CHAPTER VI

The Sexes

(i) Courting: the values of the Male

THE CATEGORIES discussed so far have not taken into consideration the dichotomy of the sexes. The analysis of this facet of the social structure comprises in the first place the institutions and behaviour in which they are differentiated, and in the second the institutions and behaviour in which they are united.

As soon as they can talk children become conscious of the sex to which they belong. Their membership of one category or the other is continually stressed in speech. Their behaviour is applauded or condemned by reference to rules expressed in generalisations upon the correct conduct for little boys or little girls. "Little girls don't do that", "What a pretty little boy!" etc. The identification of the individual child with one sex or the other is reinforced at every point by adults who see the child not only as he is but also as the man or woman he will become. Children are encouraged from an early age to imitate adults of the same sex. The small girl follows the mother or elder sister about the house with a small broom in her hand while she is still too young to be of any effective assistance. At four years old, the little boy may already be seen pasturing a piglet which he controls by means of a string attached to its hind leg. By the time he is nine he goes out with his whip and *zalea* (sheep-skin) to spend the day pasturing animals. When the child plays in the street it is with a group of his own sex. When at six he goes to school it is to a boys' or girls' school taught by an adult of his own sex. The school in the valley is an exception to this since there is only one teacher, but it is a rare exception, for elsewhere the schools are all situated in the pueblos. Education, whether in school or at home, separates the sexes, for the tasks which the

child will perform, the norms of behaviour to which it will submit, and the values which it will adopt, differ according to sex. Most tasks are the prerogative either of man or of woman, and there are few examples of persons who undertake those considered to be proper to the other sex. The only occupation which is pursued equally by both sexes is that of shop-keeping.

The role of women, as in all societies, centres upon the home. All work to do with the home, the care of children and clothes is theirs. Of the animals, only chickens and rabbits fall within their province. Girls may sometimes be seen pasturing goats, but this is only because the family is poor and there is no male child of the appropriate age. The *matanza*, the killing of the household pigs, shows a clear differentiation of the roles of the two sexes. It is something of a celebration and relatives who no longer form part of the household are often present. Some skill and experience is required in killing, and, if no member of the family possesses it, a son-in-law or uncle, known for his ability in this respect, may be invited. This would avoid having to employ a professional "matador" (meaning in this instance, "pig-killer", not bullfighter). The men prepare the *patio*, light fires to heat the water, rig up the sling, catch the pig, hold it down upon the table, and the matador cuts its throat. The blood is collected in a basin which it is the task or privilege of the lady of the house to hold and stir. When the pig is dead, the men clean the hair and dirt off with scrapers, while the women serve them, pouring the boiling water on to the carcass. The men then sling the animal up by its hind legs, and the matador butchers it. The role of the men ends when they have borne the meat into the house. There the women clean it and make sausages and prepare the meat in other ways. The men perform one other task, the preparation of the hams. Though this is not clearly defined as men's work, it requires a certain amount of knowledge, and the matador supervises the pressing of the veins in order to extract the blood. If this is not done properly, the hams will go bad. The hams are the most valuable part of the pig and are sold for money, though one may be kept for the use of the household. The money recovered in this way serves to finance the next

year's pigs. This division of labour is not governed by any recognised rules; indeed, any attempt to discover a formulated rule of conduct meets here with the response, all too frequent in this society: "Each one does as he thinks fit", or "Each family has its way of doing it"—"Cada país su ley y cada casa sus costumbres", the saying goes ("Each country has its law and each house its customs"). Men's and women's tasks devolve "naturally" from the conception which people have of what men or women do best. No taboo steps in to prevent women from scraping or men from making sausages, and they may well be asked to assist in the role normally filled by the opposite sex, if another pair of hands is needed. They would not thereby be thought to be "effeminate" or "unfeminine", it would simply not be expected that they do it very well, and, since they have not been brought up to do it, the expectation would be justified.

