertheless symbolizes the power and mobility of the true macho. The horse is displayed in macho situations in the movies.

Besides the movies, the boys took their examples of macho from history textbooks. This was done to a lesser extent in San Diego. Invariably the names of Zapata and Villa, revolutionary heroes,
pictured consistently on horses, were raised. Also the Guanajuato boys mentioned the niños héroes, boys who died fighting the Americans in Mexico City. As was the case when they spoke of occupations demanding valor, the examples of courage and machismo taken from movies and history books were remote from their everyday lives. Nor did they aspire particularly to the macho ideal. The San Diego boys, on the other hand, regardless of whether they had the money to fulfill their aspirations or not, nevertheless did hope for a horse and some other symbols of machismo such as a good knife or gun. The Guanajuato boys wanted only to be musicians or lawyers. For them the macho was worthy of respect, but they did not consider themselves particularly macho and hoped to avoid dangerous occupations. The machos belonged to faraway and exotic places and to times of the past. Admirable as macho was from their middle-class point of view, it was not desirable to be forced by birth or circumstances to be macho.

The above account of machismo by two city boys, and reinforced by other conversations I had in Guanajuato, will suffice to give a slightly different perspective to machismo than what I will offer as the account of the peasants.

The countryside (campo) exhibits the concept of macho, as a quality and an individual, in a more concrete form. As I indicated in Chapter I, "macho" can be used as an adjective or as a noun. A man is macho when he has courage or aggressiveness. A child is macho when it is strong and healthy. The word "macho" is used to compliment
a male baby to its parents. "Macho" in the sense of a quality corresponds closely with the Spanish word "valor," which means a wide range of positive qualities such as value, worth, meaning, courage and power. 1 The sense of "worth" in valor indicates the ethical meaning of macho. Therefore, insofar as macho is understood as a quality (as opposed to a person), the word is often used interchangeably with valor. Another word that is heard in the context of machismo is "personality" (personalidad). Personality is not equated with macho, but the words overlap to the extent that only those beings with personality can be macho. However, the degree of personality of a being is not indicative of its macho but indicates only its potential for macho. Men and animals both possess a personality. Plants have personality but only to a limited degree. Personality should not be confused with "soul," since living beings other than men possess personality, which is not immortal.

A more extensive notion of the quality of macho as it is considered in the campo will be developed in the following sections.

What Beings Other than Human Males are Macho?

There is a hierarchy of beings ranked according to the strength of their macho, although this hierarchy is not rigorously defined by the peasants and it exhibits beings whose macho is in dispute. There is an overall consensus concerning the hierarchy,

although individual opinions differ on the details.

Central to the concept of macho is the idea of the dominance or self-assertiveness of the human male. The male's centrality to machismo does not necessarily mean, however, that it is he who is the most macho. This is a paradox of machismo. Other animals may be as macho as a man, such as the bull and sometimes the horse. Ferocious animals such as lions and leopards all rank as high or higher than man in the macho hierarchy. Man is superior to these animals not because he is braver but because he thinks. Superiority in this case is not essential worth but rather the intellectual ability to outwit the animal. However, my informants were not unanimous on this point. Some denied that any animal is more macho than man. But it is clear that man and a number of ferocious animals are at the top of the hierarchy.

Next to men and the courageous animals come a group of Mexican domestic animals whose macho in relation to one another is disputed. The horse, as I said earlier, is always ranked high. Why the horse is called macho when it is not self-assertive or dominant was not made clear by informants. It seemed to be called macho because it makes the man who possesses it more macho. Besides being a powerful and swift animal and thus increasing the macho of its rider, the horse is also costly to buy and keep. There was sometimes an equation in the minds of my informants of "costly" and "macho," especially in relation to living beings.
Dogs are macho, but much less so than horses. A good dog is more macho than a poor stray dog. Dogs and other animals with personal names are macho by virtue of this fact. Stray dogs have no names and hence are not macho. Following dogs in the hierarchy come burros and mules, which do not possess personal names. A burro is simply called "burro," or "your burro" or "my burro." Pigs and chickens have no names and are scarcely macho.

As will be seen later, the attributing of macho to animals may have significance in the organization of the Mexican nuclear family. I do not think it too extreme to say that, by calling animals "macho" the people personify them and make relations with them in some symbolic sense meaningful, particularly relations of aggression. Such personification reflects the displacement of the initial aggression of the dominant male: children abuse animals because there is no other outlet for their aggression. This hypothesis will be elaborated in Chapter IX.

Although macho has the significance of masculinity, females may also have macho. Among human beings, some women have more macho than some men. A macho woman is called a "mula," or female mule. A woman is macho both for her actions and for her courageous tolerance of hardship and aggression inflicted on her by her husband. Often the mula is on hand to help a friend in an emergency. Although not all mulas are intelligent or sensitive enough to cure sickness, they tend to be curanderas, or folk doctors. Most of the treatment of ailments like headaches and fever, as well as delivering children,
is done by the female curers. Also they step in when it is feared
the doctor has not done enough. The curers are more macho than other
women and are more macho than even many men.

Very few plants are at all macho. Some have a little macho,
particularly those plants considered rare, costly and valuable for-
curing. It was said by my male informants that only the curanderas
knew of these plants. The association of the name of something with
its essential worth is in evidence here. Many of my young informants
and even many of the men who worked in the fields were ignorant of
the names of plants even when they saw them every day. The knowledge
of plant names and uses was left to the more professional farmers and
the women. The interest of men was mostly limited to the world of
human beings and animals, and likewise this was the sphere in which
macho was thought to exhibit itself.

Finally, there are beings and things believed not to be macho.
Inanimate things are not macho at all, not even the relics of the
saints or other religious objects. As will be seen later, these
things can be "powerful" (poderoso) in that they are efficacious in
curing sickness and helping the crops, but they are not macho. The
same is true of men outside the macho class. People of the upper-
class who consider themselves first of all Christians are not macho.
A priest, even when he is a strong personality and a dominant figure
in the affairs of the town, is never macho but rather poderoso.
It will be seen later that power is attributed to some beings which
do not have macho. But power is to be distinguished from macho in
the fundamental respect that power is not an end in itself, or an ethical good, but rather a means to something else. A relic of the saints is powerful in that it effects a cure. A priest is powerful in that he has the power to cure people and foster the growth of plants through an appeal to God and the saints. A rico has the power to bestow or withhold favors on or from the peasant. It would seem —although a peasant would never admit this—that everyone and everything outside the macho class serves, through power, the interests of this class. For the peasant, macho is an end in itself. The distinction between power and macho is essential if it is to be understood that some things and beings are positively appraised and even considered goods (though not goods in themselves) while they are not thought to be macho. Macho is a good in itself which is served or thwarted by power.

Things and beings that are neither macho nor powerful are outside the realm of interest of the San Diego peasant. A thing that has neither social nor economic significance does not have a place in his world view.

What Men are Macho?

The men of San Diego classify all men either as machos or as non-machos. I already indicated, in speaking of the quality of macho, that the people thought to possess it, as opposed to those without it, are of the peasant class. Also, since the classification of men in terms of macho is a central problem of this work, I will deal with the subject later. For the present an introduction to
the classification will suffice. According to San Diego men: (1) only people of the peasant class can be macho, while ricos are "Christian" and by definition cannot be machos; (2) among people of the peasant class, some have so little macho that they can hardly be considered machos. Instead of being called "weak machos," they are called "Christians." But both the peasant Christians and the machos regard the Christian quality as a departure from the ideal of manhood. Christianity means for them passivity. The people denied the appellation "macho" are women, children, old men and weak men. Boys who do not work in the fields are not called macho. They moreover go to church with their mothers.

However, in the class of "machos in general" some men are mentioned before others as outstanding examples of machismo, the consensus being that they are machos par excellence, whom all machos aspire to imitate. There is no strict ranking of men in a "macho hierarchy," at least not in any way the men can agree on. When examples of a macho are asked for, the answer depends on the individual informant. The first example is simply a person the informant is thinking about at the time and whom he admires. Movie stars, especially cowboys, are likely to be mentioned first. There is no attempt to compare American cowboys with Mexican ones. Both nationalities are equally macho. Movie stars and public entertainers are all agreed to be macho, although opinion varies as to which of them is the most macho of all. Following the movie stars the men of the village are put up for evaluation. Each informant has his own frame
of reference and his own choices. Some boys will mention an older brother; others an uncle or older cousin. Almost always a boy will name someone in his immediate or extended family, although the father is never mentioned. The designation "macho" is applied first of all to brothers, uncles, first cousins and finally to second or third cousins with diminishing frequency. There are men in the village who are known as good fighters and people to be watched out for, and these men are generally called "macho." But there is a tendency to call these men "dangerous" and "crazy." They are feared more than respected. A true macho tends to be a popular person. Someone who is well liked may be called macho even though he is not physically robust. A macho is often someone with whom the informant is on good terms and who can be counted on to give support, whether in a fight or, more frequently, when one needs money. The informant may be subordinate to or feel himself inferior to the macho, but the relationship is essentially friendly. The village macho (as opposed to the movie macho) is someone whom the individual informant can identify with and learn from.

The problem of kinship affiliation should not be overstated with regard to machismo. Personal factors seem more important than specific kinship bonds. The person named as macho could be in the speaker's own family, since firm bonds are established there; but there is no rule in this connection. A "macho friendship," that is, where two young men respect one another's macho, is essentially a personal relationship based on an accord of individual personalities.
In this respect, machismo is outside of the abstract "structure" of the community.

The Father

An interesting fact is that the father was never mentioned as macho. He was called macho only when the informant was specifically asked whether the father was macho. My impression was that there seemed to be an aversion to speaking of the father as macho, or for that matter to speaking of him at length in any connection. The father seemed to be a more or less taboo subject.

It is not too extreme to suppose that machismo may in fact be partially derived from the dominance of the father, who is the head of the family and who can use physical force to carry out his will. The most intense situation of dominance in everyday life is between father and son. The father expects absolute obedience from his son. It may therefore be reasonable to suppose that the son gets his idea of authority and masculine power from his own father. This explanation of machismo is an obvious and common-sense interpretation of the parallel existence of two striking features of San Diego peasant society: male dominance and the philosophy of the ethical relevance of this dominance.

1Díaz, Tonalá, p. 92.
MACHO AS A SOCIAL VALUE

Macho Expressed in Social Relations

The next three sections will treat machismo in its social context. In what human relations is a man macho? This is the central question.

A man is macho in his relations with his wife and children. He can also be macho in relation to a debtor of his or to a bully who offends him. All the rules and attitudes concerning dominance in the home and in the wider community can be defined in terms of machismo. Macho expresses itself in bullying one's wife and fighting with knives. One is macho in relation to his domestic animals and dangerous animals such as snakes and scorpions. In other words, a man is macho only in relation to other living beings. Machismo is a social philosophy, if by "society" is meant all the living beings the peasant comes into contact with. Machismo does not define a relation with the land or with farming implements. Machismo is not an economic philosophy. A man can be macho without being a good worker, if only he commands respect of the people around him. This respect is gained by the force of personality, not by economic support. A man is admired when he can force his wife to work hard for him. A
woman may leave a man because he does not support her, but it is said that even in leaving him she may respect him as a macho being. Moreover, the community does not regard wealth as essential to being macho. For one thing, the machos are always pobres, or poor people, in relation to those outside the peasant class. Furthermore there is no negative appraisal of poverty per se, since all pobres feel themselves doomed to it, whether for a longer or shorter time or to a greater or lesser degree. Machismo relates to a man's dominance relations with other men and animals, i.e., to his social relations. One's economic state relates to one's "power" (poderío), not to his being a macho.

