

Metaphors of Masculinity

Sex and Status in Andalusian Folklore

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Masculine Metaphors in Folk Speech

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When the Son of man shall come in his glory
... he shall set the sheep on his right hand,
but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his
right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, in-
herit the kingdom prepared for you from the
foundation of the world . . .

Then shall he say unto them on the left
hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into ever-
lasting fire, prepared for the devil and his
angels. . . .

Matthew 25:31-41

Unquestionably in Monteros, as throughout Andalusia, men can maintain a positive image of themselves only to the extent that they preserve their families' honor and reputation. Pitt-Rivers has offered a neat formulation of the manner in which the honor of the family and that of the individual are closely intertwined: "There is a near-paradox in the fact that while honour is a collective attribute shared by the nuclear family it is also personal and dependent upon the will of the individual; individual honour derives from individual conduct but produces consequences for others who share collective honour with this individual" (Pitt-Rivers 1977, p. 78). This means, among other things, that a woman's sexual purity must be maintained lest her entire family's image be tainted. It is the husband's prime responsibility to control the conduct of his wife and daughters. If the females should go astray, their behavior reflects as much on him as on them.

It is for this reason that men in Andalusia have tried—often successfully—to seclude women from public view and to limit the range of their activities. Men, in the end, feel severely threatened

and powerless when confronted by women. They consider women potentially dangerous, as we shall see in this chapter. It is the fear of women and the self-proclaimed male struggle against them that in large measure impel men to dominate and suppress them.

These male attitudes, I believe, cannot easily be dismissed as a mere rationalization for the political and economic exploitation of women. The attitudes must be understood on their own terms as a strong motivating force in determining relationships between the sexes. Certainly the vast majority of men, and particularly working-class men, articulate a basically defensive posture when describing their attitudes toward women. It is this defensive posture, in a variety of metaphoric manifestations, that we shall now explore.

The Moral Dichotomy Between the Sexes

Before explicitly analyzing why men feel victimized by and vulnerable to women, we should first understand an essential moral dichotomy between the sexes. In Monteros, as elsewhere in Spain (Cátedra Tomás 1976, p. 35), men believe themselves to be inherently more virtuous than women. They justify this opinion primarily on religious grounds. "Women are of the Devil," a worker once explained to me as three of his friends listened and nodded in agreement. "God created the world in seven days. Let's say that the first day He made the earth and plants, the second day the sun, the third day . . . well, I don't quite remember it all. But the fifth day He made man. And from the ribs of man He made woman on the sixth day. That's why women have one more rib than men. If you have a chance to see a human skeleton, you'll find this out for yourself."

The narrator then went on to explain that the original man and woman were called Adam and Eve and that they lived together in Paradise. God told them that they could reside there as long as they did not eat an apple. Then one day the Devil appeared to Eve in the form of a serpent, and he tempted her to eat an apple off a tree. Eve, in turn, tempted Adam to eat the apple. "And that is why woman is of the Devil," said my informant, continuing his rendition of the Fall. "She was that way from the very beginning, and she has been trying to tempt and dominate man ever since." As for man, he "is of God because he did not sin and he remained pure. He only sinned after he was tempted by woman to sin. He was and still is closer to God than is woman."

Referring to this Biblical myth, men frequently state that women "dress like serpents" (*se visten de serpientes*) in order to

create harm and dissension among men. Female iniquity is particularly evident in sexual matters, about which it is asserted contemptuously and assuredly that all women are seductresses, possessed of insatiable, lustful appetites. When women wield their powers, men cannot resist temptation and are forced to relinquish control over their passions. This is why men believe that: *Pueden más dos tetas que cien carretas* ("Two breasts can do more than a hundred carts"). Women who are determined to get their way will always win in the end; thus there is no alternative, men claim, but to capitulate to them from the start.¹

But it is not solely in sexual matters that women rule. Women are also blamed for perpetuating the Monteros class system and for being much more exclusivist than men. It is said that women of the elite refuse to associate with commoners, and that they urge their husbands, who are thought to be more egalitarian by nature, to act likewise. Female exclusivity also manifests itself in discrimination against "outsiders" (*forasteros*), people who are not Monteros-born and -bred. Wives who have married into Monteros from elsewhere complain that they are forever rejected by women from long-established Monteros families. Lengthy residence in Monteros, complain these outsider women and their husbands, does nothing to alter native female attitudes. Men who marry in, however, are said to be integrated rapidly into town society. No wonder, then, that the people of Monteros proclaim: *La mujer es de pelo largo pero intentamento corto* ("Women have long hair but few good intentions"). Or, alternatively: *La mujer es de pelo largo y sentimiento corto* ("Women have long hair and little feeling"). Whether describing a woman's goals or emotions, Monteros proverbs rarely portray her in a favorable light. Man is good, woman evil.

Similarly, some men of Monteros unconsciously express a binary opposition consisting of two distinct metaphoric chains: God is associated with men and sheep, while the Devil is linked to women and goats.² Sheep, like men and God, are good; goats, like women

¹There are similar proverbs in Old Castile, where there exists a more egalitarian relationship between the sexes than in Andalusia; however, these proverbs are employed to describe the great power of a woman's love (Brandes 1975b, p. 177) rather than the scheming nature of females in general.

