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ABSTRACT

An American family lived for 12 months in the Spanish province of Galicia as participant observers in the daily performance of the cultural roles and rituals of people living in the city of Santiago de Compostela. Since focus was on the performative dimensions of the culture, 38 people were formally interviewed, along with more than 100 on an informal basis, in an effort to discern the meaning that particular social actions have for the participants. The hypothesis was that by tracing the oral performances of a middle-aged Gallegan woman, using a year-long participant-observation methodology, her cultural world would be revealed. Culture, for this study, was defined as a group of people possessing a distinctive way of thinking that is in turn transmitted to the young. Analyses of the data collected show that a stranger can correctly anticipate scenes in which the leading characters place high value on behaving with a deep sense of responsibility to their families; on obeying the moral structures of the community; on being thrifty, hardworking, and practical in order to achieve self-sufficiency; on having some skepticism of authority and things not directly experienced, yet assuming no conflict with the teaching of the Catholic Church; and on exhibiting in public a wide range of emotions from anger to laughter. (The paper contains transcriptions of conversations between the Gallegan woman and the researchers.) (DF)

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HOW CULTURE IS PERFORMED: A GALLEGAN PARADIGM

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How Culture is Performed:
A Gallegan Paradigm

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Abstract

Tracing the oral performance of a middle-aged Spanish/Galician woman reveals portions of her cultural world view. The personal approach discussed here evolved from a year-long participant-observation methodology. The focus was on the enactment of culture that leads to a more than superficial glimpse of the cultural world view of middle-class women in Galicia.

How Culture is Performed:

A Gallegan Paradigm

I. Introduction

For twelve months, from June 1982 through June 1983, we were participant-observers in the daily performance of the cultural roles and rituals of those people who live in the Spanish province of Galicia. Throughout that period we lived in the city of Santiago de Compostela in the home of a Gallegan woman, where we spoke only Castilian Spanish; and we cooked, ate, worked, parented, and participated in the life of our adopted city. We joined in the yearly cycle of rituals that run from the month-long celebration in July to honor St. James (the Patron of Spain), through All Souls' Day, Christmas, Epiphany, Carnival, Holy Week, and Ascension Day, to the feast of St. John at midsummer in June.

Our focus was on the performative dimensions of the culture; and to that end we formally interviewed 38 people (all but six of whom were women), along with more than a hundred on an informal basis, in an effort to discern the meaning that particular social actions have for the participants in those actions (see Geertz, 1973). We are currently in the process of analyzing the data we obtained in order to state as explicitly as possible what this knowledge demonstrates about the Gallegan

society, ultimately leading, we hope, to a better understanding of ourselves.

Whereas a person may learn the general from studying the specific, it is impossible to know the specific from studying the general. Our approach, therefore, will be to look at the words and actions of a specific woman, whom we will call Teresa "Maite" Gonzales Martinez, a specific performer of the Gallegan culture. As both Brown (1982) and Ardener (1972) have noted, women form a group that accounts for about half of any population, and actually become the majority after the age of forty. They have, however, been grossly under-represented in ethnographic research (Chiñas, 1975); in fact, studies that focus on middle-aged women are almost nonexistent. Ardener further suggests that perhaps the reason for this situation may be that men are more experienced at bridging the linguistic gap between interviewer and informant, when and if it exists (p. 132). If this is true, we were indeed lucky to find Maite, who knew the difficulties of having to learn a new language as an adult and then being forced by circumstances to use that new code to communicate. As a guest-worker in France, and later as the owner-manager of a tourist-student rooming house whose clientele often include people with little or no Spanish-language facility, she has developed an ability to use gestures and cognates to communicate with strangers, which she does with great ease.

This personal approach is that advocated by Honigman (1976):

The personal approach in cultural anthropology, self-consciously and deliberately undertaken, perceives value

in the unique combination of interests, personal values, theoretical orientation, imagination, sensitivity, and other idiosyncratic qualities embodied in a particular competent investigator or team of investigators. . . . [This approach] is most appropriate for research whose goal is historical narration, depicting a way of life, the interpretation of meaning, or tracing relationships between cultural patterns. (p. 250)

We are aware, however, of the limitations imposed by this type of approach (Honigman, 1976): ". . . The conclusions it reaches are incapable of being fully tested for their reliability. The credibility of the conclusions reached by that approach depends heavily on the cogency, consistency, logic, and persuasiveness with which they are argued and presented" (p. 250).

