

START

MICROFILM COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS ON AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Series IX

No.

60

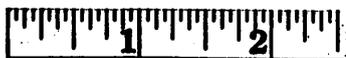
Formerly: Microfilm Collections of Manuscripts
on the Middle American Cultural Anthropology

Photographed by:

--

Department of Photoduplication, The University of Chicago Library
Swift Hall Chicago 37, Illinois

Reduction Ratio:



WITCHCRAFT AND CURING
IN TWO TZELTAL COMMUNITIES

by

Albert L. Wahrhaftig

MICROFILM COLLECTION
OF MANUSCRIPTS ON AMERICAN INDIAN
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

No. 60

Series

University of Chicago Library
Chicago, Illinois
1960

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

WITCHCRAFT AND CURING IN TWO TZELTAL COMMUNITIES

A PAPER SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

BY
ALBERT L. WAHRHAFTIG

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
AUGUST, 1960

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	111
INTRODUCTION	1
I: OXCHUC SOCIAL STRUCTURE	3
II: WITCHCRAFT AND CURING IN OXCHUC	12
III: AMATENANGO SOCIAL STRUCTURE	22
IV: WITCHCRAFT AND CURING IN AMATENANGO	31
V: THE FUNCTIONS OF WITCHCRAFT AND CURING IN TWO TZEL- TAL COMMUNITIES	41
SUMMARY	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1 MOTIVES FOR WITCHCRAFT	16
2 FEATURES OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN AMATENANGO AND OICHUC	41
3 FEATURES OF WITCHCRAFT AND CURING IN AMATENANGO AND OICHUC	42

INTRODUCTION

It is surprising, considering the amount of attention paid to the subject by anthropologists dealing with other parts of the world, that to date there has been no comprehensive study of the functions of witchcraft and curing in a Middle American society. The supernatural beliefs of Middle American Indians have long been an object of fascination. As early as the end of the last century Brinton (1864) and others of his time began to study the concept of the nagual. More recent studies have contributed a quantity of information dealing with disease and its treatment (Adams 1952) and nearly every modern monograph to come from Middle America has mentioned the ubiquity of witchcraft. In a recent reexamination of the subject, Ablon (1958) has suggested a number of questions for future fieldwork on witchcraft in Middle America. She recommends that inquiry be focused around the following questions: (1) What is the nature of the witch and his powers? (2) What are the grounds for the accusation of witchcraft? (3) What is the place of witchcraft in Middle American society? (4) What is the historical perspective of witchcraft (as reconstructed from documentary sources)?

This paper attempts to answer the first three of these questions in a study based on existing materials from two Middle American communities. The two communities were chosen because (1) they have been the scene of recent and comprehensive anthropological field work and (2) because in spite of their basic similarities the form of witchcraft and curing existing in each is quite different.

Amatenango and Oxchuc are communities of Tzeltal speaking Indians in the highlands of southeastern Chiapas, Mexico. They share a way of life common to the entire Tzeltal-Tzotzil speaking area of this state. They are agrarian communities whose subsistence crops are corn, beans and squash. They share a common Mayan and Spanish heritage. They exist as Indian enclaves in a rapidly modernizing region of rural Mexico. Structurally, the communities are nearly polar opposites: Oxchuc has a patrilineal kinship system and a dispersed settlement pattern; Amatenango has a bilateral kinship system and a nucleated settlement pattern. In terms of social structure and in terms of the type of witchcraft practiced these communities represent two widespread variants within a regional pattern.

In this paper a chapter is devoted to describing the social structure and a chapter is devoted to describing the witchcraft and curing in each of the two communities. A concluding chapter analyzes the nature and function of witchcraft and curing in these communities.

I: OXCHUC SOCIAL STRUCTURE

This chapter does not purport to be a complete summary of Oxchuc social organization as reported in the work of Villa Rojas (1946, 1947) and Siverts (1956, 1960). That task has already been accomplished most competently by J. Nash (1959b). Instead, only such ethnographic information as is necessary for an understanding of the context of witchcraft in Oxchuc is introduced here. The relevant units of social organization: the paraje, lineage, clan, calpul, and civil-religious hierarchy are presented in such a way that their significance as environments within which social control is maintained may be discussed. The chapter concludes with an indication of the points of view from which the integration of the municipio as a whole may be considered.

Oxchuc is a community of Tzeltal speaking Indians in the highlands of the state of Chiapas, Mexico. It is an endogamous community of what Tax (1937) has called the vacant town type. The population in 1942 was 3,034 Indians and 400-500 ladinos. The permanent ladino population is clustered in a ceremonial center. The majority of Indian residents of the center, however, have come to spend a term as political and religious officers of the community and then return to a permanent home in one of the hamlets or parajes scattered throughout the surrounding countryside. The center is the focus of a civil-religious organization corresponding closely to the centripetal type described by Camara (1952).

The paraje is the center of daily interaction, a little community in its own right, often with its own market. In the eight parajes for which Villa recorded census data, population ranged between 24 and 156. Within the paraje, a preference for patrilocal residence and patrilineal inheritance of land is reflected in the settlement pattern (J. Nash 1959b: fig. 1) and, from the census data on the paraje of Yechib (J. Nash 1959b: table 2) a preference for residence in nuclear families (67%) is indicated.

Oxchuc kinship terminology is essentially of the Omaha type (B. Metzger 1959, J. Nash 1959b) and is found in Oxchuc with features which Villa associated with patrilineal clan organization.

Each individual has a double surname. The first surname is Spanish, the second is Tseltal. Both are inherited patrilineally. A given Tseltal surname can combine with one and only one Spanish surname. A given Spanish surname can combine with any of a number of Tseltal surnames. Villa refers to individuals united by the same Tseltal surname as a lineage and people united by the same Spanish surname as a clan.

There are six clans in Oxchuc. Two are reduced to one lineage each and are relatively insignificant. The four major clans tend to be represented in each paraje. Villa goes so far as to say (1946:580) that "the clan is the individual's most important affiliation in matters of kinship inheritance and property rights." Oxchuqueros do, at least, recognize the clan as a unit. There is a term, shapomal or tijimabel which serves to designate a fellow clansman, although the genealogical link to

ego is not always known. The clan is the unit within which exogamy is maintained through a preference for bilateral cross cousin marriage. Funerals are one of the few occasions when clanship can be noted as an organizing principle. Ordinarily clansmen do not give special preference to one another. Reciprocal labor, for instance, is not practiced between clansmen. Although the relationship between clansmen is not ordinarily important, the relationship between clansman and clan elder is important. The "elders" of a clan are those members who "because of age, service in the civil-religious hierarchy, or ability in curing and divining, or a combination of these characteristics, have acquired prestige" (J. Nash 1959b:11). Kinship terms such as tajun or tatil are often extended to denote these men. Their responsibilities lie mainly within the area of social control. They are involved in marriage arrangements, land and inheritance arrangements and in settling disputes. Their position as clan elders or heads is augmented by supernatural power as witches which, theoretically, can be exercised only within the clan. Thus, the clan is not a unilineal group welded by specific bonds of kinship and perpetuity to an estate as conceived by Radcliffe-Brown (1935) and Fortes (1953), but a group structured by relationships of power, authority and respect. It centers not around claims to an "estate," but is structured, in Weber's terms (1947: 145), by ties to chiefs whose regular function is to enforce an "order" upon a closed group.

Lineages, groups identified by a common Tseltal surname, share on a smaller scale the general characteristics of the clan. In addition, they serve to structure land holding through patri-

lineal inheritance to male offspring only. There are indications that the lineage was once more important than at present, particularly for structuring cooperative labor within contiguous lineage landholdings. However, now, as J. Nash observes (1959b:13), "when Villa Rojas describes the 'lineage' functioning as a group, the participants include only brothers in addition to the members of the household group."

Clans and lineages alike currently find their main raison d'être as mechanisms of social control. As Villa summarizes the situation:

The direct control of each Oxchuc lineage is in the hands of the oldest members; the same is true for the clan. Authority resides in them; their prestige and magic powers enable them to deal adequately with most problems confronting the group. If there is a conflict or crime or sickness within a given family, the first step is to call in the elders of the corresponding lineage; if necessary the matter may go before the leaders of the clan to which the lineage belongs, and if still unsettled the matter goes in the last instance to the chiefs of the calpul to which litigants belong....

Excepting exceptional cases, control functions are contained within this framework. Villa continues:

...Only in extreme and rare cases does one go before the municipal authorities in the main town; these officials act as a link between the local government and the political system of the State. (1947:581)

The municipio of Oxchuc is divided into two calpules. Membership in a calpul is theoretically a matter of personal choice. In practice, however, men usually belong to their father's or grandfather's calpul. Villa (1946:580) describes the calpul as "nothing but a large fraternity where people of greater age and prestige occupy positions as parents and guardians." This is to say that each calpul defines a group from which a

civil-religious hierarchy is chosen. The complete hierarchy then has a complete set of officers for each calpul.

Oxchuc's civil-religious hierarchy differs in one important way from the "model" presented by Cámara (1952) and by Redfield and Tax (1952:34). The highest officials are chosen not only for their age, experience and previous service, but also because of their proven ability as diviners and witches. One office, that of dzunubil, is occupied by men specifically charged with maintaining morals and customs within the calpul through punishment by witchcraft. Their duty includes punishing principales, other witches and pulsers when necessary. Their sanction is a double one of political position and supernatural power.

With this information and interpretation as background, three questions may now be taken up: (1) What are the main relationships which structure the municipio as a whole? (2) What are the main points of conflict and weakness within these structures? (3) What is the nature of the stability of the municipio?

1. Kinship, particularly in its extension beyond the nuclear family, seems to do little more than lay down the structure for jural action. Calpul officers with community-wide powers are chosen on a basis exclusive of kinship. Clan and lineage frame the authority structure of defined units. As reservoirs of reciprocable labor and aid their functions are cut to a minimum, and as land controlling bodies their jurisdiction overrides individual property rights only when a man dies without issue. The most important and pervasive element of the kinship system is the principle of age-respect, reflected in

kinship terminology. The behavioral relationship with respect to consanguineal elders is one of respect combined with closeness (parent-child, grandparent-grandchild) while toward affinal elders it is one of respect enforced by fear and anxiety.