²I have refrained in this volume from analyzing binary oppositions per se, though it should be clear from the discussion of Giants and Big-Heads in chapter 2, as well as from what follows in the present chapter, that they are an important structural feature in Monteros. Henry Schwarz has carried out a binary structural analysis for a town in Extremadura (Schwarz 1976, pp. 115-40).

and the Devil, are evil. People who watch over animals say that God was the original shepherd and the Devil the original goatherd.³ God and the Devil one day decided to have a race to see who would get to the river with his animals first, so they could drink. To win, God sent a curse (*echó la maldición*) on the goats and the Devil, forcing them high up into the hills in the opposite direction from the water supply. Ever since then, goats have been destined to graze in the hilliest, poorest terrain, just as women are forced to accept a formally subordinate niche within the human domain.

Shepherds claim that at night when it is perfectly dark, if you run your hands along a goat's back it will emit sparks—the fire of the Devil. They also state by way of proof that if a goat eats the tips off an olive branch, the branch will remain forever stunted; but if a sheep nibbles at the tips, the branch will regenerate. These phenomena occur despite the fact that olive trees are a natural and appropriate food supply for goats, which subsist on trees, shrubs, and bushes, while sheep prefer to eat grasses and other herbage from the ground.

Shepherds further assert that goats, as punishment for their association with the Devil, were banished from Christ's manger at the time of his birth, while sheep were permitted to flock there in great numbers. Again in order to demonstrate their claim, they point out that Christmas creches always contain sheep but never goats. Indeed, Spanish artistic representations of the Nativity—from medieval retablos all the way to contemporary greeting cards—invariably exclude goats from the flock of animals in attendance. The Spanish image of the goat, by contrast, is nowhere more accurately portrayed than in Goya's painting *Escena de Brujas* (usually translated as *The Witches' Sabbath*), dominated by a gigantic horned goat representing the Devil, who is surrounded at the base of the painting by countless female witches.⁴

³In Christian symbolism, of course, sheep are of extraordinary significance, sometimes being associated with Christ himself. One scholar asserts that "sheep are accorded a larger share of attention in the Bible than any other animal and their names—ewe, lamb, ram, sheep, and flock—are found seven hundred and forty-two times, in seven hundred and three verses, which exceed one forty-fourth of the whole number of verses (Wiley 1957, p. 370). An important segment of the Roman Catholic Mass is entitled "Lamb of God." Interesting discussions of animal symbolism in Christianity can be found in Ferguson (1954), Rowland (1973), and Wiley (1957).

⁴The painting dates from 1798 and is housed in Madrid's Lázaro Galdiano Museum. The painting is not to be confused with Goya's later canvas with the same title, which hangs in the Museo del Prado and receives interesting interpretation by Julio Caro Baroja (1964).

In Monteros, the association between humans and animals is more subtle than is reported, for example, among the Sarakatsani shepherds of northern Greece, among whom "Women and goats are conceptually opposed to men and sheep" (Campbell 1964, p. 31), and whose sexual division of labor is in effect determined by this conceptual opposition (ibid., pp. 31-5). Nonetheless, in Monteros the symbolic associations between people and animals emerge in unexpected ways. When men speak of sexually promiscuous women, for example, they are likely to say: *La c abra que es de monte siempre tira al monte* ("The goat from the woodlands always heads toward the woodlands"). That is, once a woman begins to sleep with a series of different men, she will forever continue doing so. Although it would be possible to generalize from this proverb in other ways, I have never heard it applied to any other context. Similarly, when several men depart from a gathering in order to conduct private business, the ones who are left behind state, by way of explanation: *Deja la oveja mear* ("Let the sheep piss"). In other words, men should be left to conduct their affairs undisturbed. Women, in my experience, are never referred to metaphorically as

Men with sheep.



sheep. Spanish literature, I might add, embodies the same associations between animals and the sexes as is found in Monteros.⁵

An important expression of the metaphoric chains linking animals and humans is the evil eye, a destructive, invisible, and often involuntary emanation causing illness or death.⁶ Because of their inherent wickedness and close association with the Devil, certain females, and females alone, are accused by the people of Monteros of being possessed by the evil eye (*mal de ojo*). And certainly it is more than coincidental that animal victims of the evil eye in Monteros, as throughout Mediterranean Europe (Blum and Blum 1965, p. 131; Campbell 1964, p. 338), are often sheep and rarely goats. In one particularly interesting case, a woman nicknamed Culona ("Big Ass") is believed definitely to have the evil eye, which she regularly though unconsciously uses to destroy sheep. "Only last year," a shepherd confided, "she was staring at a perfectly healthy, well-fed sheep. 'What a beautiful sheep!' she remarked. The next day the animal died."

We may surmise, in anticipation of the forthcoming analysis, that the female destruction of sheep through the evil eye is a symbolic projection of woman's destruction of man. Furthermore, in the case of Culona's evil influence, we have a clue to one important source of man's downfall: the *culo*, referring variously to the buttocks or the anus. It is significant that a woman who has been dubbed with the nickname Culona should also be perceived as destroying sheep.⁷ For, as we shall presently see, men believe themselves to be threatened as much by their attraction to women—an attraction that centers primarily on the female buttocks—as by their potential anal penetration by other men.

Serpents and Human Sexuality

In an attempt to uncover some of the important ways in which women seem threatening and dangerous to men, I wish to explore further the symbolic connection between women and serpents. We have

⁵In Lope de Vega's *Fuente Ovejuna*, for example, Laurencia addresses the men of her town as *ovejas* or "sheep" (1969, p. 120). Bernarda, in Lorca's *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*, refers critically to the women who have come to pay their respects at her husband's funeral as "*una manada de cabras*," "a herd of goats" (García Lorca 1960, p. 1361).

⁶Bibliography on the evil eye is vast. See Elworthy (1958), Gifford (1958), Meerloo (1971), Maloney (1976), and the references contained therein.