Interest in the personal narrative as an oral tradition genre has been developing over the past fifteen years (Buechler & Buechler, 1981; Clements, 1980; Honigman, 1975; Georges, 1969) and in many ways is as dramatic a development as the acceptance of the "performance" model developed by Hymes in the 1960s (Hymes, 1975). Interest in personal narrative reinforces the truism that everyone performs folklore.

The hypothesis we hope to prove, then, is that by tracing the oral performances of a middle-aged Gallegan woman, using a year-long participant-observation methodology, her cultural world view will be revealed. This should lead us, by extension, to

more than a superficial glimpse of the cultural world view of middle-class women in Galicia.

Definition of Terms

Our title, "How Culture is Performed: A Gallegan Paradigm," has terms that need clarification at this point.

"By "culture" we mean a group of people possessing a distinctive way of thinking that is in turn transmitted to the young. Culture is what has to be known to operate successfully within this group of people, and this knowledge is so deeply represented in language that it is the only way in which people of that culture can understand anything. Not only are all the incoming data interpreted according to the pattern of a particular culture, but expressions and communications with others are based on those same patterns (Toelken, 1979, p. 226).

We also concur with Conquergood's (1983) use of the term "performance" to mean, in part, the process of enacting a culture's stories, legends, histories, gossip, ceremonies, and rituals using culturally bound scripts that are reconstituted creatively each time they are enacted. Further, these performances are reflective in the sense of showing ourselves to ourselves. Meyerhof's (1982) comments are instructive in this regard: "As heroes in our own dramas, we are made self-aware, conscious of our consciousness. At once actor and audience, we may then come into the fullness of our human capability . . ." (p. 105).

Galicia is that formally designated, somewhat isolated

province of Spain located in the northwest corner of the country, bordered by the region of León on the east, the Bay of Biscay on the north, the Atlantic Ocean on the west, and Portugal on the south. The provincial capital of Galicia is the city of Santiago de Compostela.

Finally, the word "paradigm" in our title is meant to signify an example, a pattern that is designed to "formalize the structure of a component of experience and to direct understanding and inquiry into the nature and functions of that experience. . . ." (Fisher, 1984, p. 2).

Limitations

We recognize that the believability of our particular insights is dependant on our skill and luck in uncovering the various levels of data, on our standards of relevance, on the questions we chose to put to the tradition-bearers, and on our capacity for empathy. With these problems in mind, we followed the traditional ethnographic method outlined by Conklin (1968, p. 172):

[The observer must be involved in] a long period of intimate study and residence in a well-defined community employing a wide range of observational techniques including prolonged face-to-face contact with members of local groups, direct participation in some of the group's activities, and a greater emphasis on intensive work with informants than on the use of documentary or survey data.

We recognize, however, that we can never fully apprehend what it is to be rather than to observe a member of the Gallegan culture. We are also aware of the problems of translation from the Galego-Castilian of our informants into the academic English of our reports (Kouenhoven, 1982; Tedlock, 1976). Most of the paralinguistic cues simply cannot be included in a typed transcription, the subtleties of the language radically alter the surface meanings, and the overtones that frequently appear reflect the translator's personality rather than the informant's.

II. Methodology

The basic fieldwork methodology that most ethnographers observe today begins when the researcher gets off the plane or train prepared for a lengthy stay. He or she is loaded down with a camera, a good quality tape recorder, and a supply of blank notebooks. The stay ends when the data are collected on film, tape, and page and there is reasonable hope that they can be organized into some presentable, meaningful form. Of the various methodologies available, the semiotic interpretive style--as it has been termed (Sanday, 1983; Geertz, 1973; Goodenough, 1970)--seems the most appropriate here because it is based on using specific information in order to understand the general.