In Alcalá women do not normally work in the fields for hire, though it is common in the plains of Andalusia for girls and even elderly women to go out in parties to weed upon the large farms. They are most commonly seen there working separately from the men. It is said that once the women worked in the fields in Alcalá because there was more work than there is today. There are today only four women in the pueblo who go out for hired work. On the other hand, it is quite frequent for wives or daughters of poor families to help in work upon the family plot of land, weeding or harvesting, or sowing the seed. Women are most commonly seen working in this way in the *terrajos*, and the spraying and harvesting of grapes is mainly women's work. There is one form of work, however, in which a great number of women take part, and for gain: the olive-harvest. This takes place in the autumn when the men are busy ploughing. It is paid as piece-work. Teams are formed among families and friends, four or five people in each, including children of almost any age. One at least must be a man or growing lad, for his role is to climb into the trees and beat the branches with a slender pole. The women and children collect the olives from the ground.

When women desire to make money, either to supplement their husband's income or because they have no husband,

they do so by performing other women's work for them: domestic work, sewing, fetching water, looking after children; or by petty trading.

These generalisations, even were they one hundred per cent accurate, would describe a differentiation which is purely ideal. The realism of these people quickly admits exceptions. Necessity forces people into activities which they do not undertake from free choice. There is a girl who works with her father and brothers at the heavy work of picking esparto grass—"as if she were a man". And yet she remains in all other ways entirely feminine. "What a shame!" people say, "for she is a pretty girl and look at her hands now. They are like a man's."

It is not only occupation which differentiates the sexes. In recreation the same dichotomy is maintained. Women do not go into cafés but stay in their houses where they visit one another. Women do not smoke. The rich people of the big towns differ from them in these ways, and the families of the *señoritos* once again demonstrate their intermediate position. Though they are never seen smoking, they will on feast-days make up parties of both sexes at a table outside the *casino*. For the women of the pueblo the shops, the fountains and above all the wash-house or the stream-bank, where washing is also done, are meeting-places, so that being in the pueblo all day they do not have the same incentives for social reunion in the evening, quite apart from the household duties which attend them on the return of their menfolk from work. The extreme cleanliness in regard to clothing, which is characteristic of Andalusia, is not unrelated to the need for someone from each household to go daily to the wash-house, if the family is to keep well informed upon the issues of the day.

In relation to religion the sexes are again separated. In festive processions they walk apart. The funeral is followed normally only by the menfolk once it leaves the church The seating in the church reflects the same division. Men, unaccompanied by their wives, stand at the back, while the women and those who stay beside their family, sit on the seats in front. Some men prefer to remain apart from their womenfolk and to stand with their own sex at the back.

A spirit of solidarity exists between persons of the same sex in the face of the other, which is illustrated in the sympathetic attitude of women towards a woman whose husband causes her distress or among men towards a man whose employer, a lady, is difficult. Generalisations of a critical nature concerning the opposite sex are often made when persons of one sex are gathered together, or in mixed gatherings when someone wishes to adopt a tone of humorous raillery towards the other sex.

The behaviour of the unmarried people during the evening *paseo* (stroll) accentuates the solidarity of the sexes, though not in such a way that can easily be reduced to generalisation. Groups of up to five or six girls walk together with arms linked. The boys eye them as they pass or walk in twos and threes behind them. Sometimes a boy is attached to the end of the line of girls by virtue of a specific relationship to one of the girls, brother or fiancé. But in general, fiancés walk by themselves in pairs on the road at the entrance to the town.

Yet this solidarity does not exclude either quarrelling or fighting among themselves. Occasional fights among women break out, usually at the fountains where, particularly in the summer when the water supply is less plentiful, it may be necessary to wait for some time in order to fill a pitcher.[1] Fights cannot take place between the sexes, except of course within the institution of marriage, though quarrelling occurs over money and business. When Diego Perez' *aparcera*, a woman who owned two hectares of cultivable land, defaulted on her obligations, he took her to law. Had it been a man he would, he asserted, have beaten him up instead.