⁷For extensive discussions of nicknaming in Spain, see Barrett (1978), Brandes (1975c), and Pitt-Rivers (1971, pp. 160-69).

already noted that in Monteros men say that women "dress as serpents"; since, in standard Spanish, the word *serpiente* is often used as a synonym for the Devil (Real Academia Española 1956, p. 1194), there is a clear implication that women become transformed conceptually into the Devil through their symbolic metamorphosis into serpents. In this respect, it is noteworthy too that the word *serpiente* is feminine in gender (*una serpiente*),⁸ which is consistent with a strong artistic tradition in southern Europe of portraying the serpent in the Garden of Eden with a woman's face (Rowland 1973, p. 144). Overall, the Monteros symbolic system suggests an identification of serpents as female. Here, at least, it is decidedly wrong to apply the usual psychoanalytic link between this creature and the phallus, a connection that Ernest Jones once termed "one of the most constant and invariable symbols" (1949, p. 101).⁹

Besides the serpent in the Fall of Man, serpents have two other important sources of reference in Monteros. The first is a well-known working-class rendition of the Holy Family's journey to Bethlehem. The pregnant Virgin, it is said, was seated on a mule that was plodding along the road. A serpent suddenly appeared in front of the mule, scaring the beast so greatly that it tossed the Virgin onto the ground, nearly causing the death of her unborn child. In those days the serpent still had its legs. But as a punishment for endangering the Virgin and child, God deprived it of its legs and forced it to crawl along the ground forever after. God also punished the mule—referred to in the legend as a *mula*, the female of the species—by making her permanently barren, the price for scaring easily and hurling the Virgin to the ground.

The significance of this story becomes understandable only if we recognize that the two culprits, the serpent and the mule, both represent females. They endanger the lives of another female, the Virgin, and her male child. We have here one of the clearest possible expres-

⁸Despite the usual assumption that the gender of Spanish (and other Latin-derived) nouns is arbitrary, many Spanish speakers have told me that serpents must be female because the term *serpiente* is feminine. Death (*la muerte*) is also considered to be feminine for the same reason. The issue is complex and obviously cannot be resolved here. I merely report that there is supporting evidence from informants for my interpretation.

⁹This is not to suggest that all psychoanalytic thought conforms to Jones's formula. Roheim early recognized that the snake's infamous tendency to devour, i.e., incorporate, makes it analogous to a "dangerous vagina" (Roheim 1924, p. 408). More recently, Slater has offered a sensitive and subtle analysis of the bisexual symbolic qualities of the serpent (Slater 1971, pp. 75-122). Here the serpent is portrayed as particularly feminine in nature, for it is the ingestive, incorporative function of the beast that receives primary emphasis.

sions of the intense, indissoluble bond between mother and son, which is characteristic of Monteros, just as it has been of the entire northern Mediterranean world at least since ancient Greece (Slater 1968, pp. 3-74). The son's fate is bound to that of his mother, an idealized, pure version of womanhood. To the pure Virgin, we can contrast the dangerous serpent and the disruptive *mula*, who represent negative manifestations of the feminine character and embody the potential destruction of family well-being. Indeed, according to Monteros men, it is women in their role as Devil who pose the greatest threat to family unity in Monteros, just as it is women in their role as mothers who solidify the family bond. The legend of the journey to Bethlehem is a superb reflection of male ambivalence toward women.

The second significant reference to serpents is a folk medical belief concerning infants that is now confined to the poorer and older residents of Monteros but that, until the early 1960s, was quite widespread among all but the educated elite. It is said that at night a serpent may crawl surreptitiously into the bedroom where an infant and its nursing mother are sleeping. When the child awakens from hunger and begins to cry, the serpent suckles the mother's breast and inserts its tail into the infant's mouth. In this manner, the serpent draws nourishment from the mother's body at the expense of the infant. This deception continues for a period of several weeks until the child finally withers and dies. The mother remains unsuspecting throughout this period because the tail acts as a soporific to the infant while the sucking motion of the serpent's mouth exactly replicates the child's. It must be noted that the efficacy of this belief depends in large measure upon the assumption that breast milk is a "limited good," in George Foster's sense of the term (1967). If it were not, the child could simply compensate for lost nighttime nourishment by nursing more during the day. What happens, however, is that the serpent consumes so much milk at night that it completely exhausts the mother's restricted supply, leaving nothing for the infant.

This belief, as I said, is fast disappearing. It no doubt arose as a culturally shared and codified projection of anxieties concerning infant mortality and the availability of an adequate supply of mother's milk in the days when as many as half of all infants died and wet-nurses or, later, bottled formulas, were available only to the wealthy elite. However obsolete, the belief still represents a powerful symbolic portrayal of masculine attitudes toward women.

Let us note, at the outset, the structural parallel between this folk medical belief and the legend of the Virgin's journey. In both, the serpent plays an aggressive, destructive role directed toward the

death of an infant. In both cases, too, the infant is masculine. The gender is clear in the instance of the baby Jesus, while in the medical belief the comprehensive masculine term *niño* is always used when referring to the victimized nursing child. Furthermore, the medical belief, like the legend, incorporates contrasting portrayals of females, the serpent representing the evil dimension of womanhood, the mother representing the positive one. In both folkloristic references, the disruptive aspect of women threatens to destroy or does destroy their creative, productive side (giving birth, providing milk). In both, too, the strength and well-being of the mother-son bond are also endangered. Overall, the two folklore references may best be viewed as expressions of the ambivalent attitude toward women that prevails in Monteros.

