

JOHN M. INGHAM  
Rice University

*In this paper traditional medical beliefs and practices in a Mexican village are described and interpreted. The analysis focuses on the notion that health is a balance of hot and cold within the body. Several lines of evidence are used to reveal the metaphorical meanings of hot and cold, and these meanings are then seen to be related to structural features of peasant society. [Folk medicine, Hot and cold, Mexican peasants, World view]*

I WISH TO propose an explanation for the belief in Mexican folk medicine that illness results from an excess of hot or cold within the body. In doing so I draw on ethnographic material from the Mexican village of Tlayacapan, Morelos.<sup>1</sup> And since this belief system had its origin in classical Greek philosophy, the meanings hot and cold had for early Greeks are examined. This paper illustrates that an interpretation of folk medicine may provide an understanding of attitudes underlying Tlayacapense culture.

# I

Little headway has been made in deciphering the metaphorical meanings of hot and cold. In an Andean community Stein found that hot implies evil and cold good (1961:293). Throughout Middle America hot seems to have a connotation of strength and cold one of weakness (Adams and Rubel 1967:335). These are significant observations, and they are consistent with the Tlayacapense data. But why hot and cold have these connotations is still unexplained. Studies that have discussed Mexican folk medicine in terms of social relationships and personality dynamics have not answered this question (see Kiev 1968, Rubel 1960).

Currier (1966) seeks to explain hot and cold by arguing that hotness is associated with affection and coldness with rejection and that these associations are related to weaning trauma and consequent difficulties in interpersonal relations. This, however, does not make sense of the patterns observed by Stein, Adams, and Rubel. More-

over, Mexican peasants, at least, say a rejecting person is "dry" not cold. If cold were associated with rejection and hot with affection, then one would expect to find cold illnesses to be more dangerous than hot ones, but this is not noticeably the case. Currier handles this problem by maintaining that hotness renders one susceptible to cold rejection, but this is plausible only if hot illnesses have their origin within the body. Nevertheless, despite his assertion that this is so, several hot illnesses are caused by excess sun and have their principal symptoms on the surface of the body. The rejection anxiety theory is a clever one, but a more powerful and parsimonious explanation of hot and cold relates these terms to structural features of peasant society.

Our point of departure in this respect is Foster's (1965, 1967) study of Mexican peasant world view. He has adduced evidence that peasants in general and Mexican peasants in particular are inclined to view the world as if good were limited to the extent that one man's loss implies another's gain. As a consequence of this world view peasants value reciprocity and an even distribution of wealth. Foster (1967:184) interprets the attempt to balance hot and cold as an analogue of the importance given to economic equality. This analysis may be extended by considering the specific meanings of hot and cold, clues to which are present in Greek philosophy.

# II

A hot/cold dichotomy is common in Old World peasant cosmologies. It occurs in Chinese Yin Yang symbolism and in both

Burmese and Indian folk medicines.<sup>2</sup> In the West, hot and cold have figured in philosophy, astrology and alchemy. Hippocratic medicine held that there were four humors in the body, each having two attributes: blood was warm and moist, yellow bile warm and dry, black bile cold and dry, and phlegm was cold and moist. These attributes were believed to form an equilibrium in the healthy body.

The early Greeks thought that hot and cold, wet and dry also defined the world's four fundamental elements as follows:

Hot	Wet	Dry
Cold	Air	Fire
	Water	Earth

At the same time these dichotomies explained change by describing the lines along which one element could be transformed into another. The wet/dry dimension mediates hot and cold so that air and earth have properties common to fire and water. Thus, Heraclitus, the pre-Socratic philosopher, employed these mediating qualities to account for the transformations of fire as in these fragments of his work:

- (21) The transformations of Fire are, first of all, sea; and half of the sea is earth, half whirlwind . . .
- (23) It [Fire] becomes liquid sea, and is measured by the same tale as before it became earth.
- (25) Fire lives the death of air, and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of earth, earth that of water [Burnet 1960: 125].

Greeks generally felt that fire and water are more basic than earth and air, perhaps because fire and water have the harmonious combinations of hot and dry, cold and moist.