There are few situations in which persons of different sexes collaborate outside the family. A good deal of chaff passes where groups of young people of opposite sex confront one another, but there is no *camaraderie*. Friendship is essentially a relationship between persons of the same sex. So, a man visiting a friend on a farm may often be seen to shake hands with the male members of the family and not with the

[1] The fights arise over the order of precedence which is "first come, first served" unless a person renounces her right, yet it is typical that people in this society seldom form queues; they are far too much alive to the presence of others to need such a demonstrative method of maintaining the order.

female. For to do so might be to demand an intimacy with the family which he did not possess.

The only person whose position in relation to the sexual dichotomy is somewhat mitigated is the elderly woman. When past the age of sexual attraction her behaviour tends to become freer as regards the other sex. Widowhood brings, for the first time, full legal and economic responsibility as well as the greater influence which she enjoys within the family. Her role in business is more active, though she is not in general reckoned by men to be any good at it. The word *viuda* (widow) is common in the titles of business enterprises in Andalusia. At this age a dominance formerly dormant is apt to appear. There was even one old woman who used once to play cards and drink wine with the men in the café. She was considered eccentric and disgraceful, but nothing was done to prevent her.

To attempt to define the standards of behaviour between the sexes in terms of prohibitions and obligations would be difficult. Conversation is free and no subject is taboo, provided it is not discussed indelicately in the presence of the opposite sex. The restraints in behaviour proceed from the conceptions which the situation brings into play. In the organisation of conduct, not only in situations where a member of the opposite sex is present, a primordial importance attaches to the ideal types of either sex. It would be tedious to attempt to enumerate the moral qualities attaching to manliness or womanliness for in general they are the same as in our own traditional culture: "Knights are bold and ladies are fair." Courage and strength are emphasised as male attributes. Beauty and frailty are for women. The saying: "El hombre como el oso, mientras más feo más hermoso" ("Man like the bear, the uglier the handsomer") expresses this aspect of manliness, while the grace of the women in carriage and gesture reveals the value which is given to delicacy and beauty in the feminine ideal. The fact that moral judgements are expressed in terms of beauty and ugliness, the idiom of the feminine ideal, is a point whose significance will be brought out later.

The quintessence of manliness is fearlessness, readiness to defend one's own pride and that of one's family. It is ascribed

directly to a physical origin and the idiom in which it is expressed is frankly physiological. To be masculine is to have *cojones* (testicles), and the farmyard furnishes its testimony in support of the theory. Castrated animals are *manso* (tame), a castrated ox is not dangerous like a bull. A castrated dog, it is thought, will always run away from an uncastrated one. A man who fails to show fearlessness is lacking in masculinity and, by analogy, castrated or *manso*. While it is not supposed that he is literally devoid of the male physiological attributes, he is, figuratively, so. That part of his person does not possess the moral qualities properly associated with it.

The bullfight is an occasion when the full figurative force of this conception is displayed. The bull which is *manso* is booed from the ring. The dead bull which has shown courage is applauded as his carcass is dragged out. The bullfighter, even though he may be lacking in skill and grace, is not despised as long as he is still able to show that he has valour. Yet if he fails or fears to kill the bull he is utterly disgraced. For the essence of the bullfight is the ritual revindication of masculinity and if this value is debased then the whole human species is defiled. The virility of the bull has not passed into its slayer. The champion who took the ring to redeem through his bravery the sacred quality of male pride has failed and the crowd greets him with contemptuous fury.