There is one critical element appearing in the medical belief alone, however, which we cannot afford to overlook: the *leche*, or milk. The milk is at once denied to the nursing child and incorporated within the serpent, to the beast's immediate benefit. To recognize the full significance of the serpent's thievery, we must realize that in Monteros as throughout Spain, *leche* means "semen" as well as "milk"; it is, in fact, the most universally and commonly employed word to refer to male sexual fluid. Moreover, the linguistic association between milk and semen is not merely incidental, but rather is codified in and popularized by jokes that turn on puns for the term *leche*.¹⁰ It is not surprising that semen and milk should be so closely linked when we consider that both substances, besides being white fluids, are connected with the creation or sustenance of life. (In English, *cream*, rather than *milk*, is given the dual denotation.) Just as a man in infancy depends on milk to survive, so too he relinquishes *his* milk in adulthood in order to produce children. And just as the people of Monteros consider a mother's milk to exist in limited supply, so too do they perceive semen as a finite substance, permanently depleted with each ejaculation.¹¹ Since people consider semen to be an essential ingredient for main-

¹⁰One joke, for example, tells of a Spanish emigrant working on a German farm. Among all the laborers, he was the only Spaniard. One day they held a contest to see who could get the most milk out of the cows, but they assigned to the Spaniard the only bull on the farm. When the laborers presented their results, they each had milked eighteen to twenty liters, except the Spaniard, who brought in only half a liter. Said the foreman, "Aren't you ashamed to show up with only this small quantity of *leche* [milk]?" "But, sir," the Spaniard replied, "you gave me a bull to milk and I had to jerk him off to get even this much *leche* [semen]!"

¹¹In parts of Nigeria, too, a man's lifetime supply of semen is considered to be finite (Foster 1967, p. 309).

taining a man's vigor, energy, and youth, its dwindling supply can only lead to his more rapid demise.

We can finally understand how the medical belief of the suckling serpent relates to the sphere of adult sexuality in Monteros. Just as the serpent deprives the child of milk, woman deprives man of his semen. Just as the serpent benefits from the nourishment of milk, it may be supposed that woman benefits from incorporating semen into her body. In both cases, man is victimized by woman. The serpent's role, in other words, replicates that of the wife, and reflects the male fear that women pose a serious threat to masculine well-being.

Body Substances and Bodily Strength

For many men of Monteros, women are inherently evil, and on this account alone can challenge their very existence. But it is also women's sexuality that men fear, primarily because it threatens in various ways to rob them of their masculinity and convert them symbolically into females. The men of Monteros have a sexual identity that must constantly be guarded and defended against potential assault. This assault may take one of three principal forms, each of which we shall discuss in turn: the wife's attempt to drive her husband to a premature death; the wife's adultery, which feminizes her husband; and the man's enforced adoption of a feminine, passive role.

To explain the first point, let me begin by summarizing how a traditional Monteros man views sexual relationships. When women are in their early teens, they begin to use make-up and dress provocatively so that they will attract and be able to capture men (the usual verbs here are *atrapar*, "to trap," and *cazar*, "to hunt"). While the prospective husband is courting, a woman acts submissive, shy, and compliant, but this is just part of her overall plan of attack. Once the man is bound by an official, indissoluble wedding ceremony, the woman begins to demonstrate her true ambition, which is nothing less than to dominate completely, to rule her husband and children, and above all to sap her husband's strength by forcing him to engage in heavy sexual activity and physical labor until he gradually expires. Her ultimate goal, it is believed, is twofold: to live from her husband's social security or insurance premiums without having to share the income with him; and to satisfy her voracious, indiscriminate sexual appetite without the restrictions imposed on her by marriage.

Men consider women to be constitutionally much the stronger

sex. In the short run, to be sure, men—especially young men—are demonstrably stronger than women. They can run longer and faster, lift and pull heavier objects, and do more strenuous labor. But men lack the long-range bodily resistance and durability of women, and therefore die at a much younger age. Especially in matters of sex, women are said to have superior strength and drive to that of men.

The main reason given for this female corporal superiority is that women have “clean” blood. The menstrual flow, men believe, freshens the blood supply every month by divesting it of impurities. Like most Mediterranean people (e.g., Blum and Blum 1965, pp. 33–34, 40, 138, 170; Blum and Blum 1970, pp. 20, 46; Campbell 1964, p. 31), as well as some from other parts of the world (Douglas 1966, pp. 121, 147, 151, 176; Schieffelin 1976, p. 67), the people of Monteros consider menstrual blood to be polluted for the specific reason that it carries away the filth that inevitably accumulates over the course of a woman’s cycle.¹² As one informant put it, a woman is like a bottle of water that receives periodic washing and refilling. Her blood supply remains fresh and renewed. Man, on the other hand, is like a bottle of water that becomes stagnant. The impurities of his body continuously build up with no means of release. He therefore naturally becomes weaker over time than does woman.

To compensate, however, men have one great source of strength that women lack: semen. Semen, as we have already noted, is said to be life-giving and beneficial. Given the inability of male blood to regenerate and cleanse itself, semen is without doubt man’s single most important bodily substance, the one upon which his very existence, as well as his continued enjoyment of sexual pleasure, depends. In fact, one could almost say that just as a man’s genitals are the locus of his strength and will—a notion we shall examine in the following section—so, too, his semen, which is located within the genital region, *is* his strength and will.

Considering this point of view, it is understandable that men are greatly preoccupied by the allegedly debilitating aspects of sex, which deprives them of valuable semen after each ejaculation. In Monteros, I have observed no concern among men that coitus or sexual contact of any kind with women is immoral or contrary to religious standards. Nor do men seem to fear that their sexual relationships will cause them to be punished in the afterlife. In other

¹²For a thorough discussion of the topic of menstruation from a cultural standpoint, see Delaney, Lupton, and Toth (1976); their scholarly citations on the subject are wide-ranging.

words, men are totally unconcerned that women will lead them into sin. What does worry them, however, is that their wives will, through sexual activity, deprive them of their strength and youth and drive them to an early grave.