As was said earlier, although macho is thought of in a social rather than an economic context, the Mexican understands "society" in a broad sense to include domestic animals as well as human beings. A man is macho not only toward his wife and children but also toward his burro, cows and dogs. In short, he exercises the quality of macho in relation to every living being in his household. The household is the core of the "macho society" as seen by the peasant.

Beyond the household a man can be macho toward strangers so long as they are recognizably of his national social class, whether rural or urban proletarian. A circus which comes to San Diego for the yearly festival brings with it a group of tough men who pose a challenge to the San Diego men. A peasant can behave in a macho fashion by protecting the good name of his community. The circus
workers are thought to know they can expect trouble in San Diego if they get out of line, so they generally behave well.

When a man travels from San Diego to visit relatives in San Luis Potosí or Mexico City he is likely to get into situations in bars or on the streets where he feels he ought to stand up for his honor. Whether he actually fights depends on a complex of factors, but at any rate he ought to keep face. He is usually with friends or relatives and feels all the more urgency in asserting himself as a macho. However, it is recognized that it is not so important that he come off well in a big city as it is that he is respected in his own community and his own household. Respect by his wife and children is central to machismo.

On the other hand, a farmer cannot be macho in relations with priests, members of the upper classes or with foreigners outside the national macho class. A man may stand up to a government worker with whom he has a difference of opinion (for instance, over the boundaries of a piece of land or taxes), but he usually thinks it best to maintain an unaggressive appearance. Except for official relations with government workers, the peasant does not have close personal relations, even the relations as a debtor, with people of the upper classes. He buys from the shops of the ricos, but the relation of seller to customer does not involve personal ties. A man would also be discredited if he were flippant or disrespectful toward a priest. A man will not lose status as macho if he is reprimanded or verbally abused by a priest and yet does nothing to
retaliates. Some young men are disrespectful to religion and sometimes openly abuse the priests as an expression of their own status as machos, but other people look down on this behavior. The older men, who are indisputably great machos, frown on disrespect shown to priests by young men.

I will consider the relations between machos and non-machos in later chapters.

**Macho is Transmittible or Contagious**

Like mana, a vital force in nature conceived by the Polynesians, the quality of "macho" is transmittible from one person to another. The peasants themselves do not see the "macho" quality of one person as actually occupying another person, but they do believe that a person becomes more macho by associating with macho men. The comparison with mana implies not a cognitive similarity but rather an operational equivalence. Men support and encourage one another, and they thereby feel possessed of a common macho energy. "Macho" is stimulated in one person through his contact with another. "Macho" is therefore a collective, super-individual force as well as an individual quality.

A man who has strong friends is invariably considered macho. The man may appear weak and humble as an individual, but he is respected if he has friends who will support him in activities requiring courage, such as collecting a debt. Men who are weaker therefore seek the companionship of stronger men. Younger boys
seek to associate with their older brothers by walking with them and helping them with their work. A boy whose older brother is a ticket taker on the bus may ride with him and is proud of the distinction of being active in what he regards as important work. He may stimulate envy among boys of his peer group. A boy is more macho among his peers if he has macho brothers. Brothers are indeed an important influence in the life of any boy, and what he becomes in later life is thought to be largely a result of sibling relationships. Whereas the boy is fearful and respectful toward the father and the father is distant with regard to his son, the contacts between a boy and his older brother are closer and more meaningful for the boy in terms of the formation of conscious attitudes. The boy says specifically, "I take (saco) macho from my brother because he is more macho than I am."

The word "amigo" (friend) indicates warmth of feeling. Boys do not consider themselves friends with their fathers. However, they prize friendship highly. They feel bonds of friendship are more important than kinship ties. Friendship is a relationship of warmth in which the transfer of macho takes place. On the other hand, the older men stress relations with compadres, or fictive kin with whom informal business ties, such as the lending of money and animals, are formed.

"Macho Society"

"Macho Society" is a phrase I coined to apply to the community of people in which the men aspire to the ideal of macho, or
masculine dominance. Within this community every person and even every animal is thought to have some measure of macho, although some men and animals have more macho than others. When a man in the macho class is held in disrespect, he is not said to be macho-less but simply to have very little macho. The "macho society" is therefore defined by its own members as the community in which all beings either aspire to being macho or serve the "cause" of macho.

Outside the "macho society" people, animals and things are not considered un-macho but merely are not thought of at all in terms of macho. When a farmer speaks of a macho he never means the following: a priest, a person who wants to be Christian, a rich person, a foreigner or an inanimate thing. It would be ludicrous to call these people and things macho, since it is widely known that priests, the rich and others consider "macho" a vulgar word, used by the priests and rich to express contempt for people of the lower classes. If a peasant were to call a priest "macho" he would mean that the priest did not know his place and role. The word would be used in a disparaging sense. I heard the word applied in this way only to a rather wealthy farmer, never to a priest.

Thus for the San Diego peasant the world is composed essentially of two groups of people: the "macho society" and outsiders. As a visitor to the town, I was lumped by the peasant in the class of ricos, although I had more contacts with peasants than with the upper class. The "macho society" is defined by machos themselves as those
people who are macho in a positive sense. Machismo is the positive side of the peasant's self image. The value system exists as if to say, "We peasants are poor but we also have something you rich do not have."

For the upper classes the word "macho" is often used in a contemptuous sense to indicate a peasant who stands out as a bully or a generally coarse person. The upper classes aspire not to the macho ideal but to the Catholic philosophy. The priest regards the macho as an infidel who does not come to church and who by example encourages others not to do so. Nevertheless the macho remains a potential Christian in the view of the priest, even though the macho does not live by the Christian code. He is not feared by the priest, who is more inclined to view him as ridiculous. Nor does the macho expect to be feared by the priest. He expects his family, friends and even animals to stand in awe of him. His power as a macho applies only within the "macho society."

It is interesting to note that among my informants in San Diego, two boys who were low in the dominance hierarchy of their peer group, considered Christ and the saints, as well as the priests, as hombres machos. But the more vigorous boys in the group asserted positively that no Christian, including Christ himself, could be macho. At least 90% established the consensus.

Everyone says, "The padre is a good man." But it is also asserted by the peasant men that the priest is so good, in the
Christian sense, that he cannot kill other men even to defend his honor. Therefore he must be defended by someone who can kill. The people who would defend the priest are machos. The macho does not go regularly to church because he "does not want to be a good person like a Christian" (bueno como un cristano), although he is certainly willing to be friendly (amable). To be good like a Christian is thought to contradict one's masculinity. There is a tendency to regard women as Christian, as opposed to macho. But still the Christianity of women is thought to be a secondary force in social terms. The macho does not go to confession, in contrast to women. I found a strong tendency for men over 60 to go to confession, but not the younger men. On days when the priest was listening to confessions, there would be a long line of older men leading to the priest's study. This is not to say, however, that the macho does not believe in God and the saints. He believes strongly. However, unless he is asking for a specific favor from the saints, he usually does not go to Church on Sunday.

Further Social Qualities of the Macho

The macho is successful in borrowing money. It is said that everyone in town is anxious to show friendship by lending the macho money. Even asking for an outright handout from an acquaintance is not considered demeaning but rather an assertion of masculine dominance. Borrowing with no intention of paying back is not "begging" but something entirely positive. Asking for money is a kind of challenge whether the borrower needs it or not.
A Christian (in this context, a "weak" peasant) is said to be unable to borrow money. He has no force of personality to coax it out of a person. He is so shy that if he asked for money in the first place, he would not get it. When asked if a macho would borrow money from a rico it was said that he would. This requires more courage than borrowing from another peasant, but it is sometimes done, especially when a lot of money is needed for the purchase of land or, more rarely, for a family emergency or sickness. But borrowing from a fellow peasant has more social implications than borrowing from a rich man. The two classes come together more for economic reasons.

The macho is a man who takes what he wants, and because of this he is said to be respected in the community. The young men aspire to be vigorous machos, although they distinguish machos from bullies or "bad men" (matones, hombres malos). A bully is violent but stupid and undiplomatic. The bully is respected insofar as he does have the quality of macho or bravery, but it is expected that men with both intelligence and bravery will put disruptive men in their place. The strongest quality of macho is shown by those who can subdue vicious aggressors. I mentioned earlier a type of macho shown in movies. Like the "masked rider" or heroic macho, the everyday macho is portrayed as a man capable of violence but also sensitive to the needs of the weaker people around him. His macho, which lies dormant until it is activated by the threat of evil, is popular with his fellow men.
While a young man does not want to be a bully, he does not want to be a Christian either. Christians are said to have good qualities, but if one has a choice one will not be like them, since the Christian seldom gets the women or material things he wants. It should be noted that the young man is not above trying the ritual of the Church and praying to the saints if there is something specific he wants. There is a certain stigma, however, in wanting to be a Christian. Christianity implies a certain passivity which, from the viewpoint of machismo, is reprehensible.

Some boys may have divided feelings about being Christian, especially the more timid boys and the ones called "marginal" by ethnologists. These young men of my acquaintance were somewhat uncomfortable in their social situation. They were usually solitary and very poor. They could often be recognized by the fact that, although they were old enough to wear a white hat they did not. Often they were forced to impose on a distant relative in a town away from home, since their fathers could not support them or find work for them. Poverty and the necessity of relying on their wits made their intelligence keen. They were alert for opportunity, which my own visit to San Diego provided. We made friends and they borrowed money. Now these boys leaned toward Christianity insofar as they could do so without being too severely ridiculed by other boys. These boys were sometimes likely to seek the company of the priest. But they thought it was most desirable not to be Christian. It was best to be macho. If the "marginal" boy regarded himself as Christian,
he also hoped eventually to grow into the adult world in which the men no longer exercise Christian virtues.

An autobiographical account by a 16 year old boy, Carlos, whom I met in San Miguel, suggests a tension between macho and Christian values in the marginal individual. Carlos lived off-and-on with his father on a ranch in the area of San Diego, but he also sought work frequently in San Miguel de Allende, where his employers were sometimes vacationing Americans. He worked as a gardener but also had various chores such as walking his employers' dogs. He lived with a cousin in San Miguel but had hardly any friends in his peer group, and his cousin was impatient with him. He was wretchedly impecunious and undernourished. At the time I met him he was caring for the dog of an American. This person seemed to take a friendly interest in Carlos but did not pay him much. It came out later that this employer was known as a homosexual, and I have reason to suspect he had tried to seduce Carlos. Carlos later tried to borrow money from him but was turned down in a lengthy and very personal letter, which I translated for Carlos.

Whether or not Carlos was actually sexually assaulted, the fact nevertheless remains that a boy who is away from home and without friends, and moreover is forced by lack of money to deal with strangers, may have his values seriously challenged. New values must emerge to cope with new situations. The values of his boyhood in a peasant village do not apply to his present life. He must make compromises with the values imparted to him by friends in his home.
In the case of Carlos, the values of his home community were those of machismo, which emphasized the masculine role and of course heterosexuality. If he were even approached for homosexual purposes, and if he made no attempt to revenge the "insult" even though revenge was impossible, he would have seriously compromised his original boyhood values. In his role in a homosexual relationship he would also have taken the submissive, "feminine" part. He could no longer be macho, a male. Consequently he would have to appeal to a new set of values or be entirely demoralized. Carlos therefore became a devout Catholic. It is interesting to note, however, that he did not give up his belief that it was more desirable to be macho than to have to become a Catholic. Catholicism was acceptable only because his plight in San Miguel was serious. Perhaps the same circumstances which led him to the Catholic Church led him to become a friend of mine. He was looking for a set of values which did not place so extreme a demand on his masculinity, which he was frequently obliged to compromise.