This semiotic method involves describing the actors and their symbolic acts, and then trying to gauge the underlying rules for behavior, building the whole, as it were, from a careful study of the parts. Thus the researcher uses the

informants' points of view--the "emic" in Turner's nomenclature (Turner & Turner, 1982; Turner, 1979)--in order to inform and polish the researcher's point of view--the "etic."

We met the informants by living and working in the city of Santiago de Compostela for twelve months. Our questions were in three categories:

- (1) Tell us about yourself and your life;
- (2) Tell us about the cycle of festivals that mark the calendar of life here;
- (3) Tell us what these things mean to you (their significance).

We taped Teresa "Maite" Gonzales Martinez on five separate occasions, each session lasting from 1½-2 hours, between November and March. In addition, we took fieldnotes on stories she told on hundreds of occasions between the taped sessions, occasioned by our daily, almost hourly interaction with her in the house where we lived.

Based on the information we gathered, we looked for the recurrence of prominent themes, placing Maite's values in a hierarchial arrangement according to her assessment of their value or moral weight. We were thus able to begin to develop the structure that would reveal her values. Oral performance (Carbaugh, 1983) thus created a pattern through which we were able to trace a tradition of meaning.

III. Data

Setting

The earth in Galicia is greener and more fertile than the sun-parched lands of Andalucia or the wind-swept plains of Castile. There are corn fields, potato fields, and grain fields. Stands of pine and eucalyptus on the untillable slopes alternate with grape arbors. The buildings of farm and town are constructed from the ubiquitous dark gray granite of Galicia, a stone that glistens like dark diamonds in the almost perpetual rain. The air is cool and mists hang over the valleys. Small hamlets, called aldeas, are tucked into these valleys; each has its own church, built from the same gray granite. Each house has at least one cross-topped, rectangular corncrib set up off the ground on stone or brick legs to keep the rats and damp at bay; laundry frequently hangs under the corncribs.

The spiritual center of Galicia is Santiago de Compostela, the ancient pilgrimage center that the English call "the Edinburgh of Spain" because of its medieval stone architecture, its green environs, its gorse bushes and purple heather, and above all, its constant rain. The entire city has been declared a national monument.

In a slice of a street named Huerfanas--Orphans Street--there is a slice of a building one room wide and four stories high. In this building is a small hostel where visitors and students at the University of Santiago can rent rooms by day, week, or month. The ground floor is occupied by a café-bar run

by a lively couple named Carmen and Joaquin; on the next floor up live the manager of the Hostal Gloria, Teresa "Maite" Gonzales Martinez and her two teenage children, Gloria Elena and Francisco. On this floor, the room facing the street is divided into two tiny rental rooms. The family dining and TV room is next in line, followed, in progression toward the rear of the house, by the stair-case landing, a miniscule kitchen, and a three-story lightwell. At the back of the building is Maite's bed-sit, behind which are the two cubicles for Gloria Elena and Francisco. Most of our taped interviews occurred in Maite's room; the spontaneous interviews usually took place either in the kitchen while we prepared meals or in the dining room where they ate.

Main Characters

For twelve months we and our teenage daughter lived in three small rooms in the Hostal Gloria, sharing the kitchen and wood-burning cookstove with Maite and her family. She was just fifty at the time and had been recently widowed, so she and her children supported themselves by running the fifteen-room Hostal Gloria, renting rooms and keeping them clean (but cooking only for themselves). We were the first of Maite's clientele ever to have kitchen privileges in the six years she had run the hostel.

On her solidly built body she always wore black or gray, in mourning for her French-Algerian husband, whom she had married while they were guest-workers in France. Her children were born during their ten-year stay as domestics with a wealthy family

that moved back and forth between Paris and Monte Carlo. Maite, however, had been born in an aldea fourteen kilometers from Santiago, and when her husband developed a heart condition while living in France, the family came back to Santiago and put their savings into buying the hostel. Shortly after they were settled in Orphans Street, Maite's husband died.

To us, Maite grew to epitomize the middle-class Gallegan woman as we got to know her day by day. She would always wear street clothes when she went out to shop at the open-air market a couple of blocks from the hostel, but aside from that daily excursion she rarely left the three floors of the hostel. Once a month she would cook all day, order a chauffeured car for the following day, and then pile clothes and food into it for a trip to visit her mother in the aldea where she was born. There they would clean and plant and visit with the neighbors and then return to the city, glad to be en casa once again. She had enjoyed living in France but was now content to stay in Santiago. Many other villagers from her aldea had come to Santiago to live and work, so she had lifelong friends in the city. Besides, as she frequently said, "It's a good place for Glori Elena and Fran."