I became aware of this male preoccupation soon after my arrival in Monteros when I visited a tavern where there hangs a prominently displayed glazed tile upon which is written the following rhymed proverb: *Agua de pozo y mujer desnuda/Llevan al hombre a la sepultura* ("Well water and a naked woman/Lead men to the grave"). I asked the three or four men who were gathered at the counter to explain the saying to me. The first part of the proverb, concerning well water, they dismissed as self-evident; anyone knows that well water is bad for you, they said. As for the reference to the naked woman, one of them opened his eyes wide, furrowed his brows in a knowing sort of glance, and began moving his outstretched arm and tightly closed fist back and forth to and from his chest in the typical Spanish gesture depicting coitus. By way of further explanation to the perhaps untutored foreigner, the man simply said, "*Debilita*"—"It weakens."

Though the tavern tile was manufactured elsewhere than Monteros and in fact does not bear a traditional town saying, the proverb accurately reflects the Monteros male point of view. Townspeople grow up hearing their own proverbial wisdom to the same effect: *Si quieres llegar a viejo/Guarda la leche en el pellejo* ("If you want to reach old age,/Keep your semen within your skin"). Since semen, the life-giving element, exists in limited supply, men should be careful to preserve it as much as possible. This means, for male youth and unmarried men of all ages, that self-control should be exerted against masturbation. After marriage, when intercourse becomes the main avenue of sexual release, abstinence is the best way for a man to conserve his vigor, especially as he grows older.¹³

Men take note of cases that demonstrate their perception of women's ultimate goals. In one instance, a fifty-nine-year-old widower eloped with a forty-year-old widow, who, it was said, had been trying to seduce him for months. Within days after the elopement, word was out that the man had left her with the complaint that she had a voracious sexual appetite. Every time he would turn over to sleep she would try to arouse him into another encounter. It was more than he could take, and all the men I knew seemed to sym-

¹³Most Monteros men, in fact, do not abstain from sexual activity, despite their undeniable fear of its long-term consequences. As discussed in chapter 10, men seem to enjoy sex virtually free of guilt feelings.

pathize with the man's lot. It was assumed that the woman was after his money, and was trying to do him in.

Men claim that widows immediately gain weight and acquire a lustrous glow after their husbands die; this demonstrates their happy state. They also are likely to become sexually promiscuous. Pitt-Rivers' data from elsewhere in Andalusia confirm my own observations:

It is a matter of popular consensus that women uncontrolled by men will throw caution to the winds and indulge in the most abandoned love affairs; no matter how improbable on account of her age, the widow, it is thought, is likely to take on the predatory male attitude towards sexual promiscuity. I have often been astounded by the amatory conquests credited to septuagenarian peasant ladies (1977, p. 82).

Widows with whom I have discussed the matter explain that it is only after their husbands have died that other men can begin to notice them openly without fear of reprisal. I know at least one widow who is deeply hurt by the constant implications that she and others like her wanted their husbands to die. Yet there are some who admit they are better off alone, and quote the popular Monteros saying: *Te casaste, te cogaste* ("You married, you shit on yourself.") In fact, in one conversation between a group of married women concerning the topic of widowhood, not one could think a widow whom she regarded as worse off economically or in any other way than when she was married. In part, this may be explained by the fact that married men invariably spend a good part of the limited family income in treating their friends to drinks in the bars. In part, too, women are resentful of the vast amounts of time that husbands spend away from home. If men feel trapped by marriage, women consider themselves even more so, and wives sometimes transmit their sentiments through means both subtle and overt to their husbands. It is hardly surprising, then, that on occasion men should perceive their wives' frustration and anger and should explain these feelings on the basis of a sexual ideology provided men by their culture.

Horns, Super-Goats, and the Preservation of Masculinity

For men, women are dangerous not only because they try to sap their husbands' strength but also because their intense sexuality creates the constant threat that they will enter into an adulterous

union. Men operate in daily affairs on the assumption that their wives want to deceive them, and in fact will deceive them if given the least opportunity. José Cutileiro's description of male attitudes in southern Portugal holds equally true for Monteros:

A man enters marriage hoping that he will not become a cuckold. The bride's virginity and the wife's fidelity are the basic moral assumptions on which the family is built. The ideal state for a woman is a state of purity, but purity is only part of her nature: her *vicio* (vice), the predisposition responsible for the potential social dangers attached to her active sexual life, is also part of it (Cutileiro 1971, p. 99).

A wife's infidelity threatens the moral reputation of her entire family. But it affects no one so profoundly as her cuckolded husband, who is charged with the responsibility of harnessing her rampant sexuality and confining it within the secret walls of their bedroom.

In Monteros, as throughout Spain, the predominant symbol of the cuckold is the *cabrón*, or super-goat, and its *cuernos*, or horns. The term *cabrón*, in fact, has become so purely synonymous with cuckold that it is no longer usefully applied to the actual male animal, who is referred to instead as a *macho cabrillo* ("little male goat") or simply, where conversational context permits, *macho* ("male"). And the goat's horns have become so representative of the cuckold that the word *cornudo*, "horned one," is employed interchangeably with *cabrón*.