It is the extension of this principle of age-respect from nuclear family to lineage to clan to salpul which is a keynote of Oxchuc social organization. Each unit within the community has a locus of authority, chiefs whose power grows with age and is augmented by an associated supernatural power, and, as will be described, built in points of conflict and weakness.

This hierarchy of authority provides a framework for social control within the community and specifically for the maintenance of economic egalitarianism. Oxchuc is faced with a land shortage that was evident during Villa's stay and described as "an outstanding problem" by Siverts (1960) a decade later, and with the encroachment of ladinos. Oxchuc approximates Wolf's model of the closed corporate community which equalizes "the life chances and life risks of its members" by forcing them to "redistribute or to destroy any pool of accumulated wealth which could potentially be used to alter the land tenure balance in favor of a few individual families or individuals" (Wolf, 1957: 12). Such diverse institutions as the civil-religious hierarchy, the series of marriage payments to the wife's kinsmen and the fiesta cycle have redistributive aspects. The habit of storing corn in secret places and of planting crops, once the amount of fifty or sixty maxorcas is reached, in small scattered plots are examples of attempts to avoid the envy of neighbors and their sanctioning of any accumulation or display of wealth.

Economic egalitarianism within a redistributive economy enforced by a hierarchy of positions of authority is a notable principle of Oxchuc social organization.

2. Points of conflict and breakdown are legion at all levels within the municipio.

Within the family group, the relationships between husband and wife and between wife and co-wife are particularly explosive. Marriage is brittle. Although a man is shamed if his wife leaves him and although wives are expected to suffer abuse from their husbands, Villa's notes are colored with frequent cases of separations and the entanglements resulting from them. The relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is marred by the daughter-in-law's fear of being expelled from the family for barrenness or laziness and the mother-in-law's jealousy which manifests itself in accusations of sexual relations between daughter-in-law and father-in-law. The relation between father-in-law and son-in-law is no less a source of tension, both during the period of service associated with matri-patrilineal marriage and thereafter. Sons-in-law attempt to appease their fathers-in-law through frequent visiting and gifts of liquor and complain that the old men demand still more attention. Family drinking parties frequently end as bloody brawls with liquor kindling suppressed hostilities.

Reduction in the scope of cooperative labor and landownership within the last century and the recent innovation of selling land produce disputes. Similarly, the tendency for marriage arrangements to pass out of lineage and clan control through attenuation of the series of payments of liquor and bride capture

are sources of conflict.

Difficulties in keeping hierarchy offices filled bring problems for calpul officers. B. Metzger (1959) suggests the possibility that calpules were once territorial and have been affected by relaxation in criteria governing membership. As further evidence of relaxation of rules within the calpul she cites the tendency to treat all old men as equally powerful and worthy of respect and to take disputes to whichever principal is available at the time regardless of relationship or calpul affiliation.

The conversion of more than 50% of the population to Protestantism during the decade 1940-1950 (Slocum 1956, Siverts 1956) and the rapid formation of two political parties founded on an adherence to the Presbyterian Church of Corralito on one hand and Acción Católica on the other between 1948 and 1954 (Siverts 1960) as well as the passing of control from the older diviners to young literate Protestant leaders (Slocum 1956) indicate the rapid acceptance of new alternatives and suggests fundamental discontents with the traditional system.

3. Villa's original field notes and his one published article on Oxchuc give the feeling that he is describing a well integrated patrilineal society. While aware of both overt animosities and "an atmosphere of resentment, antagonism, and hypocrisy among relatives who do not live together" (1947:586) he leaves an impression that the social structure is stable and even suggests in concluding his article that the community represents a pre-Hispanic model of social organization in this area.

Neither B. Metzger nor J. Nash, working from Villa's notes, emphasizes this stability. B. Metzger (1959) sees Oxchuc kinship as being a system in transition towards greater bilaterality. J. Nash (1959b) catalogues the points of conflict in the society and concludes by stressing the increasing importance of neighborhood groups as opposed to kin groups and the weakening of social control based on age and witchcraft as social relations expand to a community-wide network linked to the national government.

We, too, prefer to see Oxchuc as a community in a situation of change--deferring, at least for the moment, the questions of change from what to what, and of whether the change stems from internal or external pressures--and to suggest that this change, plus the inherent needs of a corporate community, tend to create a demand for a particularly clear hierarchy of social control. We would suggest in passing that the transition from a kin based society to a neighborhood society, to the extent that it occurs, creates a specially great amount of ambiguity and conflict in this society.

II: WITCHCRAFT AND CURING IN OXCHUC

In Oxchuc belief, illness which does not respond promptly and favorably to treatment with "ordinary" medicines is a punishment. Such punishment may be sent either by humans or by superhumans. The latter, illness due to supernatural agents or agencies, e.g., "naire" or theft of the soul by the guardian spirit of a local cave or ravine, are relatively rare and of little apparent importance. After diagnosis by pulsers the victim is cured by a variety of means--infusions of herbs and spices, massage, sucking, etc.--always accompanied by prayers led by the dsunubil at the house's altar. Far more commonly, serious illness and sometimes even accidents are attributed to witchcraft. Indeed, Villa (1946:241) sees witchcraft beliefs to be "the most important cause for social unrest" in Oxchuc.

Belief in the nagual is at the heart of the Oxchuc theory of witchcraft. Throughout Middle America, each man's soul is assumed to have an animal counterpart (Brinton 1894, Foster 1944). In Oxchuc this animal element of the soul, the nagual, is the instrumentality through which one may endanger the soul, and hence the wellbeing, of another. Certain men are thought to "possess" their nagual. This is to say that they know the identity of the nagual and can command it at will. Under cover of darkness, the nagual can be sent to the house of a victim night after night to eat a bit of his soul each time, or to cause other damage. The act of witchcraft, then, consists of one man sending his nagual to attach the soul of another.

In the course of tampering with the human body, the nagual leaves its "mark" behind, a mark which, properly "read," reveals the identity of the nagual and of its human "owner." The "owner" of a nagual is a witch (agchamel), a man who invariably has the power to cure as well as to harm.

While all witches can cure, there are curers who lack the power to bewitch. These are the "pulsers" (pikabil) whose control of the supernatural is restricted to that needed for diagnosis and for conducting curing ceremonies.

Thus in considering the personnel involved in witchcraft we find a familiar identity: those who have the power, real or potential, to bewitch, have the power to cure witchcraft. Consideration of the curing of witchcraft in Oxchuc reveals the consistency of this arrangement. Illness is sent by witches as punishment, but this punishment is intended not as retribution but as a step leading to reconciliation. It is not until the witch is identified, the transgression being punished understood, and the matter discussed publicly among witches and victims that the illness ceases. To understand the operation of this process, we must discuss the curing ceremony, the motives for witchcraft and the status of witches in Oxchuc social structure.

When a man begins to suspect that the injuries that he or his family are suffering are some way not due to natural causes, he brings his case to a group of curers and/or witches. On the whole, the greater the number and the greater their power and prestige, the better. Commonly, the services of three or four curers acting as a body will be solicited. At other times, advantage may be taken of a meeting when the curers are gathered

for other purposes. The patient intrudes, presents his case, and thus gains the services (albeit sometimes cursory and impatient) of as many as eight curers. The curers commence their diagnosis by taking, each in turn, the pulse of the victim and, often, his spouse, parents, or children. The pulse is taken in one or both arms. A slow pulse is a sign that a witch is responsible for the trouble. Next the curers commence to question the victim and, if they are present, his parents. The questioning amounts to an examination of occasions for social misconduct within a period of as much as the past fifteen years. The victim's relations with his spouse, his parents and elders, his in-laws, his "concubines," former wives and illicit sexual partners come in for particular scrutiny. Armed with a number of possible causes of grievance, the curers once again pulse the victim, naming each of the persons with whom the patient may have had a falling-out and waiting for the blood to "talk," for the pulse to leap and so name the witch. Each curer in turn announces the name of the person whose "mark" he has found in the pulse. Not infrequently an accusation will be leveled against one of the witches present and diagnosing. At other times, the accused witch is immediately summoned and is present and a participant for the rest of the diagnosis. Invariably the accused witch or witches deny responsibility and insist on a repetition of the pulsing. Argument among the curers may then become heated and ingenious. Seldom does a witch admit his guilt outright. Usually increasing unanimity of the other curers and witches is complemented by a diminuendo in the argument of the accused. Eventually one of the witches will accept responsibility for the

witchcraft and will reveal the motives which compelled him to injure the victim. The session ends with promises to suspend the illness promptly, for the victim knows what he has been doing wrong and is expected to cease his impropriety and benefit by the purifying effect of confession. Often, seemingly as a ratification of this informal contract, a witch or relatives of the victim will administer a light flogging to those who have behaved improperly.

Publicity is a striking aspect of these proceedings. A number of witches and, usually, several relatives of the victim are involved in the curing session. The diagnosis is public and the name of the witch responsible is revealed to all. Whenever possible, victim and witch are brought face to face and are encouraged to make their peace. In the rare case where the witch still persists in his activities, the civil authorities of the municipio cooperate by jailing the witch until the patient shows improvement.

Motives for witchcraft in Oxchuc have two major foci: violations of general moral codes and failures to fulfill specific expectations of the society. An analysis of the cases presented in Villa's notes (1946:224-337) reveals 86 witchcraft accusations. These are catalogued in Table 1 on next page.

Firth (1959:135) has suggested that anthropologists explain witchcraft in terms of

Statements ... made, and actions performed, in terms of the existence of invisible power, usually malevolent, activated by the hostility, envy, etc. of persons in specific social categories relative to others. Witchcraft accusations and behavior related thereto represent one way of saying things about other members of the society which cannot be said overtly because of lack of sophistication in analysis or of inhibition in other forms of manifesting aggression.