The terms relating to this conception are heard not only in the bullring but continually in everyday life. Thus, for example, in a quarrel concerning water-rights, one *hortelano* (garden-cultivator) said to the other, who had given him offence by repeatedly failing to relinquish the water at the appointed hour:

"Estaré en el cau' a la hora de cortar y si tienes cojones ven." ("When the hour comes to cut off your water and send it down to my *huerta* I shall cut it off myself [the place where the water is changed lies inside the other *hortelano's huerta*] and try to stop me if you dare!" Literally: "If thou hast *cojones*, come!") It is a challenge to fight. The implication is that if the other does not come, it is either that his antagonist is right and he admits that he must cut off his water at that hour, or alternatively that he has no *cojones*, that is to say that he is lacking in the full social personality of an adult male,

and is a person who can be overridden with impunity. In fact, by the time the challenge is issued there is already a dispute of some standing. The challenge is intended to settle the question of water-rights neither by law, nor by an appeal to force, for it settles nothing if the other *hortelano* comes and they fight. To be beaten in a fight does not prove lack of courage (any more than the bullfighter is disgraced if he is carried wounded from the ring. He is only disgraced if he is physically able, but lacks the courage, to kill the bull). The challenge is intended to settle the matter, because the *hortelano* stakes his social personality on the issue. The other man knows that he is in the wrong in fact and under those conditions he will not come, for if there is a fight the matter is likely to be brought before the law and his fault will be displayed; but having failed to come, he cannot then continue to steal his neighbour's water without admitting that he lacks masculinity and was too frightened to uphold his rights openly, that he is a sneak-thief. The challenge served therefore to force a renunciation from the other *hortelano* of his claim. The social significance of the conception in relation to the political structure—and a later chapter will discuss this—resides in this: that a man who loses his masculinity forfeits his standing as a full adult male and through this loss of prestige he loses his value in the system of co-operation.

The word which serves literally to translate manliness (*hombría*) also contributes to the same conception:

"The modern race is degenerate," said a friend once, "in the days of our grandfathers there was more manliness than today." To be "muy hombre" is to have an abundance of that moral quality of honourable masculinity, and, through it, to command the respect of one's fellows.

Other words which might be discussed if the length of this chapter permitted are: *soberbia* and *orgullo* which express the idea of excessive self-regard, and *amorpropio* and *honor*[1] which are intimately connected with manliness. *Pundonoroso* (meticulous as regards honour) is a popular epithet for bullfighters.

Clearly, such a conceptual evaluation of sexual virility

[1] Cf. Pitt-Rivers, J. "Honour and Social Status" in J. G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame; the Values of Mediterranean Society* (London and Chicago, 1966). For a general discussion, see my article "Honor," in *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (New York, 1968).

leads to a certain proclivity to justify masculinity literally, and the moral precepts taught in education tend to be outweighed by the desire for such justification. Success with women is a powerful gratification to the self-esteem of the Andalusian. The appreciation of feminine beauty and the attitude of ready courtship which it inspires are expressed in the *piropo*, a word which means literally a ruby and also means a compliment paid to a lady. It is a tribute paid disinterestedly to one whose presence is a source of joy and, theoretically at any rate, without any ulterior motive. It may be paid publicly to an unknown lady as she passes down the street, for it requires no response from her, and the freedom and charm of such a custom has done much to recommend the cities of Andalusia to the pretty tourist. Opportunities for this kind of *piropo* barely exist in the pueblo where everyone is known, but an appreciation of feminine attractiveness is nevertheless not scant in Alcalá. The restraints upon the sexually aggressive behaviour of men derive, it appears, from sanctions of a social nature rather than from the prohibitions of the individual conscience. However, before considering them we do well to turn to the institutions and behaviour in which the sexes are united.

There are situations in everyday life in which the category of sex is overruled by the categories of age or social status. The respect due to age or official position may go far to obliterate the significance of the criterion of sex in a specific situation. The employees must obey the employer. The patients must visit the doctor. Persons of different sex are grouped together in juxtaposition to a person distinguished from them by another category. But we are concerned here to examine the relations between the sexes in situations where the difference of sex is prerequisite to the relationship of the participants.

The only institution which binds the sexes together is the family. Primarily through marriage, but also through all the relationships established by it. The form of the individual family is continually changing in time, but we may take as its starting-point the moment when the young person abandons the companionship of his own sex and family, and seeks to establish an individual relationship with a person of the opposite sex and another family.