Our materials relating to Maite are extensive: we have 136 pages of transcripts from our taped interviews with her, sixty pages of a daily diary where she appears on all but four of those days, and 46 pages of fieldnotes devoted exclusively to her. Out of this vast amount of material, we have selected nine episodes that illustrate Maite's cultural world view and, by extension,

the cultural world view of most middle-class women in Galicia. We will present the data below and then offer an analysis of the values they seem to exhibit to us.

Like Maite, and most people, these episodes do not fit into mutually exclusive categories. Pull one panel of material --say, for example, her attitude toward her mother--and the whole costume comes with it. It all goes to show how studying the dynamic performance of culture leads to the discernment of a pattern that by and large cannot be extracted from the fabric itself.

Illustration No. 1 (3 Nov. 1982; 3 p.m.)

[Scene: Hostal Gloria; doing dishes, cleaning up kitchen, sweeping the floor after midday meal.]

Maite: Do you like your life in Galicia?

Kristin: Yes, very much. The time to read and think and study is very pleasing to me--but unusual because I don't have to go to the office every day-- I can plan my own day.

Maite: I like to be my own boss, too, and decide myself what needs to be done. I like my house. I'd rather be in here fixing it up than out in the streets talking. I like the routine of the house, and don't like it when I have to go to the aldea. When I was in Monte Carlo the boss would say,

"Do this," "Do that," or "You didn't do this right, do it again," and I had to do what he said. I like it better being in my own business.

Illustration No. 2 (14 Jan, 1983)

[Scene: Hostal Gloria; our daughter, Karin, and Kristin were cooking the noon meal of chili con carne; it was simmering slowly on the stove. The dining room table was set and the salad was made. We cook before Maite, and then get out of the kitchen before Francisco gets home from school for lunch. It was warm near the stove, burning hot with charcoal because wood is not available during the wet winter. Maite came in.]

Maite: Oh, Kristina, I have a story for you.

Kristin: Tell me, tell me.

Maite: Do you remember that I went out to the aldea on Wednesday to see my mother?

Kristin: Yes, to see Marfa-Lourdes; what happened?

Maite: When I got there she was sighing and saying, "Dios mfo," and "O terrible," and "oh" and "ah"; and I asked her, "What's wrong; what's the matter?" And she said, "Dios mfo, it's the world war and all the fighting and dying; it's terrible." You know. Kristina, my mother reads the newspaper page by page, every word. She reads every word

on every page. I had brought out an old stack of newspapers for her to use for starting her wood fire and she had picked up an old newspaper and was reading about all the fighting that was going on, and then she thought we had a world war right now.

[Then Maite told me the same story in different words, laughing all the time. She seemed to think her mother strange, but as she said earlier this week: "You take care of your children now and they will take care of you later. That's what I do with Glori Elena and Fran."]

Illustration No. 3 (24 Mar. 1983)

[Scene: Kristin is showing Maite the University Library located in the History and Geography Building (only a few feet from the front door of the hostel--but she had never been inside). Maite starts up a conversation with one of the cleaning women, then with a young man who was once one of her roomers, and finally with one of the workers at the checkout desk.]

Deskworker: The professors' bathrooms here always have toilet paper.

Maite: I run a hostel and [turning to Kristin for confirmation] we never run out of paper, do we?

Kristin: [Dutifully] Never.

Maite: There, you see!

[Later I bought her a glass of tonic water at a small café-bar attached to the library. She had never been there before either.]

Maite: [To the waiter] How much is that cup of coffee?
[She was pointing to my cup.]

Waiter: Twenty five pesetas.

Maite: Tsk, tsk; that's too much!

[Suddenly she noticed that it was 6:00.]

Maite: Glori Elena has to go to night school. I've got to get back.