TABLE 1. MOTIVES FOR WITCHCRAFT

Motive	Number of Cases
Conflict between children-in-law and parents-in-law	12
Longstanding disputes ("feuds")	12
Marriage and securing of "concubines":	
Securing the girl	3
Abandoning wife	3
Involvement in arranging an unsuccess- ful marriage	8
Disputes over payment of liquor for marriage ceremonies	4
Land disputes	8
Gossip	6
Envy	4
Enforcement of tradition:	
Sending children to school	2
Refusal to take a <u>cargo</u>	2
Failure to repay a loan	1
Failure to present gifts to elders	1
Failure to invite to a social affair someone who has a right to be there	3
"Sins"	2
Unknown	15
TOTAL	86

For one dimension of Oxchuc witchcraft this holds true. The parallelism between witchcraft accusations and conflict centering around married couples, in-law relationships, wife procurement and fissures in the landholding system is obvious. The curing ceremony provides a framework in which conflicts of this sort may be publicly and legitimately expressed and the persons involved can be reconciled. But not all the cases appearing in this analysis or alluded to elsewhere in Villa's text arise in such functionally specific relationships. Witchcraft also enters to enforce highly generalized norms as a sanction against gossip and envy and enforcing adherence to such general duties as accepting gargos and respecting elders. In cases arising both on the level of violation of specific duties and of general principles, witchcraft sanctions the traditional moral order of the society. As Villa concludes (1946:241), "in general it can be said that an individual whose conduct would be contrary to the morals or the interests of the group is likely to fall under the sanction of witchcraft."

Witches are the society's policemen, vigilant in the enforcement of tradition. Through their naguales they are clairvoyant, "able to know the thoughts and actions of their subordinates and thus mete out punishment" (Villa Rojas 1947:584). Their supernatural power is largely ascribed. Villa reports (1947:584) that sooner or later a nagual will be attributed to

all persons of any prestige, authority, or only considerable age within each lineage, clan or calpul, because it seems inconceivable that anybody would have those qualities and not have a nagual. As soon as a man begins to age, rumor spreads that he has a nagual and he is able to do harm if his wrath be incurred. People who in addition to age, are imperious and energetic personalities are most likely to be accused of harbouring a nagual.

Witches are not simply men aided by their control of the supernatural, but men who occupy loci at which all the routes to power built into their society's structure converge. They are male, old, powerful within their lineage, clan and calpul and forceful of personality. There is a legitimate status built into the civil religious hierarchy to be occupied by witches whose role is to protect the "morals and good customs of the calpul." For this office men who have exceptional abilities as pulsers and witches are chosen and are permitted to cause or counter the illnesses of witchcraft. They are avenging angels, witching legitimately and saving those illegitimately witched. Although feared in the way that all sinners fear their mentors, witches are men of honor and respect. The choice places and best foods at social gatherings are reserved for them.

Ideally, Oxehuc witchcraft consists of a system in which men who have moved into the positions of power within the society, and who having done so are aged, wise, and experienced, exercise the moral power of the society upon its members. They are, in Weber's terms (1947:145, 160) the "chiefs" whose regular function it is to enforce the "order" of a corporate group, the obvious and public locus of power within the corporate community.

In reality, this system does not operate without loopholes. The case of Isidro Gomez Ichilek, as reconstructed from Villa's notes, is illustrative:

When Isidro first appears in Villa's notes on witchcraft, he has visited three groups of pulsers in the last few days, seeking the cause of the illness which has been plaguing him. The first group of pulsers told him that the Principales of the pueblo were bewitching him because he had refused to accept the office of Regidor. Not satisfied with this diagnosis Isidro visited other pulsers who told him that Marcus Lopes Balte was bewitching him. Marcus accused Isidro

of causing the eye disease from which his wife was suffering, but behind all this lay a year-old dispute rooted in the fact that Isidro "sponsored" his niece in an unsuccessful marriage with Marcos' son. Isidro, however, tried pulsing yet a third time and this time Gaspar Santis Murino was named as the witch. Gaspar had reason to be angry at Isidro because he wanted Catarina Gomez Ichilok as a second wife for his son. Instead, Isidro, who was responsible for Catarina, gave her to Domingo López Tib. Isidro was satisfied with this explanation and decided to arrange a reconciliation with Gaspar.

A month later the reconciliation was held and Gaspar and Isidro drank together. Unfortunately, the affair ended in a brawl with each reviling the other for past crimes and injustices. The next day Isidro fell sick and requested his neighbor Manuel Gómez Bet to pulse him. Manuel assured Isidro that the illness was due to his recent fight. To assuage the witch's anger, Manuel gave Isidro a flogging.

Towards the end of the same month, Isidro still felt no better. He asked Manuel Gómez Bet and Domingo Méndez Chizna to pulse him and invited all the men of his lineage to attend the session to show they bore him no ill will. Again Marcos López Balte was cited as the witch and the same motives were imputed to him. Again Isidro was whipped to dispel the witch's anger.

Two weeks later, Isidro requested pulsing again, this time of Juan Gómez Mich, Manuel Gómez Bet, Juan Gómez Morales, and Domingo Méndez Chizna. They decided that Diego Gómez Ichilok (Isidro's FaBrSoSo) was bewitching him because of a dispute concerning the marriage of Diego's son and Isidro's step-daughter, a part of a long-standing dispute between the two.

Soon after, a reconciliation between the two men was effected and the matter was patched up.

Two weeks later, Isidro began accusing Diego of bewitching him again.

By this time, Isidro's neighbors had become convinced that it is really the Principales who are witching him because he still hadn't accepted a cargo. His neighbors were sure he would die soon.

Apparently the case was unrecolved when Villa left the field. While most people apparently accept the verdict of pulse at face value, some few, like Isidro, accept their verdict only, as it were momentarily. Then, deciding that the decision does not suit them, they start another cycle of accusation and pulsing. While the curing ceremony may not be effective in helping such a person to alleviate his anxieties, his plight is publicized and his case serves as an example to his neighbors. The

effect of witchcraft on the individual here is dubitable, but the effect on the public is clearly educative.

Such a system of overt and authoritarian control does not operate without engendering bitterness and resentment. No one takes kindly to being bewitched, particularly when the witchcraft is rooted in personal conflict. There is always the suspicion that witches will pervert their powers and use them towards evil ends. Hence there are accusations, for instance, that the head of a clan is killing a man's children through witchcraft so that when the man dies without heirs the witch will have control of the land. It would not be surprising if a man assassinated a witch whom he considered to be oppressing him. Yet a double system of checks prevents this. The first is that to kill a witch is also to kill a man of respect who is also likely to be a clan and calpul leader--a man whose destruction would be a serious crime from many points of view. The second is the certainty of revenge by fellow witches, clansmen, and civil officials. Further, the nature of the system which elevates witches to power provides, up to a point, checks on that power. Witches are old, but there are usually older men to control them. They have important positions in clan and calpul, but there are usually more important men to control them. They have supernatural power, but there are dsunubiles whose duty it is to avenge those injured by the abuse of supernatural powers.

Theoretically, only those witches who are the oldest and most powerful men in the community, and who hold the highest cargo and clan positions have outlived the controls which deter them from using their powers maliciously. These few men are the

most feared in the community and the least capable of being controlled. Perhaps the only sanction which can be applied to men who reach this position is assassination. It is suggested that the only two witchcraft killings during the seven years for which Villa had information were of very old people, heads of clans, to many cases of illness and death were attributed (Villa Rojas 1947:585).

Oxchuc presents a system of witchcraft which is, in effect, a means of providing a clearly defined locus of power and means of administration through which the customs and traditional sanctions of the community are enforced. While, in Kluckhohn's sense (1943), the psychological "costs" of constantly living in fear of witches may be high, the system operated to settle many disputes with a minimum of violence and bloodshed.

III: AMATENANGO SOCIAL STRUCTURE

This chapter does not purport to replicate the summaries of Amatenango social organization presented by June Nash (1959a, 1960a) and Manning Nash (1959a, 1959b). Instead, only such ethnographic information as is necessary for an understanding of the context of witchcraft and curing in Amatenango is introduced here. General contrasts with Oxshuc are drawn, particularly with regard to mechanisms for enforcing homogeneity within the community and alternatives for settling disputes.

Amatenango is a community of Tseltal speaking Indians in the highlands of the state of Chiapas, Mexico. It is located just off the Pan-American highway and within 44 kilometers of San Cristóbal de las Casas, the largest city within the Tseltal-Tsotsil region. Amatenango is an endogamous community of what Tax (1937) has called the town-nucleus type; that is, a nucleated pueblo with a rural periphery. Of the 2,529 residents of the municipio, 1,337 persons are permanent residents of the town center. Most of the remainder live in four barrios within view of the town center. In addition to the Indian population 500 ladino sawmill workers reside within the municipio. There are also three small settlements of ladino farmers. Although these ladinos share the town's facilities, the Indians regard them as "foreigners" and have but limited and superficial contact with them.

On the whole, Amatenango has greater and more frequent contacts with the "outside" world of Mexicans than does Oxshuc.

A Catholic priest, sometimes assisted by lay sisters, visits the town regularly. The Mexican government operates two schools within the municipio. The Institute Nacional Indigenista (INI) operates a cooperative store and maintains promotores who assist in nursing and practical education within the town. Commercial traffic to neighboring towns is heavy. All women in the village make pots and the men make frequent trips north to Teopisca and San Cristóbal, west to Villa Las Rosas and south as far as Comitán to sell loads of pottery.

Notwithstanding these frequent occasions for culture contact, Amatenango strikes the visitor as an independent and very "Indian" town.

Unlike Oxehus where the focus of everyday life is the hamlet, life in Amatenango is concentrated within the densely populated center. The center is formally divided by an imaginary line through the middle into two divisions. The divisions are endogamous. Within each of the divisions are a number of neighborhoods. Only two of these neighborhoods are spatially set off and named. The other neighborhoods, though not formally named, are the domain of bilateral kindred formed through a preference for residence close to one's parents and other siblings after marriage.

Amatenango appears to be a tightly knit community with neighborhood clusters of parents and children, siblings and affinals. Kinship and inheritance are reckoned bilaterally. Although there are patrilineal emphases in Indian surnames associated with Spanish name groups and in the manner of paying bride price, these features are no longer related to functional groups

organized on lineage principles. Genealogies tend to be "shallow" usually confined to three generations, but there is a wide horizontal spread of interacting kin. J. Nash (1959a:21) records informants who were able to name up to 180 kin with no hesitation. Nearly three-fourths of households are composed of nuclear families. Of those families who live in compound households or compound sitios equal numbers are virilocal and uxerilocal, thus indicating a lack of lineal preference in residence. (J. Nash 1959a:31). There is a strong preference for marriage with neighbors within the immediate neighborhood. Of 178 marriages analyzed, over one-third were between partners living within the same block or closer (J. Nash 1959a:30).