As the children grow up through adolescence the segregation of the sexes takes a new turn. The interest in the opposite sex, unrelated hitherto to structural issues, begins to offer the possibility of a lasting attachment which will alter the standing of the couple radically. The boy deserts the "dirty-story-telling" group of his fellows to go courting his girl. Typically, the farming families of the valley, in contrast to wealthier families of the pueblo, tend to form attachments of a serious nature as early as fifteen to eighteen years, and to regard each other thenceforward as *novios* (sweethearts), in all the structural implications of the term. *Novios* are boy and girl who will eventually be man and wife. The *noviazgo* (courtship) is the prelude to the foundation of the family. It is characteristically long in this society, always of a few years' duration, though the length depends on the age of the participants and also on their economic position. Yet it should not be regarded as a time of delay necessary for the establishment of the economic foundations of the family, though it fulfils that function. It is, rather, a steadily developing relationship which ends in marriage. The degrees of seriousness which attach to the term and give it at times a certain ambiguity derive from the fact that it covers all the stages of courtship from acquaintance to marriage. The dog which deserts the farm at night in search of a bitch is said to go "buscando la novia" ("searching for a *novia*") and the word may even be used as a euphemism for a married person's lover. But the term does not imply sexual intimacy when referring to an established relationship between boy and girl. It is thought proper to "respect" the woman who will be your wife.

The first step in the formation of this relationship is made when two young people leave the group in order to talk to one another alone. They sit together or go for a walk apart at some reunion, and this establishes a tentative beginning. If this behaviour recurs then people say that they are "talking to one another". The expression is important for it sums up an aspect of the *noviazgo*. It covers all the period of informal relations, extending from the first stage up till the "demand for the hand". During this time the relationship deepens but it is not yet irrevocable. Andresito, speaking of his former *novia* said: "I spoke with her for twelve years and at the end

she turned out a whore." This period of twelve years was exceptionally long owing to the fecklessness of the speaker and his inability to follow with one job for any length of time. When finally it became evident that he would not marry her, he laid the blame on her.

The idea of this talking together is that the *novios* get to know each other really well. The swiftness of the men to enter a sexual relationship of no structural importance contrasts with the care and delay with which they enter into matrimony. But the nature of this talk, though it inevitably varies, has a particular quality associated with courtship and which serves to forward the purpose of that institution. Its purpose is to bind the emotions of each to the other so securely that the attachment will last a lifetime. The word *camelar* expresses this kind of talk. It means—and it is above all the man who does the talking—"to compliment", "to show gallantry to", "to cause to fall in love". It is subsumed that adulation is what causes people to fall in love, and this theory is found in the secondary meaning of the word: "to deceive with adulation". In this way the nominal form *camelo* comes in the end to mean: "nonsense", "line-shooting", "a tall story", "a tale which no one but a fool would be taken in by". It is generally asserted that the essential attribute for success with women is knowledge of how to talk to them. The Don Juan must know how to deceive women with words. However, in the case of courtship, this knowledge is put to the service of matrimony. Love is an essential to a happy marriage. And this is not only the opinion of romantic *señoritas*. Andrés el Baño, a hardheaded and intelligent small farmer says: "You can see clearly which marriages were made for money. They spend their whole lives quarrelling. Sensible people marry for love." "How is a man to spend all his life working for a woman if he has no *ilusión* for her?" For it is admitted that love, like all terrestrial delights, is an illusion—to fall out of love is *quitarse la ilusión*. But in marriage it is a necessary illusion. Each person knows that he or she is not in fact the most wonderful person in the world, but through *camelos* one can be made to feel it and to feel the same about the other. The attachment formed by this mutually inspired self-esteem bridges the gulf of sex-

differentiation and forms the bond on which the family is built.[1]