[We breezed past the students waiting in the cloister, waiting for classes to begin, and down the front steps, she saying hello to one of her neighbors from the aldea who now owns a bar in the University Plaza.]

Illustration No. 4 (14 Dec. 1982)

[Scene: Kristin was getting ready to talk with another informant when Maite stopped to ask her about her encounter with Mari-Carmen, the old seamstress across the street who had recently pegged our daughter's trousers. Kristin mentioned the pile of clothes the woman had stacked up in the back of her shop.]

Maite: Oh, Kristina, she keeps such a dirty shop. She has to do trousers all day, and here [she points to the crotch area of her skirt and on Francisco's pants that she is ironing]--here is pee and who knows what else that makes them dirty. When she talks to me even I can't understand her, and I speak her language. Now, you mustn't say anything to her about this [she crosses her lips with her thumb]. And her brother-- he just stands around all day. When he gets a hundred pesetas, he goes right out and spends it on a drink. Last Holy Thursday, he peed in the street. Shame on him.

Illustration No. 5 (2 Mar. 1983, 5:00 p.m.)

[Scene: Kristin comes into the hallway of the hostel.]

Kristin: What a beautiful day. Wonderful--sunshine and people outside everywhere.

Maite: Yes, but take care, eh? The March sun is dangerous.

Kristin: Why?

Maite: It's dangerous. The March sun is bad for you. Cover your head and don't turn your face to the sun.

Kristin: But why is the sun more dangerous in March than in other months?

Maite: Mark my words--it brings cold and coughs and isn't good for you.

Kristin: [Looking dubious] Maite, is this "historia" or "leyenda"?

Maite: [Laughing at our mutual joke about the differences between the two when applied to a story I was researching] No, it's true--take care.

[Just then another roomer came in. She turned to him.]

Maite: Isn't it true, José--isn't the sun in March dangerous?

José: Yes, of course.

Maite: You see--it's not a legend or historia; it's a fact.

[In part this all goes to explain why, while walking through the city during the day, we saw:

(a) two young girls, reading books outside in the sun, one with a sweater over her head and the other with an apron over hers;

(b) three middle-aged women, one with a newspaper, one with a sweater, and one with a dishcloth over their heads;

(c) two young men at a sidewalk café with sweaters draped over their heads;

(d) many women merchants in the marketplace with sweaters, plastic bags, newspapers, aprons, and folded scarves on top of their heads.]

Illustration No. 6 (16 Mar. 1983)

[Scene: In her quarters at the rear of the floor above the café-bar, Maite sat at the ironing-eating-reading table. She had been in a good mood all week, so this seemed a good time to ask her for a recording session. Gloria Elena was present most of the time. Mari Carmen, Gloria's friend, came in near the end and sat with us.]

Kristin: What difficulties did you meet when you lived in France?

Maite: The difficulties were: not enough money to do anything or go anywhere; not being able to speak the language; the hypocrisy of the French.

Kristin: Explain what you mean about the hypocrisy.

Maite: Well, they were polite on the surface, but not as honest with a person as the Gallegans are.

Kristin: Help me to understand the Gallegans. What is most important to the Gallegan woman or man?

Maite: The children, the house, and, if you have it, the land. Instead of going to a fiesta, I like to go out to the aldea and have a picnic by the river on my own land. Once my grandmother said, that they thought they heard a compaña [a ghost] out there, but it was only the bells of an animal.

Kristin: What about the evil eye?

Maite: I don't believe in that. You look at me; whoever

looks at me, it is the same. It isn't bad. I'm Catholic, of course, but I don't believe in souls having to visit St. Andrew's shrine in Teixido after they die, or the evil eye or witches. Kristina, do you believe these stories they tell you? Well, I don't. I believe in this table right here, but I don't believe in all those stories.

Illustration No. 7 (19 May 1983)

[Scene: Before leaving for a visit to the shrine of St. Andrew at Teixido, we are asked by Maite to bring home three branches from one of the sacred trees at the shrine for Gloria Elena, Francisco, and one of Gloria Elena's friends. When we return to Santiago after the trip, Maite tells of her trip to Teixido.]