The picture of social life within the densely settled and closely interrelated center of Amatenango is one of constant interaction between affinals as well as between collaterals and lineals--a situation in which the crystallization or the persistence of unilinear kin groups is inhibited (J. Nash 1960a:5). This contrasts strongly with the social relations within the parajes of Oxchuc. While in Oxchuc marriage is brittle and relations among in-laws are strained, in Amatenango the conjugal bond is strong. There is little adultery and husbands are usually not allowed to "get away" with mistreating wives. The bonds between parents-in-law are strong. Parents-in-law use the terms of compadrazgo in address and share a mutual and active concern with keeping the marriage of their children from breaking up. Relative to Oxchuc, the sibling group seems more cohesive in Amatenango. There is a marked preference for residence near to one's siblings. Almost a third of siblings live next door,

within the same house or in the same block (J. Nash 1959a:34). Cooperation between siblings in work groups, pottery making and fiesta-giving continues after marriage. Individuals also become integrated into their spouse's sibling group and cooperation extends to siblings-in-law, both male and female.

Correlative with the patrilocal residence and patrilineal inheritance of land in Oxchuc is an extension of concern and fear of, and conflict with one's lineal elders, reinforced by the fear of witchcraft. In Amatenango where the horizontal spread of kindred is emphasized concern, fear and conflict center within the neighborhood group of interacting kinsmen and unrelated individuals. J. Nash suggests that the intensity of interaction in these small closed groups leads to a high frequency of conflict. The neighborhood community both creates and resolves many of its own conflicts. Conflicts in the family or involving married couples and in-laws--conflict situations where the parties concerned are usually interested in reestablishing peaceful social relationships--can be settled within the framework of curing ceremonies. But frequent interaction with unrelated neighbors brings conflict too. These recurrent opportunities for conflict bring about a sort of uneasy equilibrium:

Neighbors cannot be ignored, whether they be kin or non-related. They are the most likely to cast witchcraft in case of conflict, or when their envy is aroused. The neighborhood group judges witchcraft accusations. All households, and particularly those of the more powerful and wealthier members of the community, attempt to neutralize the neighbors by forming compadrazgo relations with them. Neighbors are invited to curing ceremonies, to the houses in which the Alferoces of a fiesta celebrate the saints' days, and to other household celebrations. Failure to do so would imperil members of the household, possibly making them subjects of witchcraft.

Finally, neighbors are the preferred source of spouses

for one's children, and as such, are frequently bound by affinal ties (J. Nash 1960a:82).

Coser (1956:81) has suggested that in contrast to primary relationships where conflicts are particularly intense because the "total person" is involved, there are secondary relationships in which conflicts are relatively less intense owing to the segmental involvement of the participants. In these secondary relationships, he argues, the presence of conflict may be taken as an index of the operation of a balancing mechanism. Such is what seems to be in operation in the Amatenango neighborhood. Possibilities of conflict with, and witchcraft from, neighbors are balanced against appeasement and reaffirmation of social relationships.

Public authority in Amatenango is vested in a civil-religious hierarchy composed of officers drawn equally from each of the town's divisions. The hierarchy is the formal body which maintains public order, requisitions the labor of the community on public projects, settles disputes, organizes fiestas, and deals with the Mexican nation and ladinos. In the hierarchy as in the community as a whole,

authority is acquired with advancing age as men assume the communal responsibilities of the civil-religious hierarchy. In the normal life cycle of the individual, the assumption of the roles of parent and grandparent brings one into a widening kin group in which one is accorded increasing respect and authority (J. Nash 1960a:10).

The civil-religious hierarchy in Amatenango lacks the one aspect that distinguishes the civil-religious hierarchy in Oxchuc. While certain officers are charged with religious functions such as organizing fiestas, there is no office corresponding to the dsunubil in Oxchuc who maintains morals and customs through

punishment by witchcraft. Power to divine, to cure, or to bewitch is not a qualification for civic office in Amatenango. Hence the personnel of the hierarchy do not participate in curing ceremonies, nor do their judgements bear the additional sanction of supernatural power.

As in Oxchuc, economic egalitarianism within a redistributive economy is an important feature of social organization. M. Nash (1959a:11) concludes that a low level of technology and limited land, fragmentation of estates by bilateral inheritance, time and resources expenditure in communal office and forced expenditure in ritual by the wealthy combine to keep the fortunes of various households nearly equivalent. The threat of witchcraft, particularly, deters the accumulation of power, prestige or wealth:

The delicate balance of interpersonal relationships is maintained by a rigorously defined homogeneous level of living. Any innovation or improvement in house or dress may subject one to the exercise of witchcraft by an envious neighbor. Families which control greater land wealth are indistinguishable in clothing or housing from the rest of the townspeople. Their expenditures go into the greater abundance of corn and meat consumed, in the greater exchange of liquor and chocolate and bread in marriages, and the assumption of the office of *Alferes* or positions in the civil-religious hierarchy. They differ from their poorer neighbors in their greater security and lack of indebtedness. Homogeneity in the community is assured by the payments of major exchanges of wealth at weddings and fiestas in the completely consumed good, alcohol (J. Nash 1960a:125).

In spite of informal sanctions against the individual accumulation of wealth, differences of wealth have become great enough to erode some of the area of social organization bound by reciprocal obligations (J. Nash 1960a:64).

Examination of the processes involved in settling a dispute reveal the interrelation of the various levels of the

municipio. In Oxchuc, it will be remembered, a dispute that cannot be solved within the family is brought to the head of the lineage concerned. If he is impotent, clan heads become involved in the dispute. If they lack success, the matter will be brought before the calpul officers, the civil-religious hierarchy. A dispute then passes into wider and wider groups of kinsmen. In the clan and calpul, the elders who judge a dispute as well as being the heads of a kinship unit, combine the powers of civic official and witch. All those who "judge" a dispute, including curers, are members of the same system of authority. In Amatenango, however, there is no such unbroken system of authority. If disputes cannot be settled within the family, a curing ceremony is called for. The curing ceremony unites the relevant members of the kindred plus whatever neighbors might have an interest in the matter. If the dispute cannot be resolved in this context, it passes out of the informal controls of the neighborhood. It is no longer the concern of a group of people united by daily interaction. The matter must then be presented to the civil-religious hierarchy--taken to court, in effect. The members of the civil-religious hierarchy are not united to the disputants through lineal bonds as in Oxchuc, nor have they been able to enter into the matter earlier as pulsers and curers, as in Oxchuc. Thus the problem moves abruptly out of a largely personal realm into a largely impersonal one. Further, since the judges do not have supernatural qualifications as in Oxchuc, their judgements have purely legal sanctions only. Finally, Amatenango judges do not have a virtual monopoly over the process of adjudicating disputes such as exists in

Oxchuc. Often a client is dissatisfied with the decision of this local court. Sometimes he will even fail to present his case there for fear that his case may be prejudged. When this occurs the case is brought to Mexican courts in the city of San Cristóbal. There the rules are different. This leaves uncertain the nature of local authority. While participants in a dispute may entrust the case to traditional authorities, there is always the possibility that a ladino court can overrule the decision of the local court.

As cases drag on into lengthy disputes, revenge enters as a motive, an event which often prompts accusations of witchcraft. Witchcraft and judicial process become intermixed. This poses a particular difficulty. While witchcraft may have been settled under traditional proceedings, witchcraft does not constitute a legitimate crime in ladino courts. To the extent that local courts proceed like ladino courts, or must anticipate appeal to ladino courts, witchcraft cannot be brought into court as a complaint. Disenfranchised from traditional justice, it must be settled elsewhere.

Structurally, Amatenango and Oxchuc share some basic similarities. Both are closed corporate peasant communities with redistributive economies and administrative hierarchies based on age-respect principle. While Oxchuc is structured by a lineal system that unites kin groups successively from the bottom of the society to the top when problems of conflict and discipline must be met, in Amatenango a hiatus appears between the closely united neighborhood and the community-wide civil-religious hierarchy in such circumstances. The apparent result

appears to be a greater capacity to settle disputes within the community in Oxchuc and a comparative inability to confine disputes within the limits of Amatenango's social structure.

IV: WITCHCRAFT AND CURING IN AMATENANGO

Sickness in Amatenango is either a castigo de Dios, a punishment from God, or the result of witchcraft. God sends illness as a punishment because people kill and steal. Beyond that, illness comes as punishment when personal relationships are bitter and troubled. When there is conflict in a household, a nursing baby may drink in the bitterness with his mother's milk and sicken, or his soul may wander away seeking escape in a happier place. Almost any sort of dissension may bring illness to adults. J. Nash (1960a) cites cases of a girl whose sickness was the result of conflict with her mother-in-law, of a child ill because of bickering between members of the household, of a girl who sickened because of a jealous quarrel with her husband, and of a boy whose sickness was attributed to a man who had been continuously quarreling with the family.

Should an Amatenanguero feel that an illness within his family is serious, he can consult one of the curers within the village. There are usually six or so curers within the town. They are male, mature, and like all other Amatenangueros, are farmers. Curing is a specialty they perform without pay.

As in Oxehuc, the curer diagnoses by pulsing. As long as there is no clear indication that witchcraft is being exercised the recommended remedy is a curing ceremony. Although the ceremony varies in detail according to the nature of the illness diagnosed, it always has the same basic form. All those who would have an interest in remedying the discord which has

caused the illness are invited. This includes a group of bilaterally related relatives of the patient. In case of discord between a married couple, the parents of both husband and wife would be included. According to the circumstances, neighbors and other collaterally related kin may be brought in. All of these are busied with the preparation for the ceremony, especially the preparation of food. As Gillin (1948) has noted, this busywork is in itself therapeutic. It tends to bind the patient and a circle of people important to him into a mutually important activity and to reaffirm their common interests.

The ceremony itself involves a process of questioning and confession.

In the course of the ceremony, the curer hears a full account of the quarrels which preceded the illness of the patient. The curer exercises moral judgment in the course of the tale, and may turn to others present to get confirmation in his pronouncements on the behavior of the people involved. ... The curer then attempts in the ceremony something akin to group therapy. The ceremony allows the members of the group to air grievances or to demonstrate support for a social relationship between two contending members of the group (J. Nash 1959a:61).