Courting takes place traditionally, in Andalusia, at the *reja* (the grill which covers every window), and sentimental numbers in the music-halls and the romantic postcards sold on news-stalls portray a *novio* so ardent that only iron bars can safeguard the purity of his love. The reality is less theatrical, of course. In summer the *novios* can go for walks together in the immediate vicinity of the town. To stray too far, to be out after dark, excites suspicious comment in the pueblo. Men who work and are away until dusk must do their courting after nightfall, and upon Thursdays and Sundays, the days for courting, boys will walk five or six miles, even after the day's work, in order to keep a rendezvous with a girl. Courting takes place at the girl's home. In Alcalá the doorway is used rather than the window. The visiting *novio* stands on the threshold to talk to his girl while she stands within. The girl's family pay no attention to the couple. If the father comes out he pretends not to notice the *novio*. Formerly it was considered an affront to the father to be seen by him courting his daughter. The suitor would retire while the father was in sight, but today he separates slightly from the girl and lets go her hand. To hold hands is considered proper behaviour for *novios*, save in the presence of a member of her family.

When the couple decide to get married, the *novio* makes a formal call upon the father of his *novia* in order to ask for her hand. His mother calls upon her mother. The girl's father is supposed not to answer but finally to allow himself to be persuaded by her mother. When the request is granted the young man hands over a sum of money[2] to the girl with which she is to buy the requirements and furniture of the house, and the wedding day is fixed—usually for a date three or four months ahead. The *noviazgo* then enters upon its final stage and although it remains theoretically repudiable, it would by now be extremely difficult for the *novio* to escape.

[1] The word *ilusión* is most commonly heard in the sense of ambition or hope, but it is also used with conscious cynicism as a euphemism for "lust".

[2] In the case of farming families working as a centralised economic unit the money is provided by the parents. This fact certainly contributes to the length of courtships in the valley.

The parents have been brought in who will become linked in the relationship of *consuegro* (co-parent-in-law). The money has been paid. From that moment onwards the marriage is assured. But until the demand for the hand the ties which bind the two together are purely personal. The longer an engagement lasts the stronger becomes the obligation to marry, the worse a repudiation would appear if there were no excuse for it but faithlessness. The danger is above all one for the girl, because once a long engagement is broken off it may not be easy for her to find a second suitor. The girl who has had other *novios* is not sought after in the same way, for the pride of the second *novio* must, to a greater or lesser extent, be sacrificed if he is to follow in the footsteps of another. If his *novia* were not a virgin it would make him a retrospective cuckold, but even if this is not believed, she would nevertheless be a less attractive proposition than previously. Girls whose first engagement is broken off tend to marry less easily subsequently.

It can be seen, then, that a girl of, say, twenty-five, whose engagement falls through after a long courtship is in a difficult position. If she has beauty or the prospect of inheritance, she will have no difficulty in finding a new *novio*. But if not, then she may have missed her opportunity. Andresito's *novia* remained a spinster. The moral feelings of the pueblo supply a powerful sanction against such faithlessness, for it involves the other members of both families. But *noviazgos* are in danger above all when boys go to work elsewhere for a time, and thereby escape the sanctions of the pueblo. They sometimes do not return but break with the *novia* of their home town and marry in the place where they are working, where they may never admit having had a previous *novia*, and where in any case the matter will have little importance.

In the face of this danger for which, should it materialise, the society offers no redress, one is not surprised to find the supernatural coming into play. There is a wealth of folklore which relates to finding and holding *novios*, and much of the practice of the *sabia* (wise woman) is devoted to resolving this problem. The girl whose *novio* begins to look at other girls with interest, visits her less regularly or writes to her less

frequently, in short, gives her reason to believe that her hold over him is weakening, may go to the *sabia*. For the *sabia* has power to discover whether he still loves her or not, and is also able to perform love-magic in order to secure his constancy. She uses her love-magic, in this context, in support of the social order. The love-magic which she is able to do for men is thought to be employed for a more sinister purpose, which will be discussed in Chapter XII.