The connotations of hot and cold, the fundamental aspects of fire and water, are given in the following table based on Aristotle (Lloyd 1964:104-105; see also Lloyd 1962):

Cold	Hot
left	right
female	male
wet	dry
heavy	light
dense	rare
privation	positive

Evident in this table is a linkage of hotness with absorbent capabilities (dryness, lightness, positive), whereas cold terms are heavier and denser and thus undergo privation, that is absorption. These implications of hot and cold are even clearer in the fragments by Heraclitus dealing with fire:

- (22) All things are an exchange of fire, and fire for all things, even as wares for gold and gold for wares.
- (24) Fire is want and surfeit.
- (103) Wantonness needs putting out, even more than a house on fire [Burnet 1960: 125, 140].

Heraclitus, then, identified fire with consumption, and by implication, water with nurturing, but he also postulated an implicit reciprocity between fire and water (fragments 21, 23, 25) in that fire once quenched begins a downward path to water (see also Burnet 1960:145-146). The waxing and waning of life and death, day and night, and the seasons were understood as movements, or exchanges, of fire and water as in this Heraclitean passage:

If fire advances towards the utmost limit of water, its nourishment fails it. It retires, then, to a place where it can get nourishment. And if water advances towards the utmost limit of the fire, movement fails it. At that point, then, it stands still; and, when it has come to a stand, it has no longer power to resist, but is consumed as nourishment for the fire that falls upon it [Burnet 1960:156].

Fire consumes water, although, in line with Heraclitus's philosophy that the war of opposites couches an inner harmony, the two elements exhibit an exchange. The analogy drawn between the transformations of fire and economic exchange in fragment 22 also points to the exchange metaphor in this cosmology. Fire suggests acquisitive motives, water generous ones. Nonetheless, fire and water exhibit a reciprocity: fire consumes water, but also produces it.

# III

As Claude Lévi-Strauss has shown, the constituent elements of a culture may be conceptualized as structures of opposition and correlation (1963:86). In cuisine, these elements, which he calls *gustemes*, may be

defined by many possible contrasts: sweet/sour, exogenous/endogenous, central/peripheral, or hot/cold. He says that when we uncover similar structures in different spheres of a culture—in cuisine, myth, and social structure—then something is learned about the unconscious attitudes of a society. If one examines the Tlayacapense ethnography in this way the hot/cold contrast is seen not only to be central to culinary practice and folk medicine but also to reflect a basic ideological issue in the society.

This congruence depends on metaphorical resources in the concepts of hot and cold, that is, on the connections between hotness and consumption, and between coldness and giving. This result should not be surprising since others have demonstrated that symbolic structures may mediate, reflect, or constrain social transactions. Lévi-Strauss, for instance, notes that the attitudes that obtain between kin may be influenced by whether they have rights, obligations, or relationships of reciprocity with each other (1963:49). Similarly, Needham has found the asymmetry of Purum matrilineal cross-cousin marriage to be correlated with binary oppositions in Purum symbolism. That is to say, wife giving, goodness, masculinity, and superiority are linked with the right side of things, whereas wife taking is tied to badness, femininity, inferiority, and the left side (Needham 1962:93-96). Beidelman (1961), Faron (1962), and Turner (1967) have also used this approach to advantage.

#### IV

There are many expressions in Mexican peasant culture of a world view that life is a zero-sum game in which wealth and other good things are in such limited supply that expansion in one area inevitably brings about reduction in another. Such an ethnophilosophical premise is implicit in many Tlayacapense superstitions wherein expansion (+) and reduction (−) have an inverse function.

(1) Long hair (+) causes the body to be skinny (−). Long hair, it is said, drains

the body of energy and also causes headaches. Growing hair is naturally hot, and one puts snake oil, which is hot, on hair to make it grow longer, that is, to make it absorb more body energy. Hair that grows too fast will turn grey—it burns itself out (ashes are cold). Cold herbs inhibit growth, and thus prevent greyness. If long hair is cut (−), the body grows fatter (+).

- (2) A good corn crop (+) indicates its owner will die (−), as does an unusual abundance of fruit on his trees.
- (3) Dreaming of excrement (−) is a sign one will become rich (+), while dreaming of money (+) prognosticates poverty (−).
- (4) Certain pretty flowers in the home (+) will make one poor (−).
- (5) It is believed that children must be buried (−) beneath new bridges to insure bridges long life (+); similarly, a rooster is actually buried (−) in a new house to prevent the death (−) of an occupant, which would apparently otherwise balance the newness (+) of the house.