Drink, good food and music are an integral part of curing ceremonies. A convivial atmosphere is sought and food is offered to the soul of the house so that it will be happy and not eat the soul of the inhabitants.

In the curing ceremony, the patient's illness dramatizes a situation of discord. Effectively, it is a court in which relatives and neighbors give audience to a case in which social relationships are strained. The ceremony determines the source of conflict, reestablishes good feelings between estranged individuals and is believed to make the house itself a happier place to live in. When those who were in the wrong accept the judge-

ment of the group and attempt to adjust their behavior, the curing ceremony is an effective means of social control. Indeed, it is a preferred form. Taking household disputes into court is frowned on.

In its operation, the curing ceremony in Amatenango is very similar to the pulsing sessions in which cases of witchcraft are considered in Oxchuc. The two major differences are that the public ceremony in Oxchuc deals with cases of illness due to witchcraft while the public ceremony in Amatenango does not deal with cases of illness due to witchcraft, and in the nature of the curer or pulser in the two communities.

We have seen that in Oxchuc, the curer has supernatural powers because he controls a nagual. The same is true in Amatenango. Amatenango curers always "know" their naguales, and most people who "know" their naguales are curers. As Amatenangoeros provide the explanation,

If a person has a nagual and the curers learn about it they make him enter the curing business. For example, E.P. had a nagual. The curers met at night and talked to it, and they learned that it belonged to E. and that he had the power to cure. So they forced him to "enter" (M. Nash 1958).

There still remains the question of how the curers know when a person has a nagual. The answer often is that people who are wealthy and powerful have naguales. The logic is simple. If a man is wealthy and powerful or even aggressive, it is because his nagual is helping him. The rewards of a curer are not wealth. He must take time off from his other activities to cure and is paid nothing beyond the liquor and food he consumes at curing ceremonies. His rewards are power, prestige and respect. As one informant put it:

Curers sit in the patio, content. If they hear someone is dying, they never go out. The relatives come here and ask them to do them the favor of curing their child or whom-ever. He goes out and does what he can. When he walks in the street, people greet him, ask him how he is, invite him in for a drink. (Does a curer have more prestige than a Principal?) Of course! (J. Nash 1958)

In Oxchuc curers either are or are expected to become witches. Witches are known to the public. Those who do witchcraft also cure witchcraft in a public ceremony in which the witch is always named. In Amatenango the identity of witches is unknown. When it seems certain that a man is a witch, he is either killed or driven from the community. Witchcraft is a private, not a public activity. The social position of the witch differs considerably between Oxchuc and Amatenango, as do the methods for dealing with witchcraft.

While the sickness that is treated in Amatenango curing ceremonies comes as sastigo, punishment, witchcraft is born of invidia, envy. The surest way to be bewitched is to flaunt one's wealth and power. The man who puts a fine new roof and floor in his house or who has a few extra head of cattle invites the envy of his neighbors. In addition to envy, malice or revenge also sometimes figure as motives for witchcraft. J. Nash (1958) records cases in which a woman suspects a man of bewitching her daughter because the woman refused to have sexual relations with him; of a man who, believing his family had not received a proper share of an inheritance, was suspected of revenging himself through witchcraft; and of a man who was believed to be practicing witchcraft against the man who could not give him his ward for a wife. In these cases, the aggressor attacks through witchcraft because, rightly or wrongly, he believes

that his victim has not acted in a proper manner.

An individual minimizes his chances of becoming a victim of witchcraft by following three courses of action: (1) complying with the sanctions of a redistributive economy--not becoming wealthy or at least not displaying his wealth; (2) surrounding himself in so far as possible, with relatives by blood, marriage, or compadrazgo in hopes that relatives will be less prone to envy than non-related neighbors; (3) avoiding conflict and living up to the rights and duties expected of him, thus giving as little occasion for revenge as possible.

A man may suspect that an illness from which he or a member of his family suffers is due to witchcraft if it is persistent and shows no improvement after a curing ceremony. If such is the case he may elect to consult a curer. As in Oxehuc, a curer in Amatenango is able to detect the mark of a witch by pulsing, and bloodletting. If the curer believes his patient is suffering from witchcraft he can aid his patient by sending his nagual out to negotiate a settlement with the nagual of the witch.

The [nagual of the] hired curer waits for the suspected ak Samel [witch], meets him at night and says "you are casting evil." The accused curer (for such he is) denies it. The hired curer says "either you pardon the sick man or we are going to fight (magically) and then we'll see who comes out best." The accused witch says, "I am not doing anything. I have no invidio. ... Let's not fight." They come to an agreement. Then the curación is successful (M. Nash 1958).

But if after the curer's negotiations the sickness should linger, that particular alternative has failed. The only other possibility is to kill the witch. For the victim this poses a dilemma since curers in Amatenango, unlike those in many other Indian villages, will never reveal the name of a witch. In order to identify the witch responsible for his sickness, the

victim may resort to artifices such as going to Chanal or Tecpisca where a curer may name a witch, or plying a local curer with liquor until he drunkenly brags of his knowledge of those who have power in the community. Basically though, the victim has only his suspicions to proceed on. Who could want to do him harm? With whom has he been quarreling? Who could be envious of him? These are the questions he begins to ask himself.

M. Nash (1959b) has reported the process whereby witches are eliminated. The act is simple. Once a man is convinced that a certain man is, in fact, the witch responsible for his misfortunes, he gathers a small group of friends or kinsmen and ambushes the witch, preferably when he is helplessly drunk. This raises, as the assassin was aware, a problem in the community. A man has been killed. The identity of the killers is rarely in doubt. The question is has the murder been that of a witch -- a practitioner of aggressive and deadly magic and a threat to the social order of the community--or of a blameless citizen? Ridding the community of a witch, a source of evil, is a public service not to be punished. Murder of an innocent citizen is, of course, an irresponsible and punishable act. An inquest is held, not to identify the murderers, but to pass judgement on the character of the dead man and the character of his slayer. At a typical inquest:

The judge then turned to the dead man's family, who had heard all this testimony, which established two important things: First the dead man was a novice curer and this meant that he had a magual, and second that he was regarded as brave or aggressive by the neighbors and did not properly abide by the age respect rules of Amatenango social interactions.... The kin of the dead man then began a line of testimony which carefully and systematically severed their social relations with the deceased.... It was now

clear to the judges ... that nothing was going to happen to the accused. He was free. His just grievance had been established, his neighbors had called him a cumplido, an honorable man. And the dead man was singled out as a violator of norms, his wife and brother had publicly cut their connections to him and had established the basis for a verdict. The judges decided the slain man had been in fact a witch. The slayer was in fact an executioner, not a murderer (M. Nash 1959b:6-7).

It goes without saying that only the most reckless of men would assassinate a witch without some feeling of assurance that the rest of the community will ultimately sympathize with his action. To assure this, the prospective "executioner" will sound out his fellows by gossiping to them. He will tell of the misfortunes he has suffered and hint at their cause, giving what evidence he can. Only when he feels an affirmative response, if he be cautious, will he act.

The raw facts are that among the roughly 350 mature men (30 years and over) in the municipio of Amatenango about six "witches" are killed each year. This is an impressive figure.

When we examine the situations in which individuals are suspected of witchcraft, it seems that the six putative witches who are killed each year are not just witches but social deviants in general. Fear of witchcraft leads to a particularly dramatic means of social control.

In Amatenango, curers and some wealthy or powerful men are thought to possess naguales. A nagual is a tricky thing. It can begin to want to "eat" people. When a nagual makes up its mind to eat people, its possessor becomes a witch. Witches, then, are persons who misuse the power granted by their naguales. By this logic, it is curers and wealthy and powerful people who become suspect as witches. The role of a rich man counters the

demands of wealth-leveling in the community. The role of curer leads to a position of achieved power which counters a tendency to place power in the family and in the civil-religious hierarchy in positions ascribed chiefly on the basis of age. In their defiance of the norms regarding redistribution of wealth and placing of power these roles are, in Wolf's terms (1959:142) forms which define a field of human maneuver and scenes of human maneuver always pressing against the inherent limitations of cultural forms. The curer's position assaults norms basic to the community. Small wonder that the community should consider it dangerous, even intolerable. Small wonder, too, that those who play these roles often pay with their lives.

Witchcraft appears as a form of social control wherever human maneuver threatens forms crucial to community integration in Amatenango. In the case of the curer and the rich man, persons in specific roles are singled out for observation by attributing a nagual to them. The threat of death is a deterrent to excesses in their individual behavior. This is one of the two modes in which witchcraft so works. The other mode is the threat of illness through witchcraft which any man in Amatenango must face. The problem of an Alferes illustrate this most clearly.

The alfereses are chosen to play host to five major religious fiestas which are held in their home. For the year of their service they are known as Captains of the celebrations they sponsor. The alferes is chosen on the basis of ability to pay the 3,000 pesos expended during a year of service, regardless of previous communal service. The amassing and expenditure of this sum, as J. Nash notes (1960a:441) is anomalous. Although re-

crucited to perform communal service, the alferez is supported by his familial group in undertaking this service and reciprocates their support by providing the food, liquor and meat consumed at a fiesta to which his family and neighbors are invited. In direct contrast to those who accept other offices in the municipio, the alferez displays greater economic power than his neighbors in procuring this sum for expenditure involving not the community as a whole but only a segment of it personally important to him. Assuming this office necessarily involves conspicuous display of wealth and preferential treatment of a limited group of people, both of which are violations of the homogeneous standards of living within the community. As a result, alfereces and members of their family frequently become ill through witchcraft practiced by their envious neighbors.

Reviewing the situation of witchcraft and curing in Amatenango we can see that when discord among a group of persons is such that with a little prompting it can be verbalized, the illness of a child or adult may be used as a pretext to dramatize and resolve this conflict in a curing ceremony. As in Oxchuc, the ceremony is a public, legitimate and potentially successful form of social therapy.