Interestingly, in the technical use of the term, the *cabrón* is not simply a cuckold but rather a cuckold who is aware that his wife is engaged in extramarital affairs and who continues to live with her despite this knowledge. According to the Monteros male view of the world, any woman is capable of sexual deceit; in fact, men commonly state that "All women are whores" (*Todas las mujeres son putas*), and then, if this remark is greeted with surprise, emphatically repeat the word "All" (*Todas*). What is shameful for a man is not so much that his wife should suddenly adopt her natural role. The true humiliation comes first from having been unable to control her, and second from tacitly tolerating her behavior by continuing to reside with her. In fact, this type of conscious cuckoldry, for all I can determine, is extremely rare. Informants of mine could name only two known cases in 1975-76.

Nonetheless, no man in Monteros is anxious for his wife to have an affair even if he never learns of it. The specter of a wife's infidelity

haunts men daily, for they know full well that: *El cabrón es el último que se entera* ("The cuckold is the last one to find out"). For this reason, I believe, men seem completely unashamed to admit that *so far as they know* their wives have been faithful, but that they can never be one hundred percent certain. By stating this repeatedly (in some cases, several times a week) men advertise their total ignorance of their wives' behavior should the latter actually have betrayed them. In this manner they demonstrate at least a technical disqualification from the category *cabrón*, and they announce to their friends that they are ready to hear the worst.

In matters like this, however, technicalities are hardly satisfactory. Men worry that people might be pointing to them behind their backs, pitying them for their wives' infidelity and yet embarrassed to confide the truth to them. For this reason, the people of Monteros are hesitant to state that a child, especially a newborn, looks like the mother, for this is an indirect way of raising the question of paternal identity. In Monteros, no matter what their actual appearance, the vast majority of newborn infants are said to resemble their legal fathers. Such a statement is at the very least a correct and polite opinion to express to an infant's parents and kinsmen, despite what might be said privately.

Throughout the course of a year in the field, I was told countless times that because of my coloring it would not be unusual if my wife gave birth to a blond baby. What most of the dark-haired men of Monteros fear, however, is that this fate should happen to them. Everyone cites the curious case of a married couple from a nearby town who emigrated several years ago to work in northern Europe. The woman became pregnant and returned some time before her husband to give birth among family and friends. Her progeny, however, turned out to be a pair of black (*negro*) twins. It is said that when her husband returned to town, he took one look at them and left that very day. She later was also forced to leave in disgrace. The story, which may or may not be true, clearly projects male anxieties about the actual paternity of their children. (It has nothing whatever to do with race relations.)

But we have yet to ask the critical question of why men should feel so threatened by the prospect of female infidelity, especially considering that such infidelity is actually rare. To answer, we must reconsider the meaning of the metaphors by which the cuckold is described. Julian Pitt-Rivers, who first introduced this matter into the anthropological literature nearly a generation ago, is still the

only Hispanicist to have given it serious thought. One passage from his now-classic *People of the Sierra* is crucial:

The word *cabrón* (a he-goat), the symbol of male sexuality in many contexts, refers not to him whose manifestation of that quality is the cause of the trouble but to him whose implied lack of manliness has allowed the other to replace him. To make a man a cuckold is in the current Spanish idiom, "to put horns on him." I suggest that the horns are figuratively placed upon the head of the wronged husband in signification of his failure to defend a value vital to the social order. He has fallen under the domination of its enemy and must wear his symbol. He is ritually defiled (Pitt-Rivers 1971, p. 116).

Here, as in another passage (*ibid.*, p. 116), Pitt-Rivers implies that the horns themselves symbolize the masculinity and virility of the cuckold—indeed that they are the emblem of the cuckold— which he places symbolically on the head of the cuckold.

Though Pitt-Rivers' interpretation of Andalusian symbolism is appealing and has been uncritically accepted, it needs to be challenged. In Monteros, as in Pitt-Rivers' community, people commonly use the expression "to put horns on him" to mean "to make a man a cuckold." But it is not the male rival who puts on the horns, as Pitt-Rivers implies; it is the wife! Thus, one man will say of another, "*Pobrecillo, que no sabe que su mujer le está metiendo los cuernos*" ("Poor guy, for he doesn't know that his wife is placing the horns on him"). Men also jokingly wonder aloud of their wives, "*No sé si me habría meti'o los cuernos*" ("I don't know if she ever put horns on me"). In these as in countless other expressions it is clear that it is the cuckold's wife, not his rival, who bears primary responsibility for the horns on his head.¹⁴

It is only by clarifying this seemingly minor, yet critical, point that we can explain why men fear being cuckolded: to be cuckolded is to be transformed symbolically into a woman. The horns, originally associated with or belonging to the woman, are placed

¹⁴Occasionally the people of Monteros speak as if it is the illicit couple who together put the horns on the cuckold, but this speech form is not nearly as common as the one in which the wife alone puts horns on the husband. *Never* is the husband's rival spoken of as the sole source of the horns. Very rarely it is also said that a man has put horns on his wife by engaging in an extramarital affair. This usage, I suspect, is a recent introduction into Spanish sexual ideology, but because of its rarity, I have not investigated this notion thoroughly enough to speak of it with authority.

upon the head of a man, thereby feminizing him. The cuckold not only wears horns but also simultaneously becomes symbolically converted into a *cabrón*, or super-goat. And the goat, as we have seen, is closely associated with womankind. Here it is perhaps significant that female goats, unlike female sheep, have horns. It is, in fact, safe to extrapolate and say that goathorns in Monteros, and probably throughout Andalusia, represent the harmful, devilish dimensions of the feminine character. The cuckold, who suffers the consequences of his wife's uncontrolled sexuality, becomes forever branded with this female symbol.¹⁵