Maite: When my husband and I went to Teixido, the small roadway leading from the car park down to the plaza was covered with alfalfa and cow shit. I said to the people, "Aren't you ashamed?" They looked at me, not comprehending why it should bother me.

[Then she told me two sayings about Teixido.]

Maite: One saying is that if you don't go to St. Andrew's when you're alive, you have to go after you're dead.

The other is: Dijo Santo Tomás
 una vez y nada más.
 [Go one time and
 never again.]

We always say this when we go to a place like a romería [a type of pilgrimage] or a restaurant and we don't want to have to go back.

Illustration No. 8 (4 May 1983)

[Scene: the hostel; Kristin comes into the kitchen to fix a meal and tells Maite that an informant has told her to wait for the new moon in eight days' time and the weather will change.]

Maite: A witch, huh? I don't believe in anything I can't see or know. There may be a heaven [she looks up], but I've never seen it.

[Just then a roomer named José comes in.]

Maite: Do you believe in witches, José?

José: Yes, they exist; yes, I've known some.

Maite: [After he left, Maite scoffed.] He's a village boy. They believe in those things like the evil eye. As if a person who admires your child is a witch! When I was very small, strangers, beggars, would come to our gate and my mother, María Lourdes, would let them hug and kiss me.

I was told I was very pretty when I was young. Anyway, the only thing that bothered my mother was that I might be messy or dirty. Otherwise, she didn't care. She didn't believe in witches. If you meet one, ask her how my potatoes are supposed to grow in all this rain!

Illustration No. 9 (30 May 1983; 2:00 p.m., after lunch)

[Scene: the hostel; Maite, Francisco, and Gloria Elena are just finishing their fruit dessert when Kristin comes into the kitchen to get coffee and to show them some postcards we had brought from the shrine at Cebreiro. Halfway through Kristin's recounting the story of the miracle that occurred there, Maite stopped her; there was a tone of anger in her voice as she spoke.]

Maite: Tell me, Kristina, why aren't there any miracles now? I'll believe these miracles and appearances of the Virgin when I see one in Orphans Street [she clutches the side of the table]. I believe in this table because I can see it and touch it. It's your field of study so you have to listen to the stories, but I don't want to hear about any miracles. [Her voice became loud, insistent, and she seemed almost in tears. Clearly something else must have been going on because her children were very quiet during the rest of the meal.]

IV. Analysis and Conclusion

Analysis

We would like to begin this final section by noting as Fine and Spear (1977, p. 378) point out, that the ground rules for oral tradition performances must necessarily shift as they are negotiated by performer and audience in the dynamic relationship. Maite always became more animated as her audience enlarged. For example, we might begin a taping session with her alone at 5:00 p.m. (tea time), but her children and their friends, a neighbor from the aldea, or another hostel resident would frequently augment the size of her audience. As more people came into the circle, Maite's voice would grow louder, her pitch range widen and her rate speed up, the characters she was speaking about would assume greater differentiation in quality, and her gestures would expand. As with the Celts, from whom the Galicians claim descent, verbal skill is highly esteemed; and Maite rated high on this score. This all led to our great enjoyment in being a part of Maite's household for our year in Galicia.

The thousands of hours we spent around and in conversation with Maite, our study of the 136 pages of her transcribed interviews, our fieldnotes and daily diary--all have led us to form the following hierarchical arrangement of values that were communicated to us through her performances. The episodes presented in the preceding data section were chosen as representative

and will be referenced below. Dozens more could be presented to corroborate these values. To Maite, then, it was important to:

1. Fulfill family responsibilities [Illus. No. 2]
 - a. as a widow to her husband whom she regarded as friend and lover through their thirteen years of marriage;
 - b. as a parent to nineteen-year-old Francisco and twenty-year-old Gloria Elena;
 - c. as an only child of her mother, whose husband (and the father of Maite) had left when Maite was two.
2. Make moral and ethical judgments of others based on the Mediterranean concept of pride and shame . [Illus. No. 1, 4, & 7]
3. Be self-sufficient, which includes being thrifty, a hard bargainer for goods and services, hardworking, practical, clean, and possessive. [Illus. No. 3 & 6]
4. View skeptically anything she could not corroborate with her own experience. [Illus. No. 5, 6, 8, & 9]
5. Count herself as "Catholic, of course." [Illus. No. 6 & 8]
6. Allow herself cathartic outbursts of frustration, anger, and depression, as well as a free display of humor and fun. [Illus. No. 2, 4, & 9]

These values, abstracted from her performances, are consistent with those found by other researchers into Spanish culture (H. Buechler, 1983; Buechler & Buechler, 1981, 1975; Lisón Tolesana, 1983; Liste, 1981; J. M. Buechler, 1975; Brandes, 1975; Durán, 1972; Freeman, 1968; Pitt-Rivers, 1971; Schneider & Schneider, 1971).