These superstitions seem predicated on a premise of absolute scarcity. They account for good and bad luck by implying that good and bad must sum to zero. They carry the implication that in a world so perceived a person must give and take in equal proportion or he will upset a social equilibrium. In the beliefs concerning hair we see that taking, or absorption, is a hot process. It is therefore suggested that the balance of hot and cold may be a metaphorical expression of the value peasants give to reciprocity.

#### V

Tlayacapenses classify foods, herbs, and many inedible items by a quality (*calidad*) of "hotness" or "coldness." This quality is not merely or always a function of temperature. It is often acquired by exposure to the sun, which is hot, or to water, which is cold, or is discerned by the sensations an item produces. Thus small animals, fish, and

plants living in or near the ground, or in water, are often cold, whereas living things that are more exposed to the sun are usually hot.

A meal that is too hot or too cold is dangerous, especially for those in a "weak" condition, such as the young, aged, and sick. Women therefore "mediate" (*mediar*) hot and cold in their cooking. When the weather is hot they make teas of cold herbs and when it is cold they make them of hot herbs or serve coffee, which is hot. A typical three course meal begins with rice (cold), is followed by a soup of hot and cold ingredients, and ends with dark beans (hot); that is, the meal forms a mediated opposition. In all of several possible second courses, a central item is surrounded by a medium of opposite quality. Beef (hot), for instance, is served in a tomato soup (cold) or in *mole verde* (cold), whereas barbecued goatmeat (cold) is served in corn husks (hot). A more complex structure is noticeable in the standard *fiesta*, served at both public and private *fiestas*. It begins with rice (cold), has a second course of *mole colorado* (very hot) and chicken or turkey (both cold), and a third course of slightly cool "fat beans" garnished with cheese and lettuce (both cold), and with onions and radishes (both hot). Informants say that the last course is neither hot nor cold and that the cold chicken does not by itself balance the hot *mole*. The neutral last course and cold beers round out the meal. One notices that villagers always eat the *mole* before the chicken so that the very hot *mole* is eaten between cold foods:

Course	Hot	Cold
(1)		a. rice
(2)	b. <i>mole</i>	
(3)	d. beans	c. chicken

Illness is caused by too much hot or cold in a particular area of the body. In curing, an opposite quality is applied to absorb hot or cold. For example, depending on the quality of the causative agent, headaches can be hot or cold. When they are hot, cold herbs are applied to the temples to absorb

the excess heat, whereas hot herbs are used for cold headaches. Many other complaints are likewise treated with petitions or poultices having qualities opposite those responsible for the ailment.

Respiratory maladies such as colds, pneumonia, and bronchitis are caused by cold *aíres* (drafts). A person is vulnerable to an *aíre* when moving from a warm place to a cold one, as when going from a warm bed or house to the cold outside. People who have just eaten are also in an unusually warm state and are subject to *aíres*. A high fever with these illnesses is attributed to *calor subido* (risen heat), a condition in which body heat has been displaced upward by cold entering the body from a cold floor. When heat has been displaced upward in this way making the head hot but leaving the limbs cold, a hot poultice is applied to the legs to draw out the cold so that the heat can return to the legs (see Foster 1967:190-191). *Los aires*, which are also said to cause paralyses, seizures, sores, and inflammations of the skin and eyes, originate in ant hills, river bottoms, dank places, and caves, especially those in which the Devil resides.

The victim of *los aires* is "cleaned" (stroked) with hot herbs and an egg over which cigarette smoke has been blown. The patient may also be cleaned with clay whistle-dolls that are made for All Saints Day but have been painted red and black (hot colors) for the purpose of curing. When the patient or his folk curer dream of food or drink it signifies that the *aíres* are hungry and that the case is critical. At this juncture an offering of clay dolls, a black chicken (very hot), unsalted *mole* and tamales (both hot; salt is cold), alcohol (hot), and cigarettes (hot) are taken to the ant hill to appease *los aires*. On the way to the ant hill the curer drinks some of the alcohol, which somehow protects him against *los aires*. As he walks along he blows on the whistle-dolls to attract *los aires* and he gives alcohol to other people for their protection. At the ant hill the offering is placed on a napkin and the curer says, "*Señores aires*, I brought you

something to eat. Now leave the sick one alone. Don't bother him." It is thought that anyone who steals the food will be attacked by *los aires*.