But it is necessary to state also that goathorns are sometimes said to grow from within the cuckold as well as being placed upon him from without. The men of Monteros are careful never to rub their foreheads lest people begin to wonder whether horns are beginning to disturb them. "I wouldn't touch myself on the forehead too often," advised one close friend. "I don't even like to *think* of touching myself there," stated another, "much less actually do it." I remember, in particular, one uncle's campaign to try to get his nephew to leave his girlfriend because she was reputed to have slept with a string of other men. After private conversations proved to have no effect, the uncle and some of his friends resorted to public ridicule. In the marketplace, the bars, and wherever else crowds were gathered, they would call out to the young man, "*¡Cabrón! After you marry her, let me have a turn with her, will you? She's a real piece! The horns are already sprouting from you! ¡Ya te están saliendo los cuernos!*")

The thought of goathorns is especially horrible to the men of Monteros when they are said to emerge from within the body, for this indicates that the man not only wears a symbol of femininity but also to some extent actually becomes a woman. No wonder, then, that men are so fearful of their wives: by an act of infidelity, an act toward which women are in any case said to be naturally inclined, a wife can deprive her husband of his precious masculinity and even go so far as to convert him symbolically into a member of her own sex. This potentiality, of course, invests her with an awesome power.

¹⁵Of course in this analysis I refer specifically to goathorns. As anthropologist Honorio Velasco pointed out to me while discussing the matter with him in Madrid, the symbolism of horns in general is much more complex than I have indicated here. Hence, the horns of the bull connote male aggressivity, and horn-bearers across the board seem to represent a challenge to stability and the approved social order.

Male Genitalia and Masculine Behavior

In order best to understand the third threat to masculine identity—the enforced adoption of a symbolically feminine, passive role in the sexual act—we need to examine further some masculine notions of how the male body relates to the male being. We will begin with an incident that occurred while I was collecting a genealogy from a young, highly educated member of the landowning elite, a native of Monteros and currently town judge. During the course of the interview, I found out to my surprise that one of my informant's brothers was married to an Englishwoman. "To a Spaniard it's not important who he marries," said the judge jokingly, "not even if she's from England!" With that, a Monteros bureaucrat who was listening in quickly interjected, "Didn't you know? Spain conquered America not by the sword, but by the prick (*polla*)." Eager to better the bureaucrat, the judge then recalled that one of his professors at the University of Madrid used to say, "America was conquered by Spaniards who were carrying the cross in one hand and the prick in the other."

These ideas, to be sure, were stated in typical Monteros jest. Nonetheless, they reveal an important component of the masculine self-image throughout Andalusia: the locus of power and will, of emotions and strength, lies within the male genitals. Men speak as if they are impelled to act according to opinions and desires that originate in their testicles or penis. In this particular speech pattern, the most common colloquial expressions for penis—*chorra*, *polla*, *pijo*—and those for testicles—*cojones*, *huevos* (literally, "eggs")—are employed interchangeably. Thus, if a man impulsively decides to miss a day's work and is asked to justify himself, he may likely say, "*Porque me sale de los cojones*" (literally, "Because it comes to me from the balls"). Similarly, if a man's wife should ask why he did not come home earlier the previous evening, he will answer, "*Porque no me salió de la chorra*" ("Because it didn't come out of my prick"). In all such cases, the speaker proclaims total freedom from obligations and responsibility on the grounds that conformity to the rules is contrary to his will, which emanates in some fashion from his genitalia. To rationalize one's action by reference to the penis or testicles is, above all, to assert one's complete individuality. It is an extreme, yet very common, expression of the obstinate refusal to comply with ordinary behavioral expectations. And just as this particular manifestation of the human will is somehow related to the male genitalia, so too is it perceived as being especially characteristic of men. For nonconformity of any kind re-

quires the fearlessness and sense of abandon that only men are thought to possess and that, with the single exception cited below, they alone are permitted to express.

This is why a man who is considered especially assertive, aggressive, and fearless in Monteros is called a *cojonudo*, a "big-balled man." His extreme masculine behavior is projected linguistically onto his genitals, as if normal-sized testicles were not large enough to accommodate the full force of his personal strength and will. There is also the rare woman who is called a *cojonuda*, a "big-balled woman," because she is courageous and determined, especially in business affairs, and shows herself willing to work alongside her spouse for the greater financial benefit of the household. Of such female entrepreneurs it is said that "they have balls inside," and that "God made a mistake, for they should have been born as men." A *cojonuda* is equipped with a highly desirable personality trait ordinarily reserved to men, and therefore she is similarly associated metaphorically with masculine physical attributes.

Sometimes, however, even the strongest of human beings is overwhelmed by life circumstances beyond his control. To act *por huevos* or *por cojones* ("by the balls") is to do something out of force or necessity. Thus, if one has to pay an outstanding bill lest his property be attached, the payment is made *por cojones*. Similarly, to flatter a potential employer, a detested member of the elite, is to act *por huevos*, for if one were wealthy and independent one would certainly not stoop to such demeaning behavior. A woman may also speak of being forced into an action by circumstances beyond her control, but she will employ the euphemism *por papas* ("by potatoes") or *por pantalones* ("by the trousers") instead of openly saying "by the balls."

Let us now turn to the question of the degree to which the people of Monteros actually believe that the penis and testicles are repositories of masculine personality traits—of force and will and determination—in the manner, say, that we in the United States locate these characteristics in the brain. For the people of Monteros, does masculinity actually reside within the male genitalia, or is it only spoken of *as if* it resided there?