Later Carlos was accused of theft by the maid of an earlier employer, who was at the time out of town. The police charged Carlos but let him go until a future investigation, for which they made an appointment. Carlos feared he would have to go to jail or that his father would have to sell his only two cows. It is likely that the police had intended a sort of extortion. Carlos left town, and apparently his trouble had blown over at the time I left Guanajuato. However, his story illustrates the fact that he was in
a helpless state and could easily be taken advantage of. His status in society was the opposite of masculine self-assertion. He was forced to be passive, anyone could take advantage of him, or figuratively "beat" him like the macho beats his wife. As much as he desired to be macho, it would be impossible for him to be so. He had either to change his macho values or totally sacrifice self-esteem. Whereas his friends who remained on the ranch could be macho among themselves, assert themselves in relation to one another and form hierarchical pecking orders, Carlos was forced to relate only to the tyrannical adults of San Miguel. In these relations he had a status which was considerably lower than that of a typical woman. He simply could not adhere to machismo!

The very young boys are neither regarded as macho nor as Christians. The young man between 10 and 18 may be considered "Christian" if he is timid. But the boy does not relish this status. The status means he is identified with the women, who are classed as Christians insofar as they are relegated by the men to a passive role. The passivity associated with Christianity applies to all human beings, male and female, who do not assert themselves to take what they want. This passive class includes both women and younger, more timid boys. Older men who cannot make amorous conquests and are confined to the practical work of life also class themselves as Christian and are so classed by other men. But these older men are relegated to the Christian class against their will.
Machismo as a Social Ethic

In conclusion, I shall briefly contrast machismo with Christianity in terms of the social and ethical dictates of these ideologies. Formulating the Christian morality simply as the doctrine of "brotherly love," machismo would seem to stand in radical opposition to Christianity. On the deepest level of analysis, machismo is a personalistic philosophy as opposed to a social or political one. On a level of consideration more appropriate for my present purposes, machismo substitutes egoism for the empathy called for by Christianity. The emphasis on egoism is reflected by the use of the word "love" in San Diego. "Love" (amor) and even "affection" (carino) are not used to apply to any social situation in which the dominant peasant male is involved. For instance, a man is not said to love his family but simply to command their respect (respeto). There is no concept, it seems, of a "loving father." It is possible for a woman to "love" her children, and indeed the Christian standard is used here: a mother loves her child as the Virgin loved Jesus. But this relationship of mother and child is not the focal situation, or the situation of the greatest tension and moral concern, in the "macho society." The central relationship is the father's relation with his family. I would go further and say that the crucial relationship with regard to the formulation of a philosophy of macho is that between father and son. Therefore, in the conception of the people, the sustaining force of the family unit would not be the woman's love but the father's macho, which serves to keep the household in order. It should be emphasized that this
ordering principle is an ideal for the peasants, since in fact the woman exerts considerable influence in holding the family together.

When love is attributed to a man, young or middle-aged, the word *amor* is not used but rather *querer* (desire). Likewise, the loved woman is called *querida*, or desired one. The woman is someone to be possessed. The Christian ethos would have a personal altruistically serve another person, but service is not the case in a peasant's relation with a woman. He simply desires to have her. Both women and children are thought to serve the good of the dominant male. The "cement" holding the family together is therefore not love in the Christian sense, or even in the sense of maternal love, but rather the dominant attitude of the father. A family structure emerges as the family orients itself to the egocentric wishes of the father, through whom the family is held together as a disciplined social and economic unit.

This view of family relationships is advocated as the ideal by the people of San Diego. As it works out, the woman has her own interests and those of her children in mind. Cases arise where the woman asserts herself vigorously against her husband. She may be in for a beating, and the society supports the husband in accordance with the macho ideal. It is said generally by my informants that a man "may," or can legitimately, beat his wife. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that, in bravely withstanding the punishment of the husband, the woman also is said to assert macho. Being brave toward a violent husband was said to be one of the few ways a woman
could be macho.

The problem of marriage raises the question of the status of machismo among other institutions. As I said earlier, machismo is a personal philosophy and is not given form by an external, formal institution. It appears in individual living relationships without standing above them as an abstract framework. Consequently, machismo, like individual feelings, can go against abstract structures. Indeed it is the basis of peasant marriage and often overrides the fact of marriage in the Church. A man stays with his wife or leaves her for personal reasons. Among the most important factors is whether or not his relationship with his wife fulfills the conditions of machismo, or his image of masculinity. If he cannot express himself as a macho, if his wife resists his masculinity, he will leave her regardless of the dictates of the Church concerning marriage. For the upper class, on the other hand, this pattern is reversed. A man will stay married to his wife under Catholic law. He therefore affirms the abstract institutions of his society. If he does not get along with his wife he will simply spend more time with a mistress. But his formal marriage cannot be cancelled because of his personal inclinations.
CHAPTER VII

SEX AND MACHISMO:

THE PROBLEM OF IDEAL AND REAL BEHAVIOR

Machismo as a Value Orientation

To what extent is machismo relevant to real behavior, either in mirroring that behavior or actually determining it? This question must be raised when sexual behavior is considered, since the discussion of sex in San Diego operates in its own sphere, or is subject to its own standards of truth. It operates to entertain rather than simply to report.

With regard to young, unmarried men, my guess is that their only true sexual outlet is furtive. They preferred not to discuss with me their real sex behavior. Probably there are a few widows and older women in town who will cater to the needs of unmarried men for a small price. Nevertheless, these secret relations do not play a part in the creative fantasy of young men in their conversations. The subject of sex is raised in the conversation of the young men and the ability to talk well on the matter brings the speaker extra status (and extra macho). A good talker is well liked. We may assume he is considered more macho, not for what he actually does but for how he stimulates the other boys.

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Family Patterns and Sex

My impression is that family stability is higher among men with land than among the peones, or landless farm workers, since the latter most often must leave the village to find work. New men come to the village without wives. When a man has his own land, the woman is in effect part of the property. It may be harder for a man to eject a woman from his property than simply to pack up and leave her, which the peon can do without sacrificing his means of livelihood. I do not know whether poverty is the only factor limiting sexual promiscuity, but both landowner and farmhand are miserably poor. Poverty prevents a man from supporting a mistress with a second family, a pattern which Lewis notes for the urban middle and upper classes but not for the lower classes and peasants. It seems likely that the fact of penury would limit the sexual assertiveness of the San Diego man, regardless of his qualities as a lover. The fact that a man is poor means that he can support only one family at a time. He will go from one woman to another rather than taking a second woman as a mistress. Moreover, it is easier to move to another woman than to eject the wife and bring another one to his farm. The sexual assertiveness of a man, regardless of his adherence or non-adherence to an ethos of sexual aggression, therefore seems fairly rigidly circumscribed by (1) hard-to-move property and (2) poverty. The handicap of property applies to the landowner, that of

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1Lewis, Five Families, p. 29.
Concerning the young women of the village, I saw no evidence that they are jealously guarded by fathers and brothers. On the contrary, it seemed to me that they are largely left to fend for themselves. On the other hand, the girl is fairly secure in that she is seldom alone. The family house is crowded, and she is likely to be always in the company of sisters or girlfriends. A visit of a young man to a girl’s house for sexual purposes is impossible and unthinkable, and the couple would be conspicuous walking away from town. Some young boys would be bound to follow. However a young man behaves to a girl, even to his own fiancée, is public information. It is only in marriage, or in a publicly recognized union wherein the woman has some rights enforced by the community, that the man can have a satisfactory relation with the woman. However, even in marriage the image the couple presents in public and even before their own children is one of guarded secrecy, formality and discretion.

There is still the question of sexual behavior of San Diego men in other towns, especially in the larger towns such as San Luis and Dolores. The professed exploits in the larger towns are not subject to the rules proscribing them in their own town. A young man may go to Dolores once or twice a month. Often, what he does there cannot be known to anyone but himself. He may see a movie or merely chat with acquaintances or eat an ice cream bar. Probably he does little more than watch passers-by.
Maybe he has in fact visited a prostitute. The question of money is relevant, since prostitution is banned in Guanajuato making prices high. Whatever instances of coitus occur, they are a consequence of the accidental availability of a woman rather than the motivation and strategy of a particular young man. However, to present the appearance of being a good lover is a source of pride for any young man.

**Lewis and Redfield on Sexual Self-assertiveness among Mexican Men**

Lewis finds both patriarchal dominance and sexual self-assertion in the Mexican middle and upper classes, but among both urban and rural lower-class men he finds patriarchy without the feature of sexual aggression. Asserting that the sexual institution of the *casa chica*, or the "little house" of the mistress, is characteristic primarily of the middle classes, and of the urbanites more than peasants, he concludes:

> If we accept the interpretation of the *casa chica* pattern as evidence of machismo, its distribution in these families is in accord with my general impression that machismo is much weaker in rural areas than in the cities and weaker among the lower classes than in the middle and upper classes.¹

The question of machismo and also what Lewis has said about machismo becomes increasingly problematic as a statement of George Kennedy is considered:

> Oscar Lewis points out that the valor and sexuality components

¹Ibid.
of machismo vary by class: "...in the middle class, machismo is expressed in terms of heroism and lack of physical fear." There may also be a rural-urban variance, or regional differences. My experience in rural areas of northern Mexico indicates that the sexuality component may be subordinated in the expression of behavior, but it is always implied and is felt to be the physiological base of machismo, e.g., stud animals are called machos. I

My own findings contradict Lewis' notion that machismo is weak in rural areas, my evidence being that the word "macho" excites great enthusiasm. I am inclined to agree with Kennedy insofar as he holds sexuality to be a major dimension of machismo even in the rural areas of northern Mexico, although perhaps I would not go so far as to say that sexuality is the "base" of machismo. My findings suggest that, not only is the casa chica pattern weak in the San Diego area, but that the image of the dominant, macho male as a Don Juan is relatively subdued compared with other aspects of machismo. While Lewis assumes that "machismo" and the casa chica are related because they are found together, I followed the interviewing procedure of letting my informants tell me what macho behavior is and in what situations machismo is to be found. I found that the San Diego peasants would not call the casa chica pattern an instance of machismo, because men of their economic status could never afford a "second house" or even a casual mistress. They could afford a new woman or wife only by giving up an old one. Virility would not be displayed here in that a gain would entail a loss. Hence the word "macho" was taken to mean values of a more:

general kind than sexuality, such as courage in facing situations of danger that might occur without the initiative of the macho.

The challenges to the macho are usually of a social nature, that is, from other human beings such as his wife or sons. He must above all command the respect of townspeople, an impossible task if he does not have control of his own family. It is also important that he have success in borrowing money, which is not construed as "begging" but rather as exercising dominance. In a situation of borrowing the macho thinks of himself in a position of dominance and aggression rather than in a submissive, dependent position of "beggar." Consequently, since machismo can manifest itself in these various ways, the men of San Diego would not hesitate to answer in the affirmative if asked whether machismo were present in the community.