The details of *los aires* seem logical. The drafts are attracted by heat and are cured with heat. There is, however, one anomaly: *los aires* are likely to come from ant hills and those caves inhabited by the Devil, but the Devil and ants are hot whereas *los aires* are cold. Curiously, hot things appear to generate cold *aires*.

Diarrhea may be either hot or cold depending on the quality of the food that causes it. Green or yellow coloring to the excrement indicates the diarrhea is hot; whiteness indicates it is cold. For hot diarrhea the remedy is cold tea and a cold compress, whereas a hot tea is employed for cold diarrhea.

Vomiting, diarrhea, and small white balls in the excrement mean that a child is *enlechado*, a malady that occurs when the mother's milk is "crude" (lumpy). This happens when the mother exposes her front side to cold water or her back side to too much sun or when she eats very cold foods. There are several cures:

(1) The infant is given a potion made by boiling the mother's milk in an egg shell along with mint (hot) and carbonate of soda (hot).

(2) A compress of cotton soaked in hot herbs, oil (hot), and the mother's milk is placed on the infant's back and stomach.

(3) The mother's breasts are steamed in the *temescal* (steam bath) and are rubbed with alcohol (hot) and a hot herb.

The last treatment is said to "cook" the mother's milk. Thus, as in the case of *los aires*, this condition contains an incongruity in that most aspects of *enlechado*—the white excrement, the lumpiness of the mother's milk that hints at an intensification of the ordinary coldness of milk, and the hot cures—suggest it is a cold sickness, yet it can be caused by too much sun on the mother's back. In most instances, however,

drafts and cold foods are responsible for cold illnesses; hot food may cause hot diarrhea, but hot illnesses such as smallpox, measles, scarlet fever, and urological complaints are brought about by the sun.

Another hot illness is *chipileza*. When a nursing mother becomes pregnant she emits heat that makes her milk yellow and watery (the opposite of *enlechado*) and her infant then becomes *chipil*. The infant's symptoms—sleepiness, diarrhea, and lip chewing—are ascribed to the mother's heat and to jealousy of the unborn. At this point the infant is weaned and is no longer held by the mother since she is too hot. If *chipileza* persists after the mother has given birth, the sick child is washed with the leftover bathwater of its newborn sibling, a treatment that might be interpreted as one that counters heat with something cold while it combats jealousy by establishing a parity between child and newborn. Husbands, especially those who are about to be fathers for the first time, may also become *chipil* (sleepy and listless), and their cure effects a similar symbolic affinity with the unborn child: a strip from the hem of the pregnant woman's skirt is tied around her husband's neck; what was around the fetus is put around the husband.

*Derrame de bilis* (overflow of bile) is a hot ailment resulting from too much anger or "courage." A person with *la bilis* awakens in the morning with a bitter taste in the mouth and has a loss of appetite. The stomach is said to inflate with air and the skin and whites of the eyes to turn yellow. The bile overflows from the gall bladder and empties into the blood stream. Most cold foods and a few extremely hot ones are avoided when one has *la bilis* while it is treated with medicinal teas made from hot herbs. Again, then, a condition seems inconsistent; in this case a hot illness is treated with hot herbs, the contrary of normal practice.

Still another hot illness is *mal de ojo* (the evil eye) or *el daño* (the damage), which is caused by "strong" or "hot" vision. Those in

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a hot state due to sexual excitement may also be responsible for *daño*. Envious and exploitative people are often accused of having the evil eye, although others may unknowingly have a capacity for *daño*. It is especially those who admire other children who pose a threat. Any child can suffer from the *daño*, but cute or handsome children are most vulnerable. One girl, for instance, suffered repeatedly from the evil eye because she had long, pretty hair. Conversely, a child with bad manners is not often a victim.

Methods of cure and prevention are consistent with the fact that the hot motives of lust and envy are causes of *daño*. An individual with hot vision should give a child he admires a perfunctory spanking when he comes close, as if to say, "I do not really like this child" (see Foster 1967:160). A *med* called a "deer's eye," a coral bracelet, or a gold earring may be worn by children to absorb any hot vision directed at them. A snake's fang, garlic, or a cross of oil on the forehead are amulets that deflect hot vision away from the child, since it is not attracted to what is undesirable. *El daño* is treated by "cleaning" with an egg, *jarilla* (both cold), and alum (hot). After the cleaning, the egg is tapped in the sign of the cross on a glass of water, broken, and the yolk is dropped into the glass. If the clear albumen turns white in the water, the heat absorbed by the egg is said to have "cooked" it.

Several illnesses involve loss, dislodging, or malfunction of organs. In *caída de la mollera* the fontanelle falls into the mouth and prevents an infant from feeding properly. *Empacho* is a childhood disorder that results when dirty food (hot) sticks to the walls of the intestines, and is cured with laxatives and cold compresses on the lower back. Women can suffer from *caída de la matriz* (fallen womb). *Susto* (fright) is a condition that follows an emotional upset, perhaps caused by seeing the Devil or some other supernatural being. After a severe fright, the "shadow" (soul) leaves the body and "the cold enters." To retrieve the soul a

folk curer performs a ritual called *la sona* (the shadow).

Tlayacapenses fear diarrhea and vomiting because they view them not as symptoms but as illnesses that can lead to death. There is a similar belief that blood is not easily regenerated once it has been shed, and women complain that nursing drains their bodies and hastens aging. Villagers also worry about hernias, which they try to prevent by wearing a special cloth band under their clothing. Children are warned that their intestines will come out through a bruise or cut if they cry about it too much.

The beliefs about loss of body parts and fluids express a concern with scarcity, and as does the notion of a balance of hot and cold, they indicate that health is conceived as an equilibrium state. Disturbance of equilibrium takes its most obvious form in *calor subido*, wherein cold displaces heat. Although villagers cannot verbalize it, displacement can also be shown to account for the anomalies in *los aires*, *enlechado*, and *la bilis*.

*Los aires* (and rainbows) often originate as we have noted, in caves inhabited by the Devil. The Devil is said to be hot, a quality evidenced in his red eyes and skin, his exhaling of fire, in his horse giving off sparks and leaving hot hoofprints, and in a sexual nature symbolized by horns, long tail, and a belief that he is very handsome. Ants (hot) also cause cold drafts. It may be that the Devil displaces cave air, and ants perhaps drive cold air from their underground networks. This interpretation allows us to comprehend why *los aires* are said to be hungry, the one exception to a pattern that appetite is hot. *Los aires* are only hungry when they have been caused by ants, and the offering of food is taken only to ant hills, never to other sources of the drafts. Informants say that the offering is for *los aires* but admit that the ants eat it. The offering is said to attract the cold air, but we may surmise that on an unconscious level the offering is thought to cool down the ants whose hotness displaces cold air. It may do



this in two ways: by reducing their hunger (ants are particularly appropriate for symbolizing appetite since they are forever making off with people's food) and also because the offering has absorbed cold air.

*Enlechado* is cryptic since it is a cold ailment of which the sun is a causative agent but several pieces of ethnographic evidence suggest an interpretation. Beef is hot unless it is from a cow that is nursing a calf, in which case it is cold. Since milk is cold, it seems that the cow's udder radiates cold to the rest of her meat. Now, it is likely that this is the case for human beings as well even though Tlayacapenses do not talk about the temperature of their own meat. The hot sun striking a woman's back apparently pushes the excess cold in her body back into the breasts, thus compressing in them the radiated cold and rendering her milk too cold. Informants deny that the sun makes the milk hot; rather, the sun makes it too cold. There is thus nothing irrational in "cooking" the mother's milk after she has been exposed to the sun. Little boys are said to suck milk from a mother's lungs and little girls from a mother's stomach. One then can understand how the normally cold milk in the breasts can be made too cold if a mother (1) exposes her breasts to cold water, (2) eats cold foods which make her stomach cold, or (3) turns her backside to a hot sun, which displaces to the breasts some of the cold that has diffused to her lungs and back.

The principle of displacement also resolves the paradox that *la bilis* (hot) is treated with hot herbs. One informant explained that eating cold foods while angry would cause bile overflow. He implied, in other words, that cold food would push the hot bile into the blood stream and thus to the extremities. (Notice that a cold stomach, which both causes and results from *la bilis*, is associated with loss of appetite.) It is not without reason, then, that *la bilis* is doctored with hot herbs, whereas cold herbs are used with other hot ailments.

These interpretations of *los aires*, *enlechado*, and *la bilis*, however, are attained only at the expense of a contradiction al-

ready inherent in *calor subido*, namely, that hot and cold both attract and repel each other. An understanding of hot and cold turns on this problem although its solution requires that we first examine the social meanings of hot and cold.

#### VI

If an illness proves difficult to cure it is said to be "bad" or caused by witchcraft. In witchcraft the connotations of hot and cold become evident.

Witches harm victims by manipulating photographs or by sticking pins in dolls. They also introduce insects or reptiles into victims' stomachs, or they poison them. Salt mixed with cemetery earth and other secret ingredients, is used this way or is sprinkled on the person's doorstep. *Tolouche* (belladonna) is employed as a love potion, and in large doses as a lethal poison. Witches are hot as is indicated by beliefs that they can convert themselves into black pigeons or vampires and that they keep black animals (black is the hottest color). Tlayacapense women thought to be witches have reputations for being promiscuous, and in village folklore witches are associated with such transparent sexual symbolism as flying brooms, caves, magic rings, and an ability to turn men to stone. Sex, of course, is explicitly hot.

Whereas witches are hot, the damage they do is usually cold. The most common items in their pharmacopoeia—salt, *tolouche*, needles, frogs, lizards, scorpions, and toads—are cold. *Tolouche* as a love potion is said to make its taker "stupid" and manageable rather than passionate. Curing a victim entails a two-fold process of producing discomfort for the witch and removing the cold from the patient's body and house.

Several beliefs are congruent with this pattern. It is thought that if one eats with the left hand bewitched food becomes harmless. Evidence suggests that on an unconscious level the left hand is regarded as hot. Tlayacapenses use the left hand to ward off *naquales*, who in Tlayacapan, unlike real witches, are ordinary people who do no real

harm although they turn themselves into animals. *Naquales* are not said to be hot or cold, but the excrement of a black donkey (hot) may be used against them. The keeping of black animals is also believed to be protection against witchcraft. Thus the left hand, as other hot things, is used to neutralize the cold weapons of the witch.

Witches are known to convert themselves into black pigeons and vampires in order to suck the blood from sleeping children. Not only are witches conceived to be lusty and greedy, those accused of hiring witches are generally said to be prompted by sexual jealousy or envy of another's economic success. Excessive appetite is an aspect of the hot motives clustered together in witchcraft and may be contrasted with being a victim of witchcraft, which is associated with coldness.

Within the framework of Foster's suggestion that the hot/cold system is an analogue of a socioeconomic order that encourages an even distribution of wealth, one may assess the specific connotations of hot and cold. That witches are hot indicates that it may be useful to study with respect to hot and cold villagers' terms for social character. In Tlayacapan gossip about the "character" of fellow villagers is frequent. Character adjectives used in this way, although there are many, tend to fall into several groups: (1) disrespectful, (2) exploitative-abusive (e.g., *macho*), (3) exploitative-hoarding (e.g., *miserable*), and (4) foolish-exploitable (e.g., *tonto*). A respectful person engages in reciprocal exchanges, exploitative people take or keep more than they give, and a fool allows himself to be exploited. For reasons given below, these types may be aligned in the hot/cold system as follows:

Hot		Cold
Miser	Respectful	Fool
Macho		

Idiomatic usages indicate that greed, envy, eating, sexual desire, and aggression are linked with hotness; generosity and exploitability are associated with coldness. As we have seen, beef is hot unless it comes

from a cow that has been nursing a calf, in case it is cold. An aggressive *naqual* is said to have "hot blood." A thief has "hot hands." A miser accumulates money, which is considered hot. Envy, an acquisitive attitude, is hot as indicated by *chipsa*, an animal *mal de ojo*, or "hot vision." Sexual or menstrual blood, and semen are considered hot. Anger and sexual lust are felt to be appetites in a very concrete sense. "To eat" someone is both an aggressive and sexual metaphor in Tlayacapan. Indeed, cannibalism is a frequent theme in Tlayacapense culture. Its hotness is implied by linkage with aggression and witchcraft and by a superstition concerning eclipses. The moon is normally cold in contrast to the hot sun, but an eclipse of the moon is hot. It is said that when an infant is born with a missing finger or a harelip "the eclipse ate it." The moon restores itself to wholeness by eating (a net activity) parts of fetuses—vulnerable surpluses. Here, then, is another illustration that acquisitive behavior (of which lust and cannibalism are symbolic expressions) is hot.

The opposite of an abusive person in Tlayacapan is "the fool," the "stupid" person. Stupidity in this context conveys exploitability rather than lack of intellectual ability: the intelligent person is *abusado* (quick to seek advantage) or *listo* (clever). It was observed that victimization by witchcraft is cold. Moreover, the fool is regarded as fearful by Tlayacapense men, and fear, as in *susto*, is a cold emotion. The man who is overly good or generous is felt to be foolish. The notions of coldness, generosity, and exploitability are interrelated.

These patterns also obtain on the supernatural level. It was noted that the Devil, with his money and lusty nature, is hot. The Virgin of Guadalupe, by contrast, has a nurturing image, and it can be supposed that on an unconscious plane she is cool since she is nonsexual. Perhaps for this reason *pulque* (cold), the maguay beer, is sometimes called "milk of the virgin" or "blood of Holy Mary."

The difference between sex and milk—

hot and cold—has still other manifestations. Mothers, for example, should not have intercourse for a year after giving birth since pregnancy "cuts off the mother's milk." Pregnancy, which is hot apparently because it is accompanied by special food cravings,<sup>4</sup> is inconsistent with the giving of milk, which is cold. A common slang word in Tlayacapan is *desmadre* (from the mother, or weaned), which figuratively means anything profane, particularly sexual jokes. In these usages the hotness of sex and pregnancy is contrasted to the coldness of nurturing.<sup>5</sup>

Ideally a Tlayacapense is not too aggressive or miserly, nor is he a fool. Rather, he is respectful and engages in reciprocal exchanges. He both takes and gives and in this sense is hot and cold. One Tlayacapense said an ideal man should be neither good nor bad. Similarly, a village expression, *fuerte, feo, y formal*, implies that a man should be strong and tough (hot), ugly and unassuming (cold), and well-mannered (hot and cold).<sup>6</sup> Another saying asserts that to ask too much is to be greedy, to ask too little is to be foolish, and thus it is better to be quiet. Prescriptions for ideal character appear to have the same structure of hot and cold plus a combination of hot and cold that occurs in village culinary practice.

The abusive macho and the productive miser are observable character types in Tlayacapan. After traveling in the Morelos area more than a century ago, Edward Tylor described these two types of social character by noting that some peasants buried their money whereas others were inclined to squander it on drinking and gambling (Tylor 1861:197). In Morelos, heavy drinking and gambling are expressions of machismo. In a factor analytic study of personality in a village not far from Tlayacapan, Maccoby (1967) found machismo and hoarding orientations to be common but negatively correlated. In Tlayacapan, men who are more given to machismo behavior produce less achievement imagery in response to Thematic Apperception Test pictures than do other men (Ingham 1968). In practice it is the productive-hoarding peas-

ant who is most committed to respectful behavior, a pattern that is reflected in local humor. There are many jokes in which a sexually abusive character makes a fool of a more productive and respectful figure. In other jokes about *compadres* (co-godfathers) an abusive person violates the respectful *compadrazgo* relationship by seeking to take advantage of his richer and more respectful *compadre* but fails and becomes himself a fool. These jokes are allegories about a social order in which one peasant may find another too abusive, whereas the latter may see the other as too stingy, yet neither wants to appear foolish. The hot/cold system and related verbal usages provide a common semantic framework within which each peasant, from the perspective of his character structure, may condemn the excesses of others: acquisitive people may be abusive or hoarding, but as they interact they either turn each other into fools or they practice mutual respect and reciprocity.