When, however, a person calls attention to himself by the violation of social norms, particularly those norms which enforce a homogeneous standard of living on the community, an accusation is likely to be made in terms of witchcraft. The effect of witchcraft is double-barreled. On the one hand, the aspiring citizen who presumes wealth and power beyond that appropriate to his station, and who leaves behind himself a wake of hostility
by nb

by neglecting his duties to his neighbors and relations is threatened by the powers of anonymous witches. On the other hand, those who, for whatever personal or psychological reasons, choose a shortcut to prestige and power by becoming curers and who, by injudicious bragging of the souls they have "eaten" or by other actions overstep the bonds on their power are threatened by unheralded assassins.

In Oaxhuac where witches are also elders and civic officials, there are bonds on the witch's power and protections against retaliation against a witch. In Amatenango, the witch combines no official position of "elder" or officer of the community with his status. There is no formal way to protect the public from the misuse of a witch's power, or to protect the witch from retaliation by the public. Witchcraft is secret and anonymous. Although the identity of witches is secret and their activities only suspected, witchcraft cases do become informally publicized. The circumstances surrounding the plight of a man bewitched and of the curer accused of being a witch are viewed in gossip. The public is informed and educated to the facts of the case through gossip before any indication is given that the potential assassin will be backed. The circumstances are again publicly reviewed at the inquest following the death of a suspected witch. Public gossip defines the risks and chances both curer and victim are taking; blood of witch or victim sanctions these risks which are impermissible.

V: THE FUNCTIONS OF WITCHCRAFT AND CURING
IN TWO TZELTAL COMMUNITIES

In the preceding chapters we have examined the nature of witchcraft and curing in two communities in Chiapas. For convenience we catalogue the major points in the following tables.

TABLE 2
FEATURES OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN AMATENANGO AND OXCHUC

Oxchuc	Amatenango
1. Residence in small hamlets surrounding a ceremonial center.	1. Residence in nucleated center. Neighborhood groups within center important.
2. Existence of corporate kin groups identified by patrilineally inherited surnames (clan, lineage).	2. Absence of corporate kin groups. Importance of neighborhood kindred.
3. Important proportion of witchcraft and curing centers within clan and lineage; involves clan and lineage elders.	3. Important proportion of curing and witchcraft centers within family and neighborhood group.
4. Curing ability a qualification for most important civil-religious hierarchy offices.	4. Curing ability not required for civil-religious hierarchy offices.
5. Certain individuals vested with the authority to settle disputes and enforce punishment.	5. Disputes settled either by retaliation within peer group or by formal courts.
6. Witchcraft and disputes usually settled within the <u>municipio</u> ; rarely taken to ladino courts.	6. Disputes often settled in <u>municipio</u> , but also often turn into complicated legal disputes involving lawyers and courts of ladino towns.

TABLE 3
 FEATURES OF WITCHCRAFT AND CURING IN AMATENANGO AND OXCHUC

Oxchuc	Amatenango
1. Multiple status of curers. Curers are also elders, heads of kinship groups, civil-religious hierarchy officers.	1. Solitary status of curers. Curers are specialists.
2. Witches are publicly known; always curers.	2. Witches never known. Curers are usually suspected of being witches.
3. Public ceremony to cure witchcraft.	3. Public ceremony to cure illness not caused by witchcraft. No possibility of public ceremony to cure witchcraft.
4. Witchcraft ceremony involves confession and reconciliation of disputing parties.	4. Curing ceremony involves confession and reconciliation of disputing parties.
5. Witches responsible for illness always named in witchcraft curing ceremony.	5. Witches responsible for illness never named.
6. Confrontation frequently results in reconciliation of witch and victim.	6. No possibility of public reconciliation of witch and victim.
7. Authorities may join with victim in asking witch to cease his activities; may jail witch for supervision until illness ceases.	7. No possibility of dealing with witch through instituted authorities.
8. Motive for witchcraft often enforcement of custom and proper social relations by Principales.	8. Motive for witchcraft often envy and personal desire for revenge.
9. Assassination of witches relatively infrequent.	9. Assassination of witches relatively frequent.

Before trying to account for the similarities and differences in the system of curing and witchcraft found in these communities, we must note that in this case two manifestly different systems have equivalent latent functions. A curing ceremony is held in Amatenango to relieve one who is stricken by illness, not by witchcraft. It is presided over by curers, men who specialize in divining but who do not otherwise hold exceptional positions in the social structure. Curing of illness is a public matter. Curing of witchcraft is more private. Since witches are unknown to the community, witchcraft cannot be reconciled by negotiation between victim and witch. Quite the opposite is true in Oxchuc where what corresponds to a curing ceremony in Amatenango--public pulsing, questioning, confession, etc.--is held for victims of witchcraft. Pulsers and witches preside, men who in addition to their supernatural powers have important positions within kinship units. Curing of other forms of illness is more private and is usually accomplished through a series of prayers at the family cross. Witches are known to the community. Witch and victim are brought face-to-face during the investigation of witchcraft. In short, the public ceremony of Amatenango aims at curing disease. In Oxchuc it aims at identifying witches and encouraging them to cease their activities.

In addition to the difference in the manifest function of public ceremonies in the two communities, there is also a difference in the manifest function of witchcraft itself. In Amatenango witchcraft is considered to be an evil. Revenge and destruction are the motives of a witch. The witch is a hidden, anti-social element in the society. There is no place for him

in the community. If he can be discovered, he must be eliminated. The assumption is that the power of witchcraft can be used to no good purpose. On the contrary in Oxchuc the witch is a public figure. His power is deemed to be that of coercing proper behavior. His function is to enforce the rules of the society. As long as he restricts himself to this function his power is, if not good, at least proper. The assumption is that a witch is to use his power in this positive way and that the more powerful witches will discipline any less powerful witch who attempts to use his power in an evil way.

In briefest terms, in Oxchuc the witch punishes unsanctioned behavior and the curing ceremony is a means of identifying the witch and the reasons for his distress. Witchcraft and the curing ceremony are integrated. In Amatenango the witch kills capriciously. Illness comes as punishment from spirit sources. The curing ceremony is designed to determine the reasons for illness and "put the house in order" once again. Witchcraft and the curing ceremony are unrelated. These, we would maintain, are the manifest functions of witchcraft and curing in the two communities--"the objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which are intended and recognized by participants in the system" (Merton 1957:51).

In the area of latent functions, those functions which "are neither intended nor recognized" (Merton 1957:51), the effects of witchcraft and curing in the two communities are identical. From the description of witchcraft and curing in the preceding chapters we can conclude that three major functions

are fulfilled.

1. Witchcraft and curing reinforce basic norms of the community and thereby contribute to the support of the existing social structure. Almost any unwarranted behavior may provoke witchcraft. For fear of witchcraft, people are cautious about undertaking any activity which is known to be disapproved. Thus in both communities people either refrain from or are secretive about accumulating wealth. The rich are the envied. The envied become the bewitched. Fear of witchcraft then maintains the sanctions against accumulating wealth which are the keystones of a redistributive economy. In Oxchuc people are careful not to antagonize their elders. To do so is to invite witchcraft. Hence the principle of age-respect is supported. In Amatenango people attempt to appease their neighbors through the extension of courtesies and reciprocal kinship. To ignore one's neighbors is to incite them to envy and to witchcraft. The bonds uniting neighborhood groups are preserved by fear of witchcraft. Witchcraft may be expected when a person violates various of the "rules" of his society. But "rules" such as "not out-doing the Joneses," "respecting elders" and "preserving good relations with neighbors" are relative, not absolute. Will a new tile floor for the kitchen pass unnoticed or will it bring envy? Must one's father-in-law be brought liquor each time he takes a whom to demand it or can one draw a line? Rules are defined by testing their limits. Decisions must be made as to what constitutes permissible behavior. The decisions are made before the fact by the individual; after the fact by the society. Therefore,

2. Witchcraft and curing define permissible behavior by

publicising the fate of the individual who goes too far in testing the limits of his society; they are thus educative. We have noted that curing ceremonies in both communities involve a formal examination of the past behavior of the victim or patient and his family. We have also noted that gossip about a witchcraft case provoked by an Amatenanguero who is testing public opinion before attempting to kill a witch, as well as the formal inquest following the murder of a witch acquaint a community with the facts of the behavior of those involved and the nature of their dispute. The publicising of cases of witchcraft and sickness brings to the attention of the community cases in which individual behavior must be defined. In Oxchuc, the people come to learn not just that a man is being punished by the witches, but what he is being punished for. In Amatenango, the public learns not just that a family member has been sick or bewitched, but also why the patient was sick or, in some cases, an individual bewitched. Day to day behavior does not ordinarily call in to question the social relations within a community. The status of husband and wife and mother and child is rarely equivocal. But the social usages--as Eggan (1950:4) puts it the "behavioral patterns expectable between different individuals or groups under given conditions"--are in frequent need of revision. What with the rising cost of liquors must I invite all my wife's elders to the next fiesta? Must I really put up with being beaten every time my husband comes home drunk? To questions such as these the attribution of sickness to witchcraft often provides an answer. Once judgement is passed on the novel behavior in question, the community learns the verdict. While witchcraft and curing can

call attention to an uncomfortable social situation, it is of small comfort to the persons estranged that a "rule" has been clarified. There is still the problem of the alienated individuals.

3. Witchcraft and curing are a means of social therapy allowing alleviation of conflicts between persons at friction points in a social structure. J. Nash's (1960a) thesis shows quite clearly how curing ceremonies in Amatenango are used to bring together all those who would have an interest in reestablishing a foundering relationship. The same obtains in Oxchuc where pulsings for witchcraft can aid in reestablishing relations between the parties involved. Relationships which are points of strain in the social structure--husband-wife, in-laws - children-in law, etc.--seem particularly amenable to this form of treatment, probably because the ceremony can bring in other individuals united by close kinship as well as common concern whose desire for a reconciliation will carry weight with the disputing individuals.

These are the three main latent functions of witchcraft in Amatenango and Oxchuc. They fulfill prerequisites which are, I believe, common to all societies: the need for the maintenance of norms, for the definition and redefinition of the propriety of individual behavior, and for the expression and alleviation of interpersonal conflict. But witchcraft and curing need not be the only mode for the fulfillment of these prerequisites. After a more thorough examination of the nature of the differences of witchcraft and curing in Amatenango and Oxchuc, we can return to this point.