On the one hand, men justify some of their speech patterns by making an explicit analogy between their emotions and bodily processes. When a man becomes angry and is at the height of fury, just before lashing out with a punch, he shouts at his opponent, "*¡Me sudan los huevos de tí!*" ("My balls sweat from you!") By way of explanation, men claim that this is said only when a person is so furious that his emotions rather than physical labor or the heat of

the day are enough to make his testicles sweat. Similarly, when a man is fearful with what seems to be good reason (in one such case, a man was trapped inside a truck that was perched over a cliff), he can say that he has *cojones en la garganta*—"balls in the throat," the equivalent of our "heart in the mouth."¹⁶ Men claim that even though this is the standard way of expressing legitimate fear, a man might just as well say that his testicles are anywhere in his body other than the place they belong. The critical metaphoric message is that the testicles are displaced from ordinary position, as is said actually to happen through the shriveling of penis and testicles when a man is afraid.

Of course, the above examples demonstrate a conceptual link between emotions and their effect on the male genitalia, not that the genitalia are themselves repositories for the emotions. Regarding the latter issue, a fortuitous circumstance allows us to assert that the people of Monteros almost certainly speak *as if* masculine attributes reside in the genitalia, rather than believing that they actually do. It is well known that the former mayor of Monteros, a man who held that post for nearly thirty years, lost one of his testicles in combat and for this reason was believed unable to have children. The man ruled with the tight political control required of mayors by the Franco regime in the years immediately following the Civil War (1936–39), and was decorated by that regime for his valiant service in the Blue Division, the volunteer unit that Franco deployed to Germany during the Second World War to assist Hitler. This man is detested by some, revered by others. But all say that "even though he is missing a testicle, he has acted in this town as if he had seven or eight of them." Reference to the genitals in matters of masculinity is clearly metaphoric.

So is the following popular joke, by the way, which arose in Monteros in the early 1970s when the town acquired (through appointment by the provincial governor) its first *alcaldesa* or woman mayor. "In Monteros, we're going ass backwards. First we had a mayor with two balls, next we had a mayor with one ball, and now we have a mayor with *no* balls!" It is difficult, given the overweening importance of the personality attributes associated with the male genitals, for men to understand how a town can hope to function and survive under such circumstances.

¹⁶In Monteros, as throughout the Western world (Firth 1973, p. 231), the heart is also considered an important repository of emotions, though this organ has not found its way into popular speech nearly to the degree that the genitalia have.

The Threat of Anal Penetration

We can now return to the main discussion of how women threaten men. If masculine behavior, for the people of Monteros, has its conceptual locus in the male genital region, then feminine behavior is concentrated linguistically on the anus. Men show themselves to be constantly aware that the anus can be used in homosexual encounters, in which cases the passive partner is perceived as playing the feminine role and indeed of being converted symbolically into a woman. It is this sexual transformation that men fear. As a defense, male speech forms reveal a constant attempt to force masculine rivals into the feminine role, in a quest to avoid adopting this role themselves.

Perhaps the most common expression along these lines is *tomarlo por culo* (literally, "to take it by the ass"), which has more or less the same meaning as the colloquial "shove it up your ass" in American English. The important difference, however, comes with usage rather than meaning. In Monteros I have never actually heard one man insult another by telling him to "take it by the ass." This would be an uncommonly grave attack in which the rival would in effect be transformed symbolically into a woman. Instead, men who are angry at one another commonly state behind each other's back that they are going to *mandarlo tomar por culo*—"order him [the rival] to take it by the ass." When women are present, the euphemism *saco* ("sack" or "bag") is substituted for the word *culo* ("ass"), a clear example of symbolism by analogy to biological function.

Men generally think of strategic weakness in daily affairs, be they economic or political, in terms of potential anal penetration. To *bajar los pantalones* ("lower your trousers"), for example, implies being forced into readiness for phallic attack by a male rival. On one occasion, two wealthy landowners were discussing the recent labor shortage in the olive harvest, made all the more serious by their inability to mechanize the collection (see chapter 8). In disgust, one of them blurted out, "We're fed up with having to *bajar los pantalones a los obreros*" ("lower our trousers for the workers").

But again, as with the male attitude toward horns, we have to ask whether speech patterns regarding the anus are merely metaphoric or whether they reflect an actual fear of playing the passive role in a homosexual encounter. Here, medical beliefs and practices can lead us to the answer. Throughout Spain, suppositories are one of the most widespread forms in which drugs are administered, and they are regularly prescribed for both children and

adults. In Monteros, men and women differ radically in their views of suppositories: women accept this form of treatment readily and without complaint, while most men categorically refuse ever to permit a suppository to be inserted into their anus. The male fear—sometimes expressed jokingly, sometimes seriously—is that through consistent use of suppositories, a man can become accustomed to having objects placed there; he may then begin to derive pleasure from it and will become transformed into a homosexual and, worse, one who is relegated to the female, passive role. “There’s a plague of suppository prescriptions here in Spain,” complained one bank employee. “Can’t they find some other way of curing disease?” I know of several cases in which men suffered fever and sore throat for weeks before their wives could persuade them to follow the doctor’s advice and use suppositories. “They think it’s only for homosexuals,” explained one woman, whose husband stubbornly refuses this form of medication, and whose seventy-year-old father has done likewise throughout his entire life.

Interestingly, men in Monteros, as throughout the Mediterranean (Dundes and Falassi 1975, p. 189; Dundes, Leach, and Ozkok 1970), are unafraid to joke about playing the phallic, “male” part in homosexual intercourse. This role, at least, is consistent with masculine notions of genital assertion and aggression. It is, rather, the dread of assuming a feminine posture—of being the victim of sexual attack, instead of the perpetrator—that preoccupies the men of our town. This theme, as well as the others we have examined, emerges clearly in male jokes and joking, through which men can dispel, however momentarily, the anxieties these feelings arouse.