I have not come across anything by Redfield about machismo, and it therefore seems safe to assume that he did not find machismo, as a value system inhering in a word, among the Indians of the Yucatan Peninsula. Redfield merely says that, in general, the ethos of sexual assertiveness derives from Spanish culture or from other socially elite social norms, and where this ethos has not penetrated, sexual aggression does not exist. Redfield is conscious of historical connections, and where he speaks of sexual assertiveness he does not, so far as the Mexican material is concerned, mention the word "machismo" but rather the Spanish "hombria."
Is it not the gentry of Spain...that exhibited most markedly that value called hombría which involves a certain approval of male sexual exploit and a touchy pride and use of violence in defence of honor? And yet do not the peasantry also show it?¹

However, regarding peasants in general, Redfield comes to the conclusion:

In peasant life, where work and practical good sense join with a spirit of decent restraint, there is little room for sexual exploit as a sport or from bravado. The cultivation of amorous adventure, as is practiced in not a few Polynesian societies, or among some modern Western groups, is hardly possible in peasant communities. Before marriage sexual experiment is common, yes, and may receive some public approval, or at least licensed regulation (as in the custom of bundling). But adultery is not looked on with favor... In Chan Kóm... the occasional adultery, when brought to a public issue, exposed the principal parties as figures almost as comic as reprehensible.²

A characteristic of the peasant, Redfield says, is that he has "a distaste for violence, a disfavor of prowess in any form of conspicuous aggressiveness..."³

Redfield is talking here of real behavior and of the way in which real behavior is described. He would, I think, be wrong to say that there is not some gratification of fantasy in conversation, an indulgence that takes on some of the characteristics of a value system. My findings in San Diego suggest Redfield was correct

²Ibid., p. 126.
³Ibid.
in his description of real behavior. Acts which would upset the
delicate equilibrium of village society were not condoned in San
Diego, and sexual aggressiveness was classified, in attitudes and
behavior if not in abstractions, as disruption. There was a certain
wishful thinking reflected in the conversation of the men, and it
was not considered in bad taste to indulge in such talk. The fantasy
of conversation arises out of the individual sexual psychology,
but can function positively in the formation of a general image
of a strong man, without respect to qualities of actual sexual
self-assertion.

The Sexual Ideal

According to the popular view, the village women admire the
macho more than the Christian. Christian men are not particularly
desirable because they cannot command the respect and fear of the
community. The macho can easily overcome a Christian in a fight
and thereby take his woman away from him, according to my informants.
Here "fight" (lucha) means simply a dominance situation in the general
sense and covers all hostile relations between men. Machos are
supposed to get the best of (peasant) Christians every time. The
Christian is not aggressive with women, it is said, thus prejudic­
ing his chances with women, who are said to despise passive men.
The question is therefore raised among the village men: even though
the priests encourage men to become good Christians, why should
they do so when there are so many advantages to the macho life?
The macho can take anything he desires, and that includes women.
I must emphasize here that I am speaking of my informants' image of the macho male. Specific instances of "macho" behavior came to my attention seldom during my six month stay in San Diego and, as the image of the macho man is largely an ideal one, my informants themselves could not often provide concrete examples of this machismo. They only asserted vaguely that such cases do exist.

The ideal of sexual assertiveness of the macho remains only a concept, since within the "macho society" every man is said to be desirous of being a macho rather than a Christian. As I said earlier, even the "good Christian" aspires to be macho, as far as peasants are concerned. Christianity is an undesired falling away from the ideal, either because of youth, old age or simply weakness. The fact that the ideal of sexual aggression is asserted only within the framework of the "macho society" is suggested in the circumstance that the upper-class women were excluded as a target for macho sexual interests. When asked whether the macho would ever take the wife of a rico, the answer was decidedly no. A paradox asserts itself here in that the movies sometimes portray a more or less poor cowboy (albeit outfitted with an expensive horse and fancy clothes and equipment) winning the heart of a daughter, say, of a hacienda owner. The cowboy's exploit would perhaps reflect some aspirations on the part of the poor machos, but these desires are never expressed in connection with the immediate community.

To attempt a love affair with a rica would require a man to be in effect a "super-macho" although no one remembered such a man
living in San Diego. Even the movie cowboys who court ricas are of dubious class. They simply arrive on the scene of the drama from some unknown place and heritage. They could be either rico or pobre in the social sense. They have only enough elements of the poor man to allow peasants to identify with them, and yet are not so lower class as to make a relationship with a rica implausible. Identification with the movie hero may be one way the peasants can feel a relationship with the upper classes, from whom they are cut off in everyday life.
CHAPTER VIII

THE MACHO PERSONALITY

Macho is not an Unbounded Hostility

Macho is a masculine energy which expresses itself in social dominance. To possess such energy is considered a virtue. Men who are machos are respected and it is thought natural and desirable that they should express macho through accepted patterns of hostility and even violence, in situations appropriate to this expression. The words "accepted" and "appropriate" indicate a policy and custom governing the exercise of aggression. A code governs the selection of situations appropriate for the expression of hostility. This code regulates macho aggression so that it is transformed from a disruptive factor into a force contributing to the harmony of the family and the community. The positive or "functional" significance of machismo seems to be suggested in the statement of George Foster quoted earlier: "Since a macho, a strong man, discourages exploitation, it is clear that his personality characteristic has a basic function in peasant society."¹

My data from San Diego indicate that macho is bravery and

¹Foster, "Limited Good," p. 313.
and courage in facing aggression more than initiating it. Thus one man will not assert himself to an unlimited extent for fear of retaliation by the other machos of the community. Secondly, within the man's immediate family, macho is self-assertion that preserves family order and discipline. The father has authority based on potential violence toward his wife and children. He exercises this authority to prevent disruptive hostility among his children where the house is crowded and where disorder would make family life intolerable. It is also possible that the children, in their turn, displace this aggression toward animals. Calling animals machos makes this displaced aggression meaningful, the macho animal being the dominant male personified.

Since macho expresses itself primarily in a man's relations with potential aggressors toward himself and his friends, and with his own family, a wide range of social relations remain in which friendly and pacific feelings can be expressed. Indeed, the overall picture of social relations in San Diego seems to me to be one of relative harmony. The people of the town consider themselves to be a friendly (agradable) community. An individual prides himself on his good relations with his fellow citizens. He resents injustice and expresses a willingness to support local peace, much like the "masked rider" in the movies. He wants to be considered a pleasant person, he wants to be popular. This popularity would not however be construed as Christian goodness. The desire is rooted in the social ethos of machismo, which specifies hostile relations in some situations but encourages pacific ones in others.
The people of Guanajuato think of themselves as a "smiling" people. They regard themselves as happy in comparison with the Americans they see, who seem to them frowning and serious.

The Guanajuatans like living together in compact villages and houses. Life in larger villages and towns is considered in some respects more desirable than in little communities of two or three households. The reasons one gives for living in a larger town are social reasons rather than opportunities for employment or a higher standard of living. Therefore only very poor farmers live away from larger settlements. The peasants prefer to commute to their fields distances which take half an hour or even forty-five minutes by bus or burro, rather than live alone at the site of their fields. The buses enable them to commute, and thus have promoted the growth of the farm population in the town. The function of the bus is not simply to give farmers access to their fields, but also to give them easy social access to one another by allowing them to live with one another.

During the working day, the life of the farmer presents fewer possibilities for social contacts than that of the city dweller. But the farmer likes to have as much company as possible. At worst he will settle for a transistor radio. One rarely sees a farmer working alone. His wife and a few sons and daughters might be helping with the work in the area. During a lunch break the little group sits together on a blanket. The family may also pause frequently
to eat a few bananas. The meal serves as refreshment and time for social pleasantries. During the rest periods the peasant, apart from his prevailing dominance over his son, is generally pleasant to his family, and all members talk and smile.

The desire for companionship extends to most other occupations. Driving a bus is lonely work without the company of a ticket taker. The men are together throughout the long days and nights. After a full day of driving, the men will bed down in the bus. They park in towns where they are strangers. While underway the men converse, smile over their conversation, gesture and keep up an intense communication for hours.

In the central square in San Diego, the patterns of grouping suggest an elaborate scheme of friendly behavior. On many occasions I watched from my bedroom window the formation of little conversation groups on the square. The square was originally planned as a typical Hispanic town center, with benches around a garden off the paved square. Such benches are seen in every modern Mexican town. The farmers and their families usually sit on the ground and around depressions in the ground rather than on benches. These depressions were originally spaces for trees and are either square or round, just the appropriate size for conversation pits. Only when the park is relatively deserted and a person has no one to talk to, but wants to rest, will he sit on a bench. Sometimes a few lone boys will sit on opposite ends of the benches when the park is full. Whenever people are talking they prefer not to use the benches, even on the
busiest day at the town center, Sunday, when the benches are still mostly empty. When people do sit they prefer to sit in a manner which lends itself to conversational grouping.

The principle governing the way people stand or sit is as follows. Sitting on benches they would have to sit next to one another but look straight ahead. They would rather look at one another, and hence they tend to group themselves in a circle. Some features of the town square are conducive to this kind of seating arrangement. The square may be described in terms of its social possibilities. It should be remarked in this connection that in order to protect trees growing in front of the church, little round pits lined with stone were dug and constructed. There are seven of these pits in a row, about thirteen feet apart. They are on the average three feet in diameter. In only one of them a tree grows. The rest are empty of trees and free to be used as conversation pits. In preference to the benches, from two to five men will sit with their feet in these pits. On the sidewalk is a square pit, three feet on a side, with a tiny tree growing in it. The tree is small enough that the conversants can easily look around it to see one another. They sit with their feet in the pit rather than to sit on the bench directly next to the pit.

Other possibilities for seating, but less popular than the pits, are little concrete walls built to protect trees. The two circular walls, four feet in diameter, surround large trees so that two people can sit half facing one another. The tree may be surrounded
by people sitting on the wall, though not all of them can see one another because of the trees. If they sit with their legs outside the wall, they face away from one another. They do this only if they talk with people standing in front of them. But when other people are standing, one likes to stand with them. The sense of social spacing demands that everyone either stand or sit simultaneously.

The first seating possibilities to be exploited on Sunday morning, when the square starts filling up, are the pits or round depressions. Then the little concrete walls around the big trees are occupied. Finally women lay down blankets on the ground and the family sits with legs folded under them. The bare ground is preferable to the benches, which remain until at last a few individual boys sit on them to rest.

It is interesting to note that when the young men go in groups to Dolores Hidalgo, they sit in rows on the park benches, silently and solemnly watching the passers-by. It would be interesting to undertake a more thorough study of the spatial dynamics of small groups in larger towns and cities, contrasting them with those in a small town like San Diego.¹ My impression is that the utilization of benches follows different patterns in larger towns. The farmers from out of town will spread their blankets on the most

FIGURE I

Central Square - San Diego de la Union

Front of Church

Bus Stop

"Conversation Pits"

Benches

Central Square - San Diego de la Union

Front of Church

Bus Stop

"Conversation Pits"

Benches

Central Square - San Diego de la Union

Front of Church

Bus Stop

"Conversation Pits"

Benches

Central Square - San Diego de la Union

Front of Church

Bus Stop

"Conversation Pits"

Benches
crowded sidewalks when they come to town on market days. The city people, in whose everyday life the primary family group is de-emphasized, would tend to use benches and observe passers-by.

**Horseplay as a Pantomime of Machismo**

Horseplay is defined here as "ritual fighting." Horseplay has the external appearance of aggression but is essentially friendly. Motions of aggression are carried out, but without the motives of hostility and without the painful consequences.

Horseplay is seen most commonly in larger towns at places where groups of men must stand about for long periods waiting for business or just loafing. One sees horseplay for instance around taxi stands and bus stations. The conditions for loafing in which there is horseplay applies less to San Diego, where the men have plenty to do.

At bus stops the horseplay seems perpetual. As men talk and gesture, and as they lay emphasis on a point of conversation by putting a hand on a listener, the gestures grade into the physical pokes and feints that characterize horseplay interactions. Horseplay is never abrupt but waxes and wanes. Real fights, which come on suddenly as a result of real insults, are rare in Guanajuato. The only fight I witnessed in Mexico was between a Mexican and an American in a bar. Horseplay, on the other hand, is simply a part of the regular flow of social interaction. It is a refinement or development of the overall gesture system. This general description of
horseplay applies to gesture relations in San Diego as well as larger cities, or wherever men congregate and have a moment to spare.

In a horseplay sequence, if there is no significant difference in the size and strength of the two participants, the person who initiates the horseplay, the "aggressor," finally retreats or submits. He is chased or he cowers. The submission invariably occurs in friendly horseplay. But if one of the men or boys is much larger than the other, the larger one wins. In this case the sequence is more protracted, since the smaller person continually re-initiates the horseplay. Finally he is caught in a grip and must submit.

Men over 35 or 40 do not engage in horseplay. Their gesture patterns are more formal. For instance, instead of a playful poke or punch upon meeting one another, the two older men simply shake hands. On the other hand, truly aggressive relations are likely to replace horseplay. The men may scowl, shout and menace one another. Violent fights with knives and fists are relatively rare among the older men. Such fights are more frequent among younger men between 18 and 30 years old. In any case, the dividing line between play aggression, or horseplay, and angry aggression is clear-cut, whereas the dividing line between ordinary conversation and horseplay is a gradual one. Horseplay is an extension of ordinary friendly conversation and the gesturing which accompanies such interaction.

Comparing San Diego and a larger city in terms of the vigor of gesture relations, it would seem that the relations in San Diego
are less intense and more subdued. The general temper of gesture relations on the square in San Diego is relatively restrained in comparison, say, with those at a city bus stop. The restrained quality of horseplay is consistent with the farmer's manner of gesturing in general. However, horseplay does occur in somewhat the same sequences as are seen in larger towns.

Finally, horseplay can be characterized in terms of machismo. I spoke earlier of the young Guanajuatan's description of the judo expert as a macho par excellence. Throughout the area in villages, towns and cities I saw the judo and karate punches imitated in mock horseplay sequences. A light rabbit punch is landed on the back of a comrade's neck, and he will feign extreme pain. It is a source of pleasure to make the mock actions as violent—and painful—appearing as possible. Boxing steps and judo punches are cleverly enacted. They are imitated from movies and magazines. The gesture sequence is carried out with a certain boldness which borders on true aggression, so that the participants can "feel" macho. The play activity may be initiated by a weaker person toward a stronger one, thus giving the former a feeling of strength and importance. On the other hand, the man or boy who is in fact more macho can, by submitting to this treatment, display good will. It appears there is a reversal of true macho status in this ritual play. Good will is not a contradiction here to one's essential macho. Along with the violence dramatized in the pantomime of machismo there is an essential friendliness of the stronger toward the weaker.
It is not too much to say, then, that horseplay sequences can be likened to enactments or pantomimes. They are dramatizations of the values of machismo: aggression, dominance and even savagery. But there is an underlying unity and solidarity between the participants. In the dramatization of divisive feelings there is an expression of basic social compatibility.
CHAPTER IX

ANIMALS AS A "CASTE" OF "MACHO SOCIETY"

The Argument

Animals are thought to be macho to varying degrees. They could therefore be called part of the grouping I have called "macho society," which includes also peasants and poor urbanites. In this chapter I will discuss some features of the "macho society" with reference to the role of animals. It will be argued that, since the San Diego household is crowded with children whose spatial proximity is likely to result in quarreling, potentially disruptive aggression may be directed toward animals. By channeling aggression toward animals some measure of order is maintained in the house, because the animals are conditioned to passively accept whatever abuse is inflicted on them. Calling the animals "macho" while inflicting pain on them may mean: (1) the child personifies the animal and thus makes aggression toward it more meaningful and satisfying; (2) the child displaces aggression which derives from the source of familial authority, the father or "macho."

Crowding in the San Diego House

Except for daily trips to the market and to wash, the woman spends a good part of the day at home. There she makes tortillas.
and tends to the children. The house of the average San Diego peasant family consists of one living room which is usually not larger than twenty square feet, and a smaller kitchen. The house is situated as a rule in a courtyard shared by two or three other such houses. The number of children averages around five under twenty years old. When the family gathers together for meals and to sleep, life in the house is cramped. The fact that the family is sensitive to this crowding is indicated by the fact that many men wish to make their houses larger but lack funds. During the day the mother has her children playing about her when she works. Sometimes the children roam up and down the street, play in the courtyard, or just sit in the street by the courtyard door. But the house itself is a center of activity. When the family congregates there, some kind of order and quiet must prevail. The source of this order, as I stated in the last chapter, is the authority of the father. But in accepting the discipline of the father, the children have resentments and hostility which seek an outlet. The crowding of brothers and sisters would be an occasion for the outlet of this aggression, but mutual hostility is disruptive to the family and to the work of the mother. Therefore, the children are encouraged to drain off their hostility in aggression toward animals.

A similar instance of the displacement of aggression was noted by Margaret Mead among the Arapesh:

Little children are only allowed to play with each other as long as they do not quarrel. The minute there is the slightest altercation the adult steps in. The aggressor—or both children if the child resents the attack—is dragged off the scene of battle and held firmly. The angry child is allowed to kick
and scream, to roll in the mud, to throw stones or firewood about on the ground, but he is not allowed to touch the other child. This habit of venting one's rage at others and upon one's own surroundings persists into adult life. An angry man will spend an hour banging on a slit gong, or hacking with an ax at one of his own palm-trees.¹

The San Diego child is not different except in the fact that he is taught, mostly by example, to direct hostility toward a specific feature of his surroundings, namely, domestic animals.

Abuse of Animals

In San Diego the child begins pestering animals as soon as he is left to crawl away from his mother. He pulls the family dog's fur or ears. The dog tolerates this a few minutes and then tries to escape. Given a little stick, the child pokes the eyes, ribs and anus of the dog. Pulling the tail or hitting the dog's nose is also usual. The child pulls the legs from under the dog, then kneels on it. When the child is older he begins more determined aggression such as throwing stones at the animal. Any hard object may be used to harass the animal. The presence of animals is important in the play of the child. But the child learns early to differentiate between man and beast in terms of the expression of affection and anger. Affection is given brothers and sisters, hostility is directed toward animals.

Señor Flores, head of the San Diego public schools, said that when the children begin fighting, the mother says, "Do not

¹Margaret Mead, Sex and Temperament, in Margaret Mead, From the South Seas (New York: Wm. Morrow and Company, 1939), p. 50.
fight among yourselves! Hit the dog!" I could get no further informa-
tion on this from the peasants themselves. However, I have heard
women call dogs "machos." They say, "Move, you macho!" (andele,
macho!) when the dog is in the way of their brooms. The children
learn in tense situations to follow suit by attacking the animal.

A possible interpretation of the naming of the animals
"macho" would be that, by attributing the quality of macho to ani-
mals the act of abusing them gains human significance. Not only
would hostility be given an outlet through the psychological mechan-
ism of displacement, but the animal object would become, in the fantasy
of the mother and children, the father, or feared macho. This
explanation of the naming of the abused animal remains, however,
to be validated.

What is begun as children continues into adulthood. The
adults therefore set an example for children. The following examples
of aggression toward animals appear in my notebooks:

(1) Two boys, 10 and 8, are walking with a medium-sized
pig, which is held in rein by one of them by a rope tied to the
pig's right hind leg. The boys play a game with the animal.
They drag it toward them, then both vigorously kick it five
to ten times in the ribs, nose, stomach and anus. They repeat
the sequence of drawing it in and kicking it several times. It
may be remarked the boys are wearing heavy sandals. A bent old
lady watches from nearby. She then approaches and, seizing the
pig's hind legs and lifting them high in the air, makes the pig
walk a few uncertain steps on its front legs. She laughs. The
boys then move on with the pig. As they pass down the street
they repeatedly kick it from both sides. The pig squeals and
stumbles. A few bystanders are amused as the procession goes
past.

(2) A middle-aged farmer sullenly tells his burro to move
on: "Get going, burro!" (Chay, burro!) The animal moves too
slowly. The peasant picks up a fist-sized rock and throws it with force against the burro's right hind flank. The burro runs a few steps ahead. This technique of controlling movements of domestic animals, especially burros, cows and goats, is commonly employed.

(3) In the courtyard of a house a cow is tied to a tree. Five boys and girls, aged from six to twelve, are battering the cow with sticks and boards. They hit the animal with all their strength. This game lasts ten minutes. One boy hands the anthropologist a board, so he can hit too!

When a peasant passes a dog on a back street, he often makes some gesture of recognition toward the animal. Even when a group of men pass, some or one of the men may make a gesture toward the animal. A man recognizes the dogs on his street and knows their owners. The dogs on the back streets all have owners, whereas the stray ones move toward the center of town where scavenging is better; or they move out into the countryside. (Stray dogs outside of town may be a menace at night to the solitary walker.) When the farmer walks down the street, very little escapes his notice and he is likely to recognize familiar dogs. He stops and waves his arms in front of a dog, with a lunge that sends it scurrying. If he is not in a hurry he will throw a stone at the animal.

**Ideas Concerning the Differences between Man and Animal**

Both men and animals have macho. The chief external feature of a being with macho is that he or it "doesn't have fear" (no tiene miedo). Not to fear is thought by the San Diego peasants to be a capacity of most higher animals. A distinction between not having fear and overcoming fear is not made. Invertebrates such as scorpions and ants are thought dangerous but without macho. Lions and tigers
of Africa (known through movies and textbooks) and mountain lions have a great deal of macho. These animals have less fear than a man.

The same thing that makes a man Christian makes him fearful: thought and reason (pensamiento). Man is a Christian because he thinks, as the priest has said. But in the view of the peasant, the man also sees the danger of courageous actions. The ability of man to see tragic consequences makes him afraid. The animal and the macho human being do not have this fear. On the other hand, if a man has a strong reasoning ability, it can contribute to his power in that he can outwit the animal. A Christian would not outwit the animal because he is afraid of it from the start. In other words, the reason of a Christian dominates his vital capacity, whereas in the masculine personality the macho dominates the reason.

The main distinction between man (Christian or macho) and animals is language. An informant told me:

**You know that star in the movies?** Well, his name is Casanova. He has a horse, and I think it is very intelligent. When it is asked how many novias (girlfriends) it has, it stamps its foot on the ground: one, two, three, four, five times. It can count and think, but it cannot be a Christian. It cannot speak.

It is thought that through language and also through tools, the material results of higher thought, a man asserts himself over animals. It is believed, however, that without such a high degree of intelligence a man is braver, more macho. In this sense intelligence is not a good thing. The outcome of intelligence is often Christianity, and this makes a man a total coward. A person should be able
to match his own bravery against that of any animal. Bullfighters do this. It was doubted by my informants that a bullfighter could be a good Christian, since he is too macho.

Animals understand human language, according to the San Diego viewpoint. "A burro can understand what you say. You must tell it what to do." Animals have souls (almas), although not immortal ones. Only the "thinking" or Christian soul is immortal. The soul of a macho is immortal like that of a Christian, except in the macho the masculine energy dominates the soul. Were the thinking element dominant, the man would be a Christian though not more immortal.

It is said that a peasant in a rage will sometimes beat his burro almost to death. But this beating is not approved of by the young boys and is regarded as an exceptional case. The truly macho peasant will have the respect of his family and animals alike, so that they obey him without his beating them. The reply of the Italian peasant to the query as to why he beats his animal—"No è cristiano"—does not apply to the San Diego peasant. However, he does distinguish a human being as one with the potential to become a Christian, and this potential constitutes an essential difference between man and animal.

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Conclusions:

The "macho society" is a structure at whose pinnacle is the macho himself, a strong male who egoistically imposes authority on his family for what he conceives as his own pleasure. The middle stratum consists of the mother and her children. Fearing the father, the family restrains movement and noise or anything irritating to the father.

The middle stratum of the "macho society" cannot rebel or retaliate against the authority of the upper stratum. The former thus displaces aggression toward a third stratum artificially created for this purpose. This lowest social caste consists of animals. They are called "macho" to make displaced aggression seem significant. The animal stratum is personified (1) as the macho (father), and/or (2) as a scapegoat. Since animals accept aggression passively, the hierarchy is balanced to provide order and silence in the household when the family is assembled.
CHAPTER X

MACHO AND POWER

The Distinction between Macho and Power

The people of San Diego make a distinction between macho and "power" (poderío). Both macho and power are types of energy, with the following difference: power is a means to an end, whereas macho is an end in itself. Power is therefore not an ethical good—it has no intrinsic value—but rather is of everyday utility. While macho is both valuable in itself and the source of value, power can serve only some end other than itself. Macho is a social good, power is an economic good. Macho makes the society valuable to the people living in it, power merely supports the society. Macho is never evil, whereas power, through misapplication, can be evil and socially disruptive.

The Priests as Mediators of Power

San Diego has five priests, one for each neighborhood (barrio). Those of the outlying and smaller neighborhoods (Santa Cruz and San Miguello) are young men who expect later to take more important positions in other towns. Of the three older priests, one is a native of San Diego. He has the most important position as the priest of the San Diego neighborhood, where most of the ricos
live. The priests are all respected as "good men," and as they individually appear in the central square each day, women and some boys and men kiss their hands respectfully. They converse fifteen minutes or so with the attentive townspeople. Hardly anyone says he dislikes the priests as a group, even if the peasant is an indifferent Christian. The influence of the priests, and also the influence of the Church as a whole, may be largely based, in San Diego, on the strong personalities of the priests. They have strong opinions and influence public sentiment. In San Diego there are always priests in the center of community life, as is to some extent evidenced by the fact that they are seen often in the town center, the hospital, entering and leaving private houses and so forth.

There can be no doubt that Catholicism is stronger in San Diego than it is either in the tiny villages to which priests commute only occasionally (often no more than once a month) or in the larger cities. The priests of San Diego expect the peasants of the surrounding countryside to come into town for Sunday mass, although in fact these people come to town only when they must buy at the San Diego market. Even then the men do not often go to mass and therefore are mostly outside the influence of the priest. The resident of the town may depend for some services, particularly in connection with illness, even though this person does not regularly go to mass. The people of the countryside (campo) place more emphasis on their individual saints (santos).

Regarding the degree of belief and unbelief in the town, my
impression was that confidence in the Catholic Church was general in both the upper and lower classes. Firm belief in Catholic doctrine and general church attendance was professed by men and women of the upper class. There were scattered instances of atheism among upper-class men, indeed more atheism here than among the machos who did not go to church. But even the atheists professed a belief in the worth of the Church and went to mass on Sunday at least once a month.

There was a different attitude toward the Church on the part of the peasants. As I said, peasant men were seldom outright atheists. The Catholic doctrine was at times scorned by some of the machos, but all peasants turned to Catholic ritual in times of need. When one of their family was sick, the macho would likely say prayers, light candles and follow instructions of the priest. The upper-class atheist, however, while he would attend church for social reasons, would not rely on the Catholic ritual at times of crisis. If the doctors failed him, he would resign himself to his fate rather than go to the priests. It was my impression that both upper and lower-class women believed in traditional ways of curing besides the priests and doctors. Both groups of women were strongly Catholic.

In spite of variation in patterns of belief and disbelief with regard to Catholicism, the town seemed particularly unanimous in its dislike of Protestantism. I mentioned earlier that a Protestant missionary had been killed in San Diego ten years ago.

Now the priest can exercise his "power" by ritually influencing the crops to grow. He can also mediate with the saints to cure
illness. It is believed that the priests encourage prosperity. For the peasant, anxiety over crops is closely related to his idea of personal luck. A good year will bring a little surplus and a few luxuries like a new radio. The circumstances of the peon are usually more or less desperate, since a small fluctuation in the crop may upset his life entirely. Crop failure may force him to emigrate. Some of the town poor must leave each year. The poverty creates a social pressure which focuses itself in the Church. In May, in anticipation of the summer rains, the priest goes to the fields and says a sequence of prayers. An informant said of the prayers: "The main thing is the Latin words. Only the priest knows these words. They bring the rain, and without them we would be lost." The peasant cannot understand the verbal ritual, yet they are most solemn when the words are said. I was told:

The words go to heaven, where they are heard by all the saints. Without the saints we would have nothing, the rain would not come, everything would dry up. When we pray to the saints we talk in Spanish, but our words are not as good as those of the priest.

Ritual other than Catholic ritual is frowned on by the priests. They are not tolerant and see their mission to be the expulsion of paganism. The peasant therefore depends on the priest for ritual, and the peasant in turn performs rituals for the satisfaction of the priest, such as going to mass and confession. The willingness to satisfy the priest is especially characteristic of older peasants who own land. The younger and poorer machos do not put much emphasis on affairs of the Church and consider it the
priest's responsibility to carry out ritual singlehandedly.

The peasant theoretically admits the effectiveness of the priest's ritual in securing a life after death in heaven, but he is vague in conceptualizing this future life. The machos are even less concerned with immortality than with other aspects of Catholic doctrine. Only a few of the villagers I talked to could imagine what life after death was like. The immortal soul was thought by these few to be in a state much like the present life, only there was to be greater abundance of things such as food and the other necessities of life. But I was less interested in the nature of the life after death than in the way the people conceived of the nature of the soul. One informant said he thought that when a man died the soul left his body. But he added then that the soul eventually disappeared. He did not think the soul persisted forever in heaven.

There is little uniformity of opinion on the subject of immortality. Nor are the people clear on what the Church teaches. The most plausible explanation for the discrepancy of opinion between Church and laity is that the Church, in distinguishing those souls which will go to heaven from those going to purgatory and hell, defines its position in terms of social virtues of "good and evil." A man prepares his soul for heaven through virtuous and altruistic relations with other men. But the true macho is "beyond good and evil." For the macho the primary distinction is between dominance and submission. The macho, though he is thought highly superior to the Christian, is thought dubiously prepared to go to the Catholic
heaven. He does not conform to the Catholic idea of the good man and is assumed to be barred from its paradise. For the peasant, the attainment of heaven is not the highest goal of life. Rather, the assertion of macho is his highest attainment. It is not clear in the mind of the peasant whether there even is in fact a real heaven. He says that that is the business of the priests.

Finally, in conclusion, it appears from my conversations in San Diego that the priest is a powerful man. But his power is oriented, in the mind of the peasant, toward the solution of everyday practical matters. The power of the priest is not a good in itself but is of limited economic application. Nor does the priest's power to realize life after death in paradise interest the peasant.

People Who Have the Power to Cure

Priests are sometimes asked to help cure a person who is seriously sick. The priest is usually the last person called, since the local female curers (curanderas) are more available. The priest is called when other healers fail. The priest suggests prayers and perhaps a pilgrimage or other devotional act. The prayers and rites are standard Catholic ones. Also, the priest may personally attend to the sick person. An epileptic, an 18 year old boy known in town as "crazy" (loco) and at times a nuisance, said he was greatly helped by the priest. Epilepsy, which is a long-term illness and very serious, is a disease which would likely require the consultation with priests.
If one of her family is sick, a woman may call one or a number of the following: (1) a spiritualist medium; (2) a female curer; (3) a priest; (4) a friend who is considered to have a superior knowledge of medicine; (5) a doctor. To the priest, all these practitioners except himself and the doctor are objectionable. But, in fact, of all in the group the most favored by the people is the spiritualist, although her services are the hardest to obtain. Her fee, though lower than the doctor's, is also high: 50 pesos ($1) unless she is working for a friend, to whom she will give special rates. But her services are highly prized. There are no spiritualists living in the area of San Diego, Dolores and San Miguel, to the knowledge of my informants. I suspect that there were a few spiritualists living in San Miguel or Dolores, but I would have to widen my group of informants to find out about them. A known practitioner living in Celaya, a town of 100,000 in south Guanajuato, was sometimes called specially to San Diego, according to my sources. She comes no more frequently than once every two or three months, and when she does come she is called by someone she already knows, who is asking on behalf of herself or a friend. Spiritualism apparently is less important in Guanajuato than in northern Mexico, where Isabel Kelly finds it much in evidence. However, a difficulty in estimating the number of spiritualists in Guanajuato is the fact that an individual or a segment of the population knows only one specialist, or perhaps knows someone who in turn knows a specialist.

1Isabel Kelly, Folk Practices in Northern Mexico (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), passim, chapters i, ii, iii.
The spiritualists can divine the past and so discover evil that occurred then. They cannot divine the future. People, in seeking the cause of a specific illness, will tell the spiritualist the names of people in the community who are suspected of being witches. A person may even name his or her parent. The medium can thus point out the specific witch out of those named. The seance takes place in a darkened room lighted only by a candle. According to my informants, a drum throbs a monotonous steady beat (similar drums are frequently heard in Guanajuato at fiestas and on Sundays). The medium sits in a chair, eyes closed, and apparently goes into a trance. She is blindfolded by a helper. She then stands up and walks around the room. She can find people and objects even though blindfolded. She sits again in her chair. In this phase she is in contact with the spiritual world and can divine the witch responsible for the sickness.

When the witch is divined he or she may be killed, according to my informants. However, no one could remember personally witnessing an instance of witch killing. It is more likely that the witch is humiliated and made to pay something, or his or her son or son-in-law must pay something. It is a humiliation for a man to have a witch in his house, and the witch can either "go into a corner to die" or go to San Luis Potosí or San Miguel to beg. This humiliation of the "witch" just speeds the process of expulsion already in motion, since penniless old people are considered a burden. During my residence in San Diego there was no instance of witch divining that I could detect. The priest says that divining no longer occurs in San
Diego, although my informants say it takes place regularly.

Another healing specialist is the curandera. Her services are cheaper and more available than those of the spiritualist. Also the curandera, unlike the spiritualist, does not inquire into the ultimate causes of a sickness, such as witchcraft, but rather simply applies her cures to the symptoms. There are many curers in San Diego, perhaps several dozen, although no one knows exactly. Among them there are all levels of competence and popularity. If any of them can specialize to the point where they do not have to do house and farm work, it is because they are in great demand or because they have "retired" from other work. The curandera is respected because she is more knowledgeable than the average person concerning medicine. The average peasant does not know the names of most of the plants he sees on the way to work in the fields. The cures are more medicinal than ritual, although there seems to be some ritual in her application of medicine (as there is even in "scientific" medicine). Her medicines are not considered superior to those of the university-educated doctor, nor of course better than those of the spiritualist.

When a woman's child or husband is sick, she seeks someone who "can help." A friend may come, and every woman has a friend or two who has a superior store of medical information and encouragement. A woman who is a "friend" to many women in the capacity of a helper at the time of sickness is a curandera. She may visit not only her own friends but friends and acquaintances of friends. Very rarely is she called upon by a stranger or one whom she does not know.
personally. It is a feature of the curandera system in San Diego that
the reputation of an individual practitioner does not spread far by
word of mouth. The people living within the city limits would like
to trust the two doctors serving them. The priest also likes to be
consulted. The curer is simply someone who is available when the
doctor and priest are not available or are too expensive. It
should be noted that the barrier to the application of modern medi­
cal techniques is not "ignorance," because the people generally have
respect for the learning of the doctor and for the medicines bought
at the drugstore. A chief factor in seeking help during illness is
the availability of the practitioners and drugs. The doctor has
visiting hours and much of the time is not to be found in his office
(though he is likely to be seen chatting in the street). Still more
important than the cost and availability of the practitioner is the
latter's strong personality. The curer is generally considered
more macho than other women so long as she is of the "macho society."
As I explained earlier, the doctors and priests, because they are
not of the "macho society," cannot be macho. But the personality of
the curer irrespective of social class makes him or her "powerful."

Finally, when peasants have money, they prefer to consult the
doctor. Of practitioners skilled in curing common illness the doctors
are more respected than the curers. There are two doctors in San
Diego serving a total population in the county of 24,000. It is evi­
dent that, especially in the outlying villages, people must be content
with the services of curers except in cases of extreme sickness, when
the ill person is brought to the hospital. The doctors are considered expensive. One doctor is thought to cure only very slowly and is nicknamed the "burro," a pun on his name. Sometimes the people visit doctors in Dolores or San Miguel.

Santos

A santo (saint), in the view of the people of San Diego, is a person in Heaven who exercises his "power" to assist human beings in need. The saint is represented by wooden images in the churches. Each church has its patron saint whose wooden image is in a prominent place in the church. The people do not confuse the saint himself with his image, although they very much prefer to pray in front of the image. All the barrios' saints are respected, but some stand out above others. Of the saints, San Diego is thought to be the most important, since, in the words of the people, the town is named after him and his church is the most central in town. His neighborhood is the largest and richest. Wealthy people, whose houses are in the central barrio, visit the church. The church of the Virgin of Guadalupe is also highly regarded. It is outside the town but overlooks it from a hillside and is visible from any point in town. The Virgin represents Mexican nationality. On the other hand, prayers are addressed to her mostly by the people living in her barrio. Most saints are prayed to by the people of the neighborhood they represent, although there are special circumstances leading people to pray to other saints who may be said to be performing well. If a man's sick cousin or other relative lives in
another neighborhood, the man will go to that relative's saint and pray to him or light a candle at his altar. Furthermore, rigid particularism is avoided as the entire town acknowledges the fiestas or "days" of the various saints in town. National holidays are celebrated by homage to the image of the Virgin, with special masses in her church. Also overriding neighborhood particularism is the fact that the favorite saint in terms of wish-granting is not a barrio saint but rather an "extra-territorial" saint, San Martín de Porres, whose image is in the church of San Diego. The only altar in town that is more elaborate than that of San Martín is the altar of San Diego. San Martín is possibly prayed to more often than any other saint, and his is the first altar visited by people coming in from surrounding villages.

Besides the saints inside the town, the people respect the image of San Juan, which is located in a tiny hamlet within five hours' walk from San Diego. The people make a pilgrimage there several times a year. The pilgrimage is encouraged by the priest, although he does not accompany the walkers. In addition to the saints in the other towns, there is a shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe three miles outside of town on a small mountain. In spite of the remote location of this shrine, candles are always kept burning there. Letters of thanks for past cures are posted. Beside the shrine are a bell and a cross. Pilgrimages are made there by both groups and individuals. The priest will sometimes recommend a pilgrimage to this isolated place.
What makes a saint efficacious, insofar as the people talk about a real spirit or personage, is his essential "power." The power of the saint makes his image powerful when it is prayed to. The image may therefore be thought of as a mediator of the power. Efforts to pray directly to the saint without confronting the image in the church are thought to be less successful. However, it should be made clear that the power of both the saint and the image is a miraculous power. It is therefore to be distinguished from the power not only of curing specialists but also the priest, who is never called miraculous (milagroso) except, apparently, when the people profiting from the priest's efforts are especially pleased. They use the word "miraculous" out of admiration. It is logical to infer that the power of the priest is not regarded strictly as divine or supernatural in the same way the power of the image is. The power of the priest as well as that of the curing specialist if regarded in a matter-of-fact way as stemming from the personal qualities of the individual. The power of the image, on the other hand, is held in deep reverence and awe. Power that is miraculous is reverenced more than ordinary power which the person obtains from his fellow townspeople.

In addition to images of the saints in churches, individual citizens hang small shrines in the houses and places of work. The shrines consist of small pictures of the Guadalupe Virgin in a metal frame and a vigil light, or candle. Shrines are also hung in buses, but without candles. They are often decorated with a velvet curtain.
A slice of apple or orange is sometimes placed under the shrine as an offering. The candles in the market and in shops are always burning, but in homes they burn only on Saturday night, Sunday, before fiestas and when someone is sick.

**Inanimate Things with Power**

Whereas all beings with macho are living beings, and specifically higher animals, "power" may be possessed by inanimate things as well as living beings. A plant or substance which is efficacious for some human purpose is called powerful. Medicines especially have the quality of power.

Sicknesses that most concern the people of San Diego are epilepsy, typhoid, "dolor del estómago" ("pains of the stomach," an intestinal infection which is particularly dangerous for children under two) and common colds which are spoken of in terms of their symptoms, a cough or watery nose. The sickness most feared were those which afflicted adults, typhoid and influenza.

Medicines bought from the two drugstores are considered effective though expensive. They are applied as prescribed by the doctor for children's diarrhea, headache, cold symptoms, fever and so forth. Antibiotics and aspirin are used by upper-class and peasant families alike. The peasants also use factory-packaged plant medicines sent from remote cities. They are taken as tea and are claimed to cure anything from headache to "general disability" (debilidad general), sexual debility, or syphilis. The town doctor, who has a
medical degree, says that these medicines are not entirely without curative power but that the medicines of the pharmacy are better. Also important to the medical stock of San Diego are specifically local medicines. Goat milk is thought to be good for any illness. A plant known as *lerba de perro* is also thought to have general curative powers. Since my informants consisted mainly of young men rather than the curers, I did not get much information on San Diego medicine.

It was said to me on occasion that an especially potent plant could be macho as well as powerful. In these instances "macho" was understood in the sense of valor, or worth. "Macho" was used to express admiration. However, plants (and even stones) are generally thought of in terms of their "power." The reason plants were called macho is probably that some of my informants were vague in the way they employed abstract categories. A general consensus would support the idea that plants, while they are powerful and effective as means to ends, are not macho, which is a quality reserved for animals and men.

**Power as a Negative or Harmful Force**

The force of macho, from the point of view of the farmer, is always a good. It is a supreme value in itself. It is good by definition. For the upper classes, macho is regarded as sometimes bad when it gets out of hand in a bully or murderer. But this dissertation, in describing macho from the point of view of the peasant,
will not depart from the concept of macho as being unequivocally positive. In the case of "power," on the other hand, what is normally a material good for society, in that it usually brings health and well-being, can be a force for evil. A clear instance of a being who is very powerful but also evil is a witch.

Sudden death or sickness of children, and also sickness in general, is often thought to be the work of a witch. Some people, particularly the priests and upper classes, thought that, although there were indeed witches (brujos) in the time of the Indians, they have been driven away from the modern areas of Mexico. However, the peasants generally believe that witches still attack men in the night in the dark away from town and still kill children inside the town when the children are not being carefully watched. It is believed that witches do not generally live in the larger towns such as Dolores or Guanajuato, where the streets are well lighted and where the people have the knowledge to deal with them. Also, where spiritualists live, there is less danger of witches. But on the ranches and in small towns like San Diego witches can be dangerous. Measures must be taken against them. According to one informant, a boy of 16 whose mother was said by him to know much about witches, the witch, often a poor woman, will ask a child for money. When the child does not give the money, the witch goes at night to the house of the child. If the child is alone (which would seem to be seldom the case), the witch may drink the child's blood and even eat the child. One informant contributed the accounts below:
My mother once saved my brother from a witch. My brother was alone in the next room, and my mother saw through the door a witch attacking him. She ran in and recognized the witch, who fled out the door.

Within the memory of this woman, a witch was killed at the woman's ranch. The mother of a dead child informed the people, asking them to kill the witch. They came with pistols and machetes, and the witch's blood "ran in the streets."

This still happens although I have never seen it. Out of our family only my mother has seen it, although there are accounts of it from other towns and ranches. It used to be written up in the newspapers when a witch was killed, although now they keep it silent.

Witches also attack grown people by sneaking up on them in the dark on paths outside the town. A witch dresses in the skin of a dog and crawls on all fours.

My brother was once frightened by a dog outside the town, and he fired at it with his pistol but could not kill it. It ran off. Another time, also in the dark, he suddenly felt strong arms around him, crushing his chest. The arms were like those of a giant. But when my brother fought the arms off and turned around, the witch was suddenly gone... My mother saw a witch in a tree at night. The witch fell to the ground and ran off when my mother crossed herself.

It is said that witches are most often old people with ugly faces, who must be supported by their children but are often given to begging. There are said to be a number of witches in San Diego, but none has been killed here for a long time. The Protestant missionary who was killed in San Diego ten years ago is said to have been a witch, though I do not know if he was "discovered" as a witch by a spiritualist. Generally witches are not killed but simply resented.
Conclusions

"Power" characterizes any thing or person which or who serves the interests of the community in terms of prosperity and health. Since power is a means to an end rather than an end in itself, it is to be distinguished from macho, which has intrinsic value and is an end in itself. Whereas macho is egoistic and self-centered, power is usually altruistic. However, whereas macho is always a good, power is sometimes a negative influence, as in witchcraft, which is evil.

Power can be attributed to many people and things without macho, such as precious stones, medicinal plants and animals, women with powers to cure, saints and priests.
CHAPTER XI

POWER AND SOCIAL CLASS

Power as a Social Force

In San Diego class distinctions follow lines suggested by the use of certain words such as "rich," "poor," "macho," and "power." By "social class" I mean rank differences that are intuited by the people in particular situations of interaction. Their criteria include economic factors as are suggested by the words "rico" (the rich) and "pobre" (the poor), but these distinctions of wealth seem to be mere facets of deeper criteria for which other value words are used. These terms, such as "macho" and "power," have significance which could appropriately be called mystical or metaphysical since they indicate not only differences between men in rank hierarchies but concepts of what a human being is or what he should be. In these terms San Diego is stratified, on the one hand, as a group in which the heads of families profess adherence to Christianity but who are regarded by themselves and by others as "powerful." The other stratum is a group in which the heads of families subscribe to the macho ethos. Although it is tempting to speak of the "rich," Christian and powerful stratum as the "upper class," these terms "upper" and "lower" class do not exist for either the Christian or the macho.
Although "the rich" obviously have more money than "the poor," the people of San Diego universally express the feeling that Post-Revolution Mexico is an equalitarian society devoid of absolute class or caste distinctions as would imply a dominance of one group by the other. Indeed, the knowledge that some people have more money than others is interpreted in a peculiarly equalitarian sense of "power," which is essentially impersonal and therefore of no fundamental significance for its possessor. The ricos can accumulate wealth and exercise political power, but they are not necessarily regarded by the peasants as greedy or self-indulgent or in competition with the peasants, but rather they are thought of in much the same terms the peasant thinks of the priest, as using an impersonal "power" for the ultimate good of the entire community. This is not to say there is no unconscious class envy, nor is it unthinkable that this envy could at some time by exploited for political purposes. The idea that money is power, power is impersonal, and impersonal attributes are irrelevant to the deepest moral concerns of the individual, is merely expression of the fact that at the present time the "upper" and "lower" classes have overriding common interests and do not understand their relationship in the revolutionist sense of "oppressed" and "oppressor."