The difference in curing and witchcraft in these two communities is not due to a difference in theory. In both communities belief in witchcraft and curing are drawn from a common body of theory, elements of which are widely distributed throughout Middle America. An inventory of these common beliefs would include:

1. Belief in the nagual, an animal counterpart to the human soul.
 - a. Belief that the nagual "eats" human souls.
 - b. Belief in the ability of certain men to "own" naguales.
 - c. Belief that the "owner" of a nagual can cure.
 - d. Belief that the "owner" of a nagual can cause sickness.
2. Belief in divinatory powers of pulsers.
 - a. Belief that pulsers can diagnose the nature of an illness.
 - b. Belief that pulsers can "read" the name of the person responsible for an illness.
3. Belief that illness can be sent as punishment by gods, spirits or people.

These basic beliefs are prerequisite to witchcraft and curing as practiced in both of the communities. They define powers which men may possess. It is the coordination of this theory and the aforementioned supernatural powers it provides with a given social structure and its possibilities for the allocation of power and social control that structures the particular way in which a system of witchcraft and curing will be manifested.

Oxchuc, with its dispersed population settled in small hamlets, has a far more monolithic power structure than Amatenango. We have been able to view Oxchuc as a series of telescoping units: i.e., the family, lineage, clan, cajcul and entire community each with definite loci of authority. The individuals occupying these loci are qualified for power in a number of ways:

by age, by senior position within their lineage and clan, by office in the civil-religious hierarchy, and finally by the attribution of a nagual and its concomitant supernatural powers. The higher officers, particularly, combined several duties: administrator, judge, and priest. A variety of forms of power blend into each status in this hierarchy. In this situation, the powers of witches and curers does not conflict with that of other officers of the municipio; they are part and parcel of the same line of power. We have also noted the series of checks and balances in this hierarchy; old men usually have older men to check their behavior; lineage heads usually have clan heads checking them; and witches usually have more powerful witches supervising them. This system of checks protects citizens from the wanton use of power by officials; at the same time officials are protected from reprisal by the citizenry. All, that is, save the officials at the very top of the hierarchy. Their power cannot be controlled nor are there superiors to protect them. They are vulnerable.

In Oxchuc, the power of curers and witches is amalgamated with the legitimate power positions within the social structure. Because of the positioning of personnel in this social structure, the citizens are protected from the misuse of supernatural power as much as from the misuse of other kinds of power. By identification with public and legitimate office, witchcraft, too, can be public and legitimate. Witchcraft, though bringing sickness and even death, comes as a punishment which opens a road to social rehabilitation. Since Oxchuqueros believe that witchcraft will cease once the nature of the sin or crime that laid the

patient law is discovered and the identity of the witch who originated the punishment is determined, witchcraft can be "undone" any time the victim cares to submit himself to questioning by the pulsers. Further, disputes which express themselves in witchcraft can be resolved at any level of the society. As Siverts (1960:22) puts it, "sanctions are based on a succession of unanimous decisions proclaimed by a progressively larger body of officials, who represent increasingly inclusive groups." This system is analogous to our American system of appealing from lower courts to higher courts. The officials at each level differ not in the quality, but in the inclusiveness of their power. It appears that this is a relatively efficient means of getting disputes. Oxchuqueros are rarely faced with conflicting lines of authority when they try to settle their disputes and they rarely find it necessary to take their disputes outside the municipio.

Amatenango presents quite another picture. In its crowded center conflicts are frequent and intense as man tries to live without stepping on the toes of his fellow man. But when it comes to settling disputes there is no such unity in lines of authority as exists in Oxchuc. Within the family, family or some coalition of family members may resolve disputes. But beyond the family, the only formal channels for solving disputes lie in the community-wide civil-religious hierarchy. The hierarchy provides judges and a local court, but there is a "gap" separating these judges from the local family groups. It is thought shameful to have to take a family quarrel into court. It seems to be in this structural middle range--between family

and community-wide court--that curers step in as a means of resolving conflict. But whereas in Oxchuc the supernatural powers of curers and witches are interwoven as a further dimension of the powers of officials, in Amatenango a curer is a specialist in supernatural power with no other powers and no formal checks on his power. In Amatenango conflict which falls outside the domain of the family and is not taken to court is resolved by the mobilization of the neighborhood group and the weight of its gossip and informal sanctions. The curer in the curing ceremony appears as a catalyst of these informal sanctions. The balance of power here lies not with the man who can be adjudged by a judge-priest-witch, but with the man who has maintained the most personal ties within his neighborhood--who has the most neighbors and relatives allied to him. Neighborhood opinion and informal coalitions rule this range of the society. There is no formal support for witches publicly proclaimed, no coordinated officers who could take responsibility for the witch's actions. There exists no coalition by means of which a witch can exercise his power in support of public order. But there is always the possibility that a curer, who possesses a nagual will turn "bad" and become a witch. If a witch be known there is no way to protect him from the vengeance of the community. It is only in this sort of context--where no manifest good can come from a witch's activities and there is no way of controlling his powers--that M. Nash's general statement regarding witchcraft holds true:

As a body of cultural theory then, the witchcraft system leaves open the empirical definition of who is a witch. Cultural theory does not tell anyone who a witch is, and

gives no particular, immediate rules for the logical or empirical establishment of a witch.

This I take to be a characteristic of any functioning system of witchcraft belief. Since witches are practitioners of aggressive and deadly magic and are continual threats to the social order, and operate in violation of the moral rules of a society, it is not possible to have a set of cultural beliefs which provides general and immediately verifiable rules for the identification of a witch. If such operational witch theory did exist it would mean that no witches would operate, for nobody would suffer their presence. (1959:2)

The contrast between these two communities suggests a general proposition which may in the future be amenable to refinement in the light of further cross-cultural data. We would propose the possibility that a social structure which provides indubitable positions of authority with clearly defined and limited powers such that citizens are protected from wanton use of power and occupants of positions of authority are protected from reprisal by citizens may utilize witchcraft for social control in a moral, public, and sanctioned way. Such a situation is less likely in groups in which the opinion of an aggregate of members relevant to each citizen, as opposed to the judgement of constituted authorities, play the predominant role in social control. When this is the case, there is little possibility of providing a protected status from which witches can operate in a public and moral way although the fear of anonymous witches may play an important role in social control. We would suggest that nucleated populations as opposed to dispersed ones, increase the possibilities that groups of contiguous individuals will play an important part in sanctioning social behavior, and that in bilateral as opposed to lineal kinship systems there is less possibility for a series of authorities whose powers can be controlled.

This leads us to hypothesize that the public and sanctioned use of witches and witchcraft as agents of social control is most likely to be found in lineal communities with dispersed populations.

To this point, we have been discussing what happens within these communities with no reference to what happens outside of them. In both of these communities, institutions of ladino society have had a profound effect. When Villa Rojas visited Oxchuc in 1942-1944 the municipio had but recently been officially integrated into the Mexican administrative system. In 1936 Oxchuc became a municipio libre and ceased to be treated as an agencia municipal under the jurisdiction of the municipio of Ocoingo. The town had an ayuntamiento in addition to its civil-religious hierarchy. The ayuntamiento was, in a sense, the office of external affairs for the municipio and handled negotiations with the ladino world. The ayuntamiento as late as 1943 was predominantly staffed by ladinos. Now up to this point, the system of witchcraft and curing we have examined appears to have "worked." Disputes could be settled within the traditional organization. Villa noted that very rarely and only under the utmost provocation were disputes carried outside the municipio. To do so would have been to put the matter into the hands of ladino courts with their different principles of operation. Similarly, to have brought the matter to the local ayuntamiento would have involved the judgement of ladinos. To the extent that the traditional social organization which placed authority in the hands of elders persisted, witchcraft and curing served to maintain the authority of these elders. Fear of witches was partially responsible for

preserving the traditional social organization.

The importance of the Ayuntamiento could not long be ignored. Its presence was a threat to the Oxshuqueros' form of government. Says Siverts:

Inevitably some adjustment to this situation has to be made by the tribal council [civil-religious hierarchy]. The officials had to face the fact that the Ayuntamiento C. constituted the legal government of the municipio, and that the Ladinos might get absolute control of the area through the key position of the secretary. (1960:25)

The adjustment was made through a delicate balance in which the ladino secretary of the Ayuntamiento was opposed by an Indian president chosen by and under the command of the civil-religious hierarchy. Hence the Indians of Oxchuc were forced to greater recognition of their access to ladino courts and forms of government.

During the same period the organization of the parajes or hamlets began to change. Through the influence of ladino school teachers and later the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, the paraje of lineages bound together by clan and affinal ties was organized into a paraje-community of common interests headed by political strong men--local leaders who built up their position through the occupation of the paraje presidency.

Finally, during this decade came the conversion of half the population to Protestantism. Counteraction brought Acción Católica into the municipio to fight Protestant influences. Ultimately, through their battle for control of the Ayuntamiento, the religious groups became political parties founded on adherence to conflicting religious institutions and "struggling for power in a political frame of shifting alignments and uncompromis-

ing ideologist" (Siverts 1960:28). These parties were led by the young and literate ambitious men of the communities. Their existence compromised the traditional government by elders.

While religious conversion had not yet gained a foothold nor had parajes reorganized under local Comites de Educación when Villa made his study of nagualism in Oxshus, there were, as we have already noted, signs of considerable conflict and social disorganization. The effects of Oxshus's contact with the world outside suggests that the effects of its increasing disturbance in the 1940's may have been an increased need of social control and, as we have termed it, social therapy. It is possible that as dissatisfaction with the existing social system accumulated, the existing systems of social control were elaborated to counter this dissatisfaction. We must admit the possibility that the particular form of public and sanctioned witchcraft that Villa found in Oxshus was a phenomenon of the transition of this community into its present form.

In contrast, Amatenango has adjusted to the forces that shook Oxshus. The community is already organized around neighborhood groups and the civil-religious hierarchy has adjusted to the presence of an Ayuntamiento without any apparent conflict between "young" and "old" leaders. The basis of witchcraft and curing lies, as we have seen, not in affiliation of the status of curer with other statuses of authority in the social structure, but as part of the delicate balance of neighborhood interpersonal relationships. We have indicated that traditional authorities in Amatenango are undermined by the possibilities of appealing cases to ladino courts outside of the community. It may be the

problems inhering in the conflict between local courts and outside ladino courts that contribute to the survival of witchcraft in Amatenango. D. Metzger (1959:19-20) has outlined the nature of these conflicts in the neighboring community of Aguacatenango:

1. There is a conflict of jurisdiction. The community has institutionalized ways of handling intra-town and private delicts, some of which the state aims to monopolize.
2. Ladino authority does not recognize the category of private delict in many cases in which the Indians do. Thus Indians may receive what appear to them to be strong sanctions...in offenses which in terms of traditional justice demand only restitutive sanctions....
3. Ladino justice does not recognize the right of the kin group to settle those private or public delicts which involve serious injury or death by means of direct action with resort to violence.
4. ... [There is a difference in definition of what constitutes a public or private delict.] Thus ladino justice does not recognize the "successful" practice of witchcraft as a delict.