I suspect that the orientations of machismo and miserliness are historically rooted in the socioeconomic conditions of preindustrial peasantry, particularly in the fact that peasants have been the rural members of larger orders containing markets and exploitative elites. Redfield noticed the mixed nature of this order:

The peasant society exists by virtue of the traditional moral solidarity to be found in any isolated folk society; kinship relationships are still of first importance; the ends of living are implicit and strongly felt. On the other hand, the peasant makes certain elements of civilization a part of his life: a trading spirit, money, formal and impersonal controls, whether economic or political. . . . The peasant style of life is a balanced adjustment between moral order and technical order [1953:39-40].

It is well known that prestige is acquired by conspicuous giving in primitive societies and by conspicuous consumption in industrialized ones (Erasmus 1961). It has often been observed that as primitive cultures are assimilated into industrialized market societies social conflicts develop over communal

obligations (conspicuous giving) and individual inclinations to consume. Redfield put too much stress on the extent to which peasantry is a transitional stage between folk and urban, moral and technical, but peasants do have to handle the structural problem inherent in that transition. As Redfield noted, peasants have both market and non-market exchange systems; they live in societies that contain both profit making and institutions of reciprocity and redistribution that award conspicuous giving. In primitive societies that lack money and powerful elites there are fewer opportunities for sustained acquisitive behavior and hence greed is less of a social issue than for peasants who experience good as limited while being exposed to markets and exploitative political and economic controls. Thus giving is linked to goodness and power in a primitive society such as the Purum, whereas in a peasant community such as Tlayacapan giving may be related to goodness, but not to power, and taking has a connotation of evil, but not one of weakness.<sup>7</sup> In Tlayacapan the Devil is seen as wealthy, potent, and evil. In village humor the "Indian" is portrayed as humble, innocent, and exploitable; his goodness is viewed as foolishness.

Machismo and miserliness recall two social stations in the preindustrial agricultural society, that of the landed aristocrat and that of the merchant. Tlayacapan is an upland village on the northern edge of the sugar cane growing areas of Morelos. Before the Revolution of 1910 the Valley of Morelos was dominated by haciendas, and to a certain extent it still is. Tlayacapan, like many other independent towns and villages, lost a large tract of its communal land to encroaching haciendas. In the village itself a small Spanish elite ruled what was otherwise an Indian community in which many people spoke Nahuatl.<sup>8</sup> These Spaniards, unlike the pajama-clad peasants, wore elegant clothing and lived in expensive houses. They owned the local stores and most of the village land, which they let out to sharecroppers. They also loaned money at exorbitant rates. In Morelos, the macho, like the hac-

endado of earlier times, amasses power and valor. The hoarding peasant, like the merchant, saves his money. Interestingly, the Devil has two images that reflect these roles: he is sometimes seen as an hacendado-like figure on horseback (during the Colonial period only Spaniards were allowed to ride horses) or in another guise he is a well-dressed city slicker, a merchant who trades for souls.

The associations of hotness and appetite, on the one hand, and coldness and exploitability, on the other, suggest a solution to the puzzle that hot and cold both attract and displace each other. Since hotness is connected with appetite, perhaps hot absorbs cold. Cold, by contrast, may displace hot because, as the Greeks noticed, it is denser than hot, and also because it is water's nature to resist fire, even while nurturing it. Indeed, such a process is explicitly stated in *calor subido* wherein entering cold displaces heat upward and an external application of heat is used to draw out the cold so the risen heat can descend. If hot and cold generally have these contrary functions, then it follows that whenever they are in contact both displacement and absorption will occur. This may explain why in some instances (e.g., *los aires* and *enlechado*) hot seems to displace cold.

Historical and ethnographic evidence, then, suggest, that within a tradition having its roots in preindustrial Mediterranean culture, hot implies consumption and cold implies giving. These qualities reflect the orientations of two social strata—the strong and the weak—and their mutual relationship. The effort to balance hot and cold is a symbolic attempt to secure an equitable social order, or more precisely, reciprocity and ideal social character.

"Getting ahead" is a common orientation in a consumer economy, whereas conspicuous giving is more valued in a so-called primitive one. Peasant societies have structural features typical of both. ~~These~~ features evoke primitive motives of greed and voracity. Through the mediation of hot and cold the