**Social Class**

By and large, the non-machos (Christian but powerful) include government workers such as the postmaster, telegraph operator, tax assessor, school superintendent, land surveyors and so forth.
Also there are shopkeepers who do not farm, a military officer’s widow and children living on a pension, the hotel family, the men who have government positions in Mexico City and commute to San Diego a few times a month and other people who do not farm. The telegraph operator is related to the hotel family and is therefore part of an influential extended family. The postmaster, on the other hand, has no relatives in town, lives in a poorer house, considers his post in San Diego temporary, and is not outspoken in political affairs. In addition to the above-mentioned citizens who are indisputably “upper class” there are two schoolteachers who live at the hotel. They are poor but are invited to fiestas and dinners by the upper class. I have also included the priests in the upper class in that they affirm the Catholic ethos of that class in opposition to the ethos of machismo.

**Class Structure at a Fiesta**

A fiesta is an occasion which to some extent reflects the overall class cleavages in town. The fiesta described here was a small and privately financed celebration. All fiestas, including this one, were said by rich and poor alike to be open to the general public, including all the peasants without distinction. A man would not think of having a “private” fiesta, since by his own word even the richest, most aristocratic citizen is equalitarian. However, there is obviously not space in any house for the whole town. But there are in addition more subtle class restrictions which exhibit themselves as the fiesta develops. A code of class distance is unspoken
but is manifested in the grouping at the fiesta. For instance, those of the lower classes who do come to the fiesta of a rich man do not dance or otherwise participate. Rather they stand in a semicircle near the door with their hats in their hands. They are only onlookers. Usually they leave early.

I will describe a fiesta given on the occasion of the fifth birthday of the daughter of a government official. To have "completed fifteen years" was the occasion of festivity among the upper classes, but among the peasants the girl would have only donned a white dress for Sunday mass. In the case of this upper-class girl, a special mass was celebrated Saturday night. The girl and a group of friends stood throughout the mass. There was a choir and organ music, as well as ample flowers. Most people present were friends and relatives of the girl, both from San Diego and out of town. These people wore dress suits and elaborate dresses. Some peasants and their wives came as onlookers, and they wore their usual work clothes. The peasants did not sit in the center pews but rather on tables and benches which were apparently stored in the side aisles under the colonnades.

After the mass photos of the participating group were taken at the front of the church. All the cars in town were enlisted to take the group to the house where the fiesta was to be held. It was not raining hard and the house was within easy walking distance, but the group waited for the cars anyway.
On arriving at the house, the group assembled in the center courtyard. A table for refreshments was set up at one end of the courtyard, but otherwise nothing was done to decorate the house. At first the young men and women sat entirely separate from one another. Only a few adults were present. Finally a band began playing. The guest of honor was the first to dance. She danced with her father. Then all joined in. The dancing was lively but formal. They danced waltz and polka steps. The dancing partners for the most part avoided physical contact with their torsos. It might be noted here that the upper-class Guanajuatans dance more than the farmers and urban proletariat. Lower-class dances in Guanajuato are generally rather dull affairs, with most people sitting bleakly. Only a few couples dance.

Adults came in and began dancing. A number of them had come from other towns. Finally the poor peasants came in, dressed as neatly as possible but not venturing to enter further than the vestibule at the end of the courtyard next to the street. They did not dance but stood silently and respectfully. These men were not given drinks or food. There were no peasant women present!

Analysis

Although certain ricos profess equalitarian sentiments, a clearly delimited class system characterizes San Diego society. The class divisions are evident in the structure of the fiesta, where only the upper class dances and the pobres stand and watch. Seen merely in terms of "power," the rich are on top of the social hierarchy. The lack of power forces the peasant to stand aside in many
instances and forfeit the good things of life. On the other hand, the peasant rationalizes his position and is not altogether bitter toward the rich. For one thing, he does not regard the "power" of the rich man as serving only the interests of wealth. Power, in the general sense, can potentially be exercised for the public good. In this respect the power of the rich man is not different from that of the priest or doctor. Furthermore, the possession of power is not crucial to the peasant's estimation of himself. He may even be a poor provider, his wife and children may go hungry, he may play pool all day when his wife or mother begs him to come home—he may, in short, be what we would call a "no good bum"—and still have the worthy quality of macho! The peasant does not feel degraded by his lack of power since he adheres to the world view of machismo. For him, macho is the only good in itself. Only the men of the peasant's own class possess macho. The rich are outside the macho system altogether, and in fact they possess some qualities which are offensive to the values of machismo. Whereas if one would ask an upper-class man if he were macho he would be insulted, the Christianity of the rich man implies a passivity which the macho sees only as feminine. Hence, in a sense, machismo reverses the structure of the hierarchy of "power," putting the peasants on top and the rich on the bottom.¹

CHAPTER XII

SUMMARY

The word "macho" excites enthusiasm among the men of Guanajuato. For them, macho is male dominance and worth. Macho is the quality of masculine energy and is considered a central ethical good. Macho is central to the peasant's value system in that it is the only quality which is intrinsically good. Other human and natural qualities and properties are good only as means to ends. Individual people and the events relating the people to one another are of significance insofar as worth is bestowed on them by the exercise of macho.

Insofar as the macho male is the center of authority and the source of the highest moral worth, machismo reflects a principle of organization in the community. The macho male keeps his own family and the community in order. While machismo emphasizes the aggressive qualities of the male, particularly in relation to his wife, children and animals, the assertion of such aggression actually contributes to the maximum stability and unity of the family and community.

Machismo relates to the social structure of San Diego. The upper and lower social classes interpret the word "macho" in
different ways. I call the group which affirms the quality of macho the "macho society." This group is composed of peasants. Whereas not all peasants can actually be macho, they all tend to think that it is preferable to be macho. Insofar as Christianity contradicts the ethos of macho, religion is thought to be a departure from the best life. On the other hand, the people who use "macho" in the disparaging sense of "coarse bully" are the ones who consider themselves Christian by preference. Whereas in the "macho society" a man is Christian out of weakness, youth or senility, the true Christians deplore the ethos of machismo. These Christians are generally wealthy or are powerful by virtue of government positions.

Although the upper classes do not consider themselves macho, and are not considered macho by the peasants, they are "powerful." A distinction is made in San Diego between macho and power. Power is not an ethical good or an end in itself. Rather it is a means to an end. Power is impersonal and is attributed to money, government connections and Catholic ritual. While macho is personal in that it derives from the deepest character of a man, a macho individual is most often in fact socially subordinate to a true Christian who has great "power" at his disposal.

In this thesis I have not explicated the philosophy of macho as it occurs in diverse Latin American countries, nor have I developed a theory of class per se. I have considered Latin American machismo in an Appendix. My purpose has been rather to see the relationship between machismo and social class at a particular time and place,
that is, in a single organic social system.
Is machismo characteristic of Latin America in general?

John Gillin says: "The 'macho' (literally, the 'male') is a highly valued ideal in Latin American culture. In a sense it corresponds to an ideal type of male social personality." Gillin elaborates:

...regardless of social position, the "macho" is admired. The cultural concept involves sexual prowess, action-orientation (including verbal action), and various other components. But, a "real macho" is one who is sure of himself, cognizant of his own inner worth, and willing to bet everything on such self-confidence. There can be no question about his "dignidad." The "macho" may express his own inner convictions by overt action, as in the case of bandits and "revolutionary" military leaders, or he may do so verbally, as in the case of a leading intellectual, lawyer, or politician. 

Gillin further asserts that machismo is an expression of the emotional side of masculinity rather than of intellect: "...rationalistic qualities are secondary in the emotions of his (the macho leader's) followers to what can only be described as their identification with his soul aspirations." W. P. Strassmann and R. P. Dore apply the word "machismo to a certain individualism which lends itself to a particularly Latin American incapacity for cooperative enterprise

2Ibid.
In sampling the literature on "machismo" in Latin America a problem arises in determining the nexus between a word ("machismo") found in Latin America and various personality and behavioral patterns which can be called uniquely Latin American. In considering machismo in San Diego de la Unión, I have attempted to show how a word evokes a fairly well defined concept which encompasses a specific range of human characteristics. But how is the term "machismo" to be applied to Latin America in general? What is the nexus between the word and the behavior? Does the mere existence of a word with a vague meaning warrant its applications to situations where there is no clear link in the minds of the people being considered? For instance, it is apparent that in every human society there are instances of masculine aggression, perhaps with sexual overtones: is "machismo" the universal word applicable here? The people of San Diego, although they thought machismo was present in many societies, meant by the word a specific configuration of attitudes and actions. It is true that "machismo" is a term which has grown not merely out of Mexico but out of Latin America in general, or a certain element or stratum of it. But would every Latin American male have a clear idea of what sort of behavior is "macho"?

My sampling of the literature on Latin American Indian agriculturalists, for example the work of Redfield and of Charles Wagley, indicates that there is no defined concept inhering in the word "macho." Comparing the ladino, whose ancestry is partly Spanish, and the Indian peasant in rural western Guatemala, Redfield says, "...the ladino shows much of the formal courtesies of Castile and exhibits the remnants of hombría, manly pride; the Indian does not." A thorough reading of Redfield's work on the Yucatan, an area which has escaped much direct Spanish or modern Mexican influence, satisfies me that Redfield did not encounter machismo there, or at least he did not find the word "macho" used there. Consequently, in a review of the general literature on Latin America, my impression is that the word "macho" and the specific values encompassed by the concept are found only in Spanish-influenced Latin America. San Diego de la Unión, which is entirely a modern Mexican community, participates in the general Spanish-influenced Latin American ethos. It remains only to discover what Kennedy calls the "regional differences...of machismo" with reference to San Diego. Gillin's description of machismo applies in most respects to the peasants of San Diego.

It is possible throughout the literature on Latin America to find many references to behavior described as "typically" Latin

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2Redfield, Peasant Society, p. 131.

American, for which no general word such as "machismo" is used but which nevertheless lends itself to the definition of machismo. For instance, Gillin says of the ladinos of Guatemala, "The possession of numerous prerogatives by the male Ladino is a common feature of this culture. Pre-marital chastity is considered essential for the woman; however it is hardly taken seriously for the man."1 Charles Wagley says the same of Brazil: "There is a double standard of sexual morality."2

Speaking of Brazilian middle-class young men in technological training situations, William H. Allen says they have a "morbid fear of failure." Unable to master a problem, they may cry or destroy their machinery. They are likely to drop out of the program rather than risk flunking out.3 This sensitivity regarding failure seems to stem from an underlying feeling of individual pride which is akin to the personal feelings in machismo. The sense of honor which is involved in everyday accomplishments may be applied in situations of sexual self-assertion. A portrait of a Latin American male personality which fits the ideal of personality in San Diego may justifiably be called "macho."

However, comparing San Diego to Latin America in general

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there is a question of who consciously subscribes to the ethos or ideal and who would actually be called macho. Of course in San Diego, people of all social statuses are aware of machismo, but the reaction to the concept varies. The ricos, who also call themselves Christians, do not think of themselves as macho since they consider machismo vulgar and demeaning. Nor are they thought of as such by the peasants, who reserve the term macho for themselves. Gillin asserts that in Latin America generally, middle-class people can be thought of as macho, and in this respect the San Diego instance differs absolutely. But Gillin nowhere asserts that it is the middle class itself which uniformly considers itself macho. Indeed, the possibility of reconciling the San Diego case with Latin America in general follows from an assertion of Gillin that, "...the 'macho' may be deplored by outsiders (including intellectual commentators of Latin America itself)..." It has been my experience in Mexico among the middle class, and particularly among professional people, that the concept of "intellectual" must be widened considerably beyond its application in the American middle class, that is, it must include nearly the entire professional class. The role of intellectual and indeed the role of detached "commentator" was assumed by nearly every lawyer, doctor and teacher of my acquaintance, all of whom to varying degrees were critical of the manners "of many Mexicans." The word "macho," which was not used in "polite conversation" unless I directly referred to it, would be equivalent

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to the English "jackass" or something stronger.
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