Brown (1982), studying middle-aged women in a number of cultures, writes that their lives appear to improve with the onset of middle age (defined as women who are not yet aged but who have adult offspring), bringing positive changes. "Middle age brings fewer restrictions, the right to exert authority over certain kinsmen, and the opportunity for achievement and recognition beyond the household" (p. 143). In her behavior, Maite clearly exhibited this extension of influence.

Further clarification is provided by Buechler and Buechler (1975), who have conducted extensive studies of the Gallegans, especially those who, like Maite, migrated to other countries for work and then returned to the homeland. They corroborate much that we discovered. Maite, for example, spent her girlhood working long hours in the field and then, as she told us, "walked the sixteen kilometers twice a week to the market in Santiago carrying thirty kilos of potatoes on [her] head." For her-- and other poor, rural, single Gallegan women--employment in a city was the only escape. She got on a bus to join a friend who was working in Paris and eventually married a chauffeur working for a wealthy family with homes in Paris and Monte Carlo. "These migrant women are highly valued for their domestic services, earning capacity and thrift," writes J. M. Buechler (1975, p. 210). H. Buechler (1975, p. 18) adds that "love for the homeland, the avoidance of generalization, a slipperiness in dealing with the civil authorities, and an astuteness in getting ahead

in the world," head the list of typical Galician traits. And in their account of a Galician woman from La Coruña (sixty kilometers from Santiago), Buechler and Buechler (1981) write that "the Galician capacity for hard work is matched only by their ability to save. . . . The Galician strategy is to save as quickly as possible for a rapid return to Spain" (p. 198). Maite and her husband invested in the business of running a hostel. That way, they reasoned, they would have a place to live and a business to run under the same thrifty roof.

Again, like other Galicians, Maite kept her ties to the aldea (sixteen kilometers away). She and her mother own a two-story house and three acres of farmland bordering the Sar River. The Spanish anthropologist Lisón Tolesana (1983) has studied the Galician hamlets over a period of twenty years. "The aldeas," he writes, "have their own, but unofficial, boundaries that enclose the ordinary and monotonous world of the small human groups that form them. Each small village is like a stage where existence is acted out and where all the inhabitants play the various roles throughout the year--roles that living close together demands" (p. 113). Maite's sense of responsibility to her mother and her desire to keep the land for her children take her out to the aldea at least once each month. It is the only extended time she ever spent away from the hostel in the twelve months we lived with her.

Maite prides herself on her ability to size up a person in a few minutes, if not seconds, and make a judgment about whether

or not she has a room to rent. Frequently, if she did not like the tone of voice or the looks of a potential guest, she would send him or her down the stairs to the neighboring hostel, where, she said, "the manager is a pig and will take anybody." She made strong statements on everybody she knew or that we, as foreigners, knew. She would caricature our friends and by her imitation, if nothing else, we could tell whether or not she approved.

It is also worth noting that we were counted in her "possessions" as much as were her children, and she wanted to be sure our relationships brought us, or her, no shame. The codes of honor and shame (see Schneider & Schneider, 1971) are common to the Mediterranean cultures and form the basis for the social order. In fact, vergüenza, the Spanish word for shame denotes a moral quality that is persistent and may not be displaced. Once lost, furthermore, honor is, generally speaking, not recoverable. It is the essence of the personality and for this reason is regarded as something permanent. "True vergüenza is a mode of feeling which makes one sensitive to one's reputation and thereby causes one to accept the sanctions of public opinion" (Pitt-Rivers, 1971, p. 113). It was a matter of deep concern to Maite, for example, that our teenage daughter was dating a boy whose family had been the subject of much negative discussion in the market. Maite told all three of us, and had her friends in the market tell us, of the bad reputation of this family and the fact that we, albeit with some reluctance, allowed the relationship

to continue caused her constant concern.

Her self-sufficiency manifested itself everywhere in her daily life. For example, she drove a hard bargain with the woman who brought in wood for the stove from the forest. "This wood," she would say, picking up a damp twig covered with moss, "is not worth 300 pesetas. It's damp and won't dry out for weeks." Another time, she would say to Kristin as she brought in the vegetables from the market, "Oh Kristina, you paid too much for those; and look, here are bruised spots on the tomatoes. Tsk, tsk, tsk." She was an extraordinarily hard worker. Her broom was heard at work at 8:00 every morning, and it was usually 11 or 12 at night before she would be finished washing and ironing.

As is rather clear from the data, Maite acknowledged that she was a Roman Catholic, but she was always testing what she heard against her own experience; she remained quintessentially Gallegan in her skepticism. When we talked about the Virgen de la Barca in Muxia (a small Gallegan seaside village), where the stones, said to be the remains of the Virgin Mary's boat, were thought to convey curative powers, she said, "I'm Catholic, of course, but I don't believe that stones can cure illnesses. I like to talk about what is the truth."

Her experience taught her that the March sun was dangerous. After six months of clouds, cold, and rain, the Gallegans would finally see the blue sky and feel the warm sun and would, in her experience, overdo it. As she once told me, "Cuidado, the March

sun is dangerous. One March I put my head out when they were repairing the roof and I got dizzy. José (one of my roomers) got a cough. If you are planting and don't put something on your head, it's bad for you."

Maite had a sore throat at the time of the festival of San Blas--patron of throat illnesses--and felt that she should go to the church with us to see if it would help. And she clearly accepted the curative powers of San Benito de Lérez to cure boils on the hands or body. She would sing the following song:

Si vas a o San Benitiño	If you go to San Benito
Non vaias a o de Paredes.	You don't need to go to Paradise.
Que hai outro mas milagreiro	Nothing is more miraculous
No conventiño de Lérez.	Than the convent at Lérez.

This song is sung by Gallegans the world over--immigrants, emigrants, and the stay-at-homers. And Maite, who took great pleasure in singing as well as in telling stories, would sing this song to us with all the conviction she could get into her beautiful full voice.

All of us in the house knew when she was happy, and we all stayed out of the way when, as was frequent, she was depressed or angry with one of us or with her children. She would tighten up her jaw in anger as she announced in reference to her son, "He is going to be a ditchdigger if he doesn't get better grades."

In "The Ethnographic Paradigm(s)" Sanday (1983) suggests that one good way to test the accuracy in a cultural analysis

is to ask oneself if a stranger, using the ethnographer's statements as instructions, could appropriately anticipate the scenes of a society. From checking the published research against the experience in Galicia of the three of us over a twelve-month period, we believe a stranger could in fact correctly anticipate scenes in which the leading characters placed high value on behaving with a deep sense of responsibility to their families; on obeying the moral structures of the community; of being thrifty, hardworking, and practical, so as to achieve self-sufficiency; or pouring a healthy dose of skepticism on authority and things not directly experienced, yet assuming no conflict with the teachings of the Catholic Church in Spain; and, in addition, of exhibiting in public a wide range of emotions from anger to boistrous laughter.

Conclusion

The job we set for ourselves was to try to understand details of the culture of that portion of northwestern Spain known as Galicia by studying the performance of roles and rituals of its people, more specifically of its women, and, even more specifically, of one particular middle-aged woman named Teresa Maite Gonzales Martinez, born in an aldea, guest-worker in France, and manager of a tourist-student rooming house in the city of Santiago de Compostela.

In coming to know another culture, we come to know our own. We are trying to understand ways of looking at the world that are

and are not like our own, trying our best not to prejudge, and not to impose our own ethnocentrism on our data or its analysis. As Geertz (1983, p. 5) puts it: "The figurative nature of social theory . . . [is] an attempt somehow to understand how it is we understand understandings not our own."

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