Thus ladino justice does not recognize certain offenses which the Indian considers important, and it punishes other offenses in a way which the Indian sees as unjust and unpleasant.

As D. Metzger (1960) has shown in another context, there are circumstances in which an Indian is handicapped when he seeks justice in the community's court and circumstances when he is handicapped when he seeks justice in ladino courts.

The transmission of conflict in Amatenango into accusations of witchcraft is one way of dealing with a situation where disputants are disadvantaged in local courts but unwilling to enter into the complexities of ladino courts. Witchcraft accusations offer an alternative means of expressing and sometimes resolving disputes in this area.

With consideration of the effects of culture contact on these two communities, the burden of the discussion of witchcraft

and curing has shifted from the role these institutions play in the context of the existing social structures to the role that they will play as the communities adapt to the institutions of modern Mexico that are now affecting them. Thus far we have taken a fairly positive view of witchcraft, stressing its useful latent functions and implying, as did Kluckhohn (1944:50), that witchcraft belief is a highly adjustive way of releasing not only generalized tension but also those tensions specific to a given social structure. However, we are not unaware of the costs of witchcraft and curing. As Nadel said of the Nupe:

The aggression invited by witchcraft beliefs is as harmful as anything a society can produce in the way of "disruptive" practices; the relief offered by witch-hunting and witch-punishing is no more than temporary and their capacity to allay anxieties no more than illusory; for if witchcraft beliefs resolve certain fears and tensions, they also produce others. Nor is there anything unique in this. If witchcraft beliefs represent a very imperfect "solution," cultures are full of similarly shortsighted reliefs and spurious correctives. In a sense, the remedies are always better than the complaints; for they enable individuals to go on living and societies to go on functioning without having to face the task, often impossible of achievement, of completely refashioning the social system. But they are the kind of remedy which both becomes a drug and poisons the system. Or, to change the metaphor, we may liken witchcraft beliefs to a safety valve; but let us be clear that the engine which needs it has been badly constructed; nor is the safety valve itself safe. (1954:205-206)

What Nadel says, in short, is that witchcraft is an expensive way to keep a social system going. What happens when it does become possible to refashion a social system? The possibility existed in Oxehue and exists in Amatenango. When the "costs" of witchcraft and curing are considered, it would seem reasonable to propose that any alternative which will serve the same function as witchcraft and curing at a lower cost will be adopted if

changes in the social system make such adoption feasible. But "costs" can be assessed only after the fact. If a community adopts an alternative to witchcraft, then we must suppose that the costs of such an alternative are lower. There is the possibility that the new and functionally specific bonds of political parties in Oxchuc will serve as arenas for the expression of tension and antagonism. To the extent that the invasion of Middle American communities by Protestantism affords release from traditional wealth leveling devices (cf. J. Nash 1960b) the needs for social control change radically. As power drifts from elders to "strong men" the nature of the administration of social control changes too. To the extent that the nature of legal processes in Amatenango becomes clarified and a greater range of conflicts can be publicly expressed, either in courts or curing ceremonies, the functions of witchcraft are eroded.

Future studies of witchcraft and curing in these communities offer the possibility of recording the process whereby the institutionalized doctrines and controls of modern societies transmute and replace the personalized controls of the little community.

SUMMARY

In this paper, the nature of witchcraft and curing and the nature of the social structure in which it appears has been examined in two Tseltal communities. The two communities, Amatenango and Oxshuc, were chosen for study because (1) they had recently been the subjects of comprehensive anthropological fieldwork, (2) in terms of environment, technology, language, and economy they are generically similar, and (3) in terms of social structure and the type of witchcraft and curing practiced, they are extreme variants within the general Tseltal-Tsotsil pattern.

We suggest that in spite of striking differences in social structure and in witchcraft and curing, witchcraft and curing perform the same latent functions in each community.

- (1) Witchcraft and curing reinforce basic norms of the community and thereby contribute to the support of the existing social structure.
- (2) Witchcraft and curing define permissible behavior by publicizing the fate of the individual who goes too far in testing the limits of his society; they are thus educative.
- (3) Witchcraft and curing are a means of social therapy allowing alleviation of conflicts between persons at friction points in a social structure.

The differences in witchcraft and curing in these two communities exist on the level of manifest rather than latent function. Each of the communities bases its understanding of witchcraft and curing on the same theory, a theory in which the concept of the magual, an animal counterpart to the human soul, plays

a prominent part. The coordination of this cultural theory with a given social structure produces manifestations of witchcraft and curing which vary in accord with the nature of the social structure.

Witchcraft and curing are, in both communities, important as mechanisms of social control and vehicles for the expression and resolution of conflict. The "costs" of witchcraft and curing, however, appear to be high.

When the nature of each community's contacts with modern Mexican society was considered, it was suggested that appropriate Mexican institutions may be less costly alternative mechanisms for maintaining social control and expressing and resolving conflict. It is suggested that political parties founded on conflicting religious institutions in Oxahuc and ladino courts in Amatenango may become the arenas in which the institutionalized doctrines and controls of modern society transmute and replace the personalized controls of the little community.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: Abbreviation RMN = Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago (1959). Report on the "Man-in-Nature" Project of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Chicago in the Tzeltal-Tsotsil-speaking region of the State of Chiapas, Mexico.

- ABLON, JOAN
1958 An history of anthropological thought on witchcraft in primitive society. Ms.
- ADAMS, R. N.
1952 Un análisis de las creencias y prácticas médicas en un pueblo indígena de Guatemala. Publicaciones especiales del Instituto Indígena Nacional #17.
- BRINTON, D. G.
1894 Nagualism: A study in native American folklore and history. Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 33:1-65.
- CÁMARA, FERNANDO
1952 Religious and political organization. In Heritage of conquest, eds. Sol Tax et al. 142-173. The Free Press.
- COSEY, LEWIS
1956 The functions of social conflict. The Free Press.
- EGGAN, FRED
1950 Social organization of the western pueblos. University of Chicago Press.
- FIRTH, RAYMOND
1959 Problem and assumption in an anthropological study of religion. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 89:129-148.
- FORTES, M.
1953 The structure of unilineal descent groups. American Anthropologist 55:17-41.
- FOSTER, GEORGE
1944 Nagualism in Mexico and Guatemala. Acta Americana 2: 85-103.
- GILLIN, JOHN
1948 Magical fright. Psychiatry 11:387-400.
- KLUCKHOHN, CLYDE
1943 Navaho witchcraft. Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology #22. Harvard University.

- MERTON, ROBERT
1957 Social theory and social structure. Revised edition. The Free Press.
- METZGER, BARBARA
1959 The social structure of three Tseltal communities: Omaha systems in change. In RMN.
- METZGER, DUANE
1959 A preliminary evaluation of institutionalized social control and its contribution to cultural pluralism in the highlands of Chiapas. In RMN.
1960 Conflict in Chulsanto, a village in Chiapas. Alpha Kappa Deltan 30:35-48.
- NADEL, S. F.
1954 Nupe religion. The Free Press.
- NASH, JUNE
1958 Amatenango field notes. Ms.
1959a Amatenango del Valle. In RMN.
1959b Social structure and social organization in Oxchuc, Chiapas. In RMN.
1960a Social relations in Amatenango del Valle: an activity analysis. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Chicago.
1960b Protestantism in an Indian village in the western highlands of Guatemala. Alpha Kappa Deltan 30:49-53.
- NASH, MANNING
1958 Amatenango field notes. Ms.
1959a The small scale economy: the context of economic choice. In RMN.
1959b Witchcraft as social process in a Tseltal community. In RMN.
- RADCLIFFE-BROWN, A. R.
1935 Patrilineal and matrilineal succession. In A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and function in primitive society (1952). The Free Press.
- REDFIELD, ROBERT and TAX, SOL
1952 General characteristics of present day Mesoamerican Indian society. In Tax et al. eds. Heritage of conquest. 31-42. The Free Press.
- SIVERTS, HENNING
1958 Social and cultural changes in a Tseltal (Mayan) municipio, Chiapas, Mexico. Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of Americanists 177-189.

SIVERTS, HENNING

- 1960 Political organization in a Tzeltal community in Chiapas, Mexico. Alpha Kappa Delta 30:14-28.

SLOCUM, MARIANNA

- 1956 Cultural changes among the Oxchuc Tzeltales. In Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología. Estudios antropológicos publicados en homenaje al doctor Manuel Gamio 491-496.

TAX, SOL

- 1937 The municipios of the midwestern highlands of Guatemala. American Anthropologist 39:423-444.

VILLA ROJAS, ALFONSO

- 1946 Notas sobre la etnografía de los indios Tzeltales de Oxchuc, Chiapas, Mexico. Microfilm Collection of Mss. on Middle American Cultural Anthropology, No. 7. University of Chicago.

- 1947 Kinship and nagualism in a Tzeltal community, southeastern Mexico. American Anthropologist 49:578-587.

WEBER, MAX

- 1947 The theory of social and economic organization. The Free Press.

WOLF, ERIC

- 1957 Closed corporate peasant communities in Mesoamerica and Java. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 13:1-18.

- 1959 Specific aspects of plantation systems in the New World: community sub-cultures and social class. In Plantation systems of the New World, Pan American Union Social Science Monographs No. 7. 136-145.

END

**MICROFILM COLLECTION OF
MANUSCRIPTS ON AMERICAN INDIAN
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

Series IX

No. 60

**Formerly: Microfilm Collections of Manuscripts
on the Middle American Cultural Anthropology**

Photographed by:

**Department of Photoduplication, The University of Chicago Library
Swift Hall Chicago 37, Illinois**

Reduction Ratio:

