MEANINGS IN MOTORCYCLING

by

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The thesis is divided into three major sections. Section One is devoted to a discussion of the motives and assumptions behind this particular study and of the problems involved in formulating a research procedure. The general intent is to generate an account of some important facets of the North American motorcycling boom. The basic method is to ask approximately fifteen hundred cyclists, "What do you get out of it?" in a series of separate motorcycle-situated encounters. It is assumed that this procedure elicits subject accounts of what motorcycling means. A schemata is developed to explain the process by which a single account of these many participant explications may be created. The result is a thematization of recurrent elements of responses. In addition, the further procedure of consultative feedback is employed in a series of one hundred second-order encounters.

Section Two contains a discussion of the nine major themes which are redacted as an account of the fifteen hundred encounters. Each theme is discussed at length, and the schematized relations between them are explained in terms of the clustering of concurrent response elements. In addition, two findings which do not fit the schema are presented: one is the adamant refusal to respond, the other is the invocation of a form of communality.
Section Three takes up where Section Two is forced to leave off. It proceeds from the abovementioned disparities and from the results of the one hundred second-generation encounters. The object is to generate some account of the high degree of consensus among responses to the basic question. In addition to explaining some important features of motorcycling, this section presents a more abstract explanatory concept, Image Behaviour. This concept involves four basic principles: sensitization, imitation, the conversation of Images, and Image projection. Finally, an appendix is included to review the two major pieces of research into the phenomenon of motorcycle-situated behaviour.
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SECTION ONE
The most general purpose of this study is to say something about the social phenomena associated with the burgeoning presence of motorcycles in recent North American culture. There are many other factors which have had to be taken into consideration in preparing the report, such as handling available data by acceptable means, but our general resolve has persisted as the cardinal component throughout. We have restricted ourselves to North American culture, both because it was not feasible to gather data anywhere else, and because it is the unique American context which we are curious about. Likewise we are confined to recent culture, say 1960's onward, because this is the era of the "motorcycle boom", and anything which we say about motorcycling will be rooted in the historical peculiarities of the period. This then, is the stage as we have set it for our o'erriding resolve. We would do well now to catalogue the principals as they appear.

Proposing to say something about motorcycling behaviour, we have restricted ourselves to a study of the motorcyclists themselves. Alternate approaches might have been essayed, for instance: a study of public behavior in the presence of motorcycles, an analysis of recorded facts about motorcycle owners, or an examination of motorcycle consociated documentation; however, that is not where our interests lie, and instead we have chosen to confront those most directly
involved in the production and maintenance of motorcycle-associated behaviours.

Accordingly, a single population element in this study is defined as follows: a creatural-contraption conglomerate, consisting of at least one human being, referred to as "the motorcyclist", or "the cyclist", and a number of physical objects, which will be subsumed for the purposes of this definition under the rubric of "the motorcycle milieu". Let us consider the two facets of the population conglomerate in turn.

Every population element must include at least one motorcyclist, that is, the one who drives the contraption. This much is given. Some degree of variation may be introduced in considering that the contrivance can also carry, by law, no more than one passenger. We must therefore allow that instances of two human subjects per population element, and the relative frequency of such cases, may have some effect on the behaviours associated with the motorcycle; that is to be determined. Other possible first-facet variations include whether or not the passenger is himself (herself) a motorcycle driver. Hence, we have phrased this portion of the definition in the terms "at least".

The motorcycle milieu generally, but not necessarily,
includes that two-wheeled gadget legally defined under the Motor Vehicles Act as a motorcycle. The other physical objects in the milieu are those which are brought together by the particular cyclist/passenger specifically for use with the machine, for example: helmets (now almost universally required by law), colours (emblems of membership in some form of motorcycle association), or special clothing (leathers, cutoffs, etc.). The precise extent and content of the milieu depends on the cyclist being observed: there are cyclists who get by with a bare minimum of trappings, or none at all; some have the bike and all the assorted regalia; others have the extras and no motorcycle. All that is required by this facet of the definition is that there be a cluster of artifacts which connote "motorcycle" for the subject, objects which are commonly and directly associated with the presence of the two-wheeled contrivance that is the normal focus of the milieu.

The first facet of the definition now falls out in terms of the second. A motorcyclist is anyone who makes use of a motorcycle milieu. Having confined ourselves to a study of the immediate producers of motorcycle behaviour, there is still leeway under this definition of a population element to include a wide range of diverse, even bizarre combinations of the two critical facets.
Thus far, we have set the stage, and delimited the principals, but there is still the matter of how our epic is to progress. We must give some consideration now to field methods.

It is altogether apparent, that in attempting to say something about North American motorcycling, we are in no position to observe and interview all or even a major portion of North American motorcyclists; nor, for that matter, is anyone else. Practical considerations have confined us principally to metropolitan Vancouver, with the odd jaunt down the West Coast to 'Frisco, and one side trip through Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal. There is no point in trying to defend this as a representative or a random sample; it is all that we could get our hands on, it is all that we could gather from November of 1970 through January of 1972; and that is all there is to it.

This sampling problem extends beyond the practical limitations of this report, however. To begin with, there is no extant list or set of lists of the entire population which can be subsumed under our definition of a population element. This is not unexpected, since the definition was constructed for our own specific research purposes, but various attempts have been made, by other individuals and organizations, at estimating, at the continental, national
or local levels, using identical or at least similar definitions. Further estimates were elicited in the course of this study. On the basis of these figures we have reached only one firm conclusion: they are all just guesses, not even educated guesses, which, when examined closely, have no sound statistical basis. There is as yet no way of compiling a representative sample of North American motorcycling behaviours, let alone of assessing the prefigurativeness of our data.

The next best thing would be to compile for a given survey area a list of all registered motorcycles, or all licensed motorcyclists (preferably both, since the overlap is far from perfect, and the conjoint distribution would be revealing). This is not the entire solution, for it takes no account of the unregistered, unlicensed population elements, whose absolute numbers are legion. For this portion of the list one could consult such incomplete records as are kept by motorcycle racing associations who have at least some token contact with these potential subjects. Interestingly enough, in terms of the behaviours associated with motorcycles, even this second best procedure proved impossible. Registration and/or licensing statistics, though nominally open, are kept from the public eye by a bureaucratic runaround, at least in British Columbia. In the case of unregistered cyclists, either such files do not exist, or
they are "none of ...(the inquirer's/sociologist's)... goddamn business!"

It was too far afield from our major purpose, and certainly beyond the scope of this study (as well as crushingly uninteresting) to compile any last resort population list from scratch using the door to door/ street to street at all hours of the day and night technique.

The conclusion is that, having no list, we once again have no sample of North American motorcycling. However, even without the statistical amenities, we shall hold fast to our general aim, which is to say something about it, at least in terms of the data we do have. All that we have lost is some statement of the generalizability of our interpretations to the total population, or to some identifiable segment of it; this does not entail the loss of all valuable understanding.

Having set mathematical foreplay aside as impractical for the purposes of this report, the immediate problem becomes how to recognize a population element when you see one, since our definition as it stands encompasses a wide range of permutations. Fortunately, the probable subject-object combinations are much fewer than the possible ones, and the task is not as difficult as it might have been. The media, manufacturers, and motor-vehicle legislation have reduced
the available "motorcycle" trappings to a rather standardized, hence, readily recognizable set. Those subjects who have some of the trappings but no motorcycle are still visible. The problematic cases are those with nonstandard trappings, or none at all, who are not in the presence of the machine; and also those with nonstandard trappings, or none, no cycle, and who still regard themselves as motorcyclists. The former are necessarily bypassed, since we have no way of identifying them. Given the above mentioned provincial and market effects, such cases will be few in number and can safely be ignored. The latter cases are population elements for a study of the self concept (and possibly, psychiatric help), and do not fall within the scope of this report.

Thus, the net operational effect of our contrived definition of the population is such that the typical, or modal element will be an individual in the presence of a motorcycle and a number of additional artifacts. The study does not directly concern itself with observing the behavior of noncyclists, or the behavior of cyclists beyond the milieu, since problems of identification and explanatory scope would inevitably arise.

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The next field work problem is how to recognize the opportunity for an observational session when you see one.
The possible situations include any and all occasions that satisfy the previous population requirements; that is, whenever and wherever a cyclist is en milieu. Recalling our geographical and temporal pragmatics, it was feasible to avail ourselves of a mere fraction of the legitimate opportunities. To correctly sample them, one must have a complete list of when and where cyclists are in milieu; and, once again, there is no such list and it is beyond our means to compile one. Though there are times and places where cyclists are more and more frequently in evidence, any analysis of the particulars of this, especially in combination with the population sampling considerations, approaches a near-infinite task. This affects only the statistical generalizability of our results, not their entire sense. We have included space/time details of specific occasions only when and where it was possible and worthwhile, in the interest of getting on with our more general purpose.

It ought to be obvious by now that the phenomena we are considering are, in terms of tried-and-true social science technique, rather "slippery". We shall have cause to remark on this again, when we look at "the literature", and in our discussion "of maths and men". For now, having picked a subject and a situation, let us consider the problem of what to look for: what shall be our data? As a
forewarning to prospective researchers in these, and...we suspect, other "real world" areas, we might mention that the sociologically popular and precise variables, classical fieldwork methods if you will, may imperil the researcher. Attempts to determine, no matter how unobtrusively, answers to the "who-what-where-when-and-how-much?" questions generate suspicion, even overt hostility, particularly if the observer should identify himself/is identified as a sociologist. Let us lighten the text with an illustrative incident that we cannot resist relating. It was the second bad scrape to occur in this same location, just shortly before we really knew what we were doing (wrong).

The episode has been reconstructed from memory, but it was worth remembering. The encounter takes place on an up-'til-now pleasant summer Saturday in the Foreshore Park parking lot. Winding Marine Drive blacktop is a great place for "jammin'", a motorcycle activity designed to test and improve one's skill, and nerve, in the art of high-speed near suicide. The sole trick to this exercise is that one must avoid "going over the high side." Sliding off the outside edge of a curve at excessive speed is regarded as probably the worst of all motorcycle accidents, short of a head-on collision, because the rider is invariably crushed by the tumbling machine. The activity is hardly a contest; there is no room for distracting frivolities like competition.
Hence, cyclists give each other a wide berth, preferably, "outta sight an' 'round the next corner." "The winner" is the one who can brag the loudest afterwards.

Yours truly has been questioning three members of "The Spartans", a non-Biker (but still very M.a.cho) club "dedicated to the enjoyment and improvement of the sport of motorcycling." At this point in the encounter I mistakenly let drop that I attend U.B.C... It seemed a safe enough statement at the time, we being on "University property" and all. Rather abruptly, it is now my turn to be interrogated. The opening line goes to Moose, ex-president and honourary lifetime member of The Spartans.

"Whadda ya do here?"

"Oh...doing my thesis."

"Whaddabout?"

"Umm, anthropology and sociology." I am a congenitally improficient liar when queried directly; I really need a lot of time and plenty of warm milk to get my story straight.

At this point I decide that I had better get my tomatoe plants in as it feels like we are on the verge of a very heavy frost. Delicately excusing myself, "Gotta split...", in the face of rapidly comprehending glares, I begin figuring: "no springer, low centre of gravity, all tuned; maybe I can outrun 'em." Electric start gives me the head start and
o'erwrought adrenals extend that to an uncomfortable early lead.

Coming up on Simon Fraser's monument a scoot materializes on the white line, inside track for the oncoming corner.

The Mongoloid observer-in-us-all states fatuously, "he's closing, crowding you up, you-are-about-to-be-highsided..."

Ego counters frantically, "Hang there! Your Hog's heavier, Let him hit you!"

Clanka-ta-CRUNCH! Arms flail. A scscocrrapppepepepe...

Cretinously, "well sheeit, man, you made it...he bounced right off...why, hell,"

Berserk, "FAAAASSTERRR!!!

Aorading the box into third, pump-pump-pump a throttle-Dervish. Go wheelstanding into a loonnng straightaway. Time without end later I notice that my little speedometer giggles jouncing off-end (it does not work to this day, nor have I essayed to have it repaired), a nobody else is in sight. Fins.

This slipperyness (if you will recall) may be a function of the particular phenomenon we are examining. We take up
this topic specifically in the chapter entitled "None of Your Goddamn Business!", and refer to it again in Section Three under "image behaviour."

In this same vein, it is worth noting that the academic treatises which concern themselves (directly, indirectly, remotely) with motorcycle-focused behaviours number exactly two. Either the topic is sociologically uninteresting, or sociologically slippery, or both; we have concluded, on the basis of the preceding incident, that it is at least saponaceous, but reassert that it is academically absorbing. The paucity of attempts to understand the motorcycling phenomenon, in the face of the growing presence of the contraptions, is sufficient excuse for studying them.

One final qualification before returning to the account of exactly what we did do: concerning the relationship between mathematics and human behaviour. We have already explicated the practical impossibility of performing any of the most rudimentary sampling procedures. We are stuck with the data we have. However, even under these less-than-ideal circumstances, one tried and true sociological procedure is to apply statistical techniques of summation and analysis in an attempt to render comprehensible that body of information which is at hand. The list of available methods is impressive, and all that they require is one assumption about
the nature of the data: the facts, as we have them, must satisfy the principle of equivalence. We must suppose that each and every instance of "X" (in this context, some motor-cycle related behaviour, or some feature of that behaviour, for example: "power tripping") is mathematically and phenomenologically equivalent to each and every other instance of "X", and distinguishable from all "Y"'s, "Z"'s etc. ("a punchout", "picking up broads", "going for a Sunday spin").

Unfortunately, this is an assumption that we are not willing to make, because it seems quite obvious that the phenomena in question are not like that at all. The computational mode may be perfectly possible, and the results would be elegant, trim, and natty. However, the mode of analysis is incongruous with the features of motorcycle situated activity which we have encountered. This amounts to our asserting that the phenomenon is not only "slippery", but "fuzzy" as well. Each and every bit of information obtained from our subjects was, in a very real and important sense, unique and situation specific. The force-fitting of a post-hoc mathematical mode of analysis would be wholly inappropriate for the subject matter and our interests. Our own "soft sociology" approach (if one must give it a name) to this problem might be the precursor of a hard math schema, but at this stage of the game (both early and late) what with the riddles of sampling, the dearth of directly
relevant literature, and the kinds of information which we were able to extract, we are forced to conclude that mathematics is too precise, motorcycling too velutinous. The two will not fit.

Having made all these qualifications about what we did not/could not do, we may begin to examine exactly what it was that we did accomplish in the field, and how we went about doing it. Quite simply, we went around and asked a lot of motorcyclists what they got out of it. As outlined above, we confined our questions mainly to the Vancouver area, with brief side trips down the West Coast and over to Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal for interest's sake. The bulk of the questioning occurred during the summer of 1971, with some preamble during the previous winter (notably the Motor Vehicle Records fiasco) and the tying up of loose ends the following year's end. That is the matter simply put, but there is much more to the matter than that.

First, "a lot of motorcyclists" means in excess of one thousand respondents, all of whom fit our definition of a population element. The precise number is not known because of two factors. There were a few known "repeats" (persons we "ran into" twice, or in a few cases, several times) plus a (likewise, presumably small) number of unknown repeats. Also, when it became quite evident that mathematics was of no avail, we simply stopped counting. Since
the one true science was disfranchised a little over half way through the whole procedure, the raw number of encounters probably exceeds fifteen hundred but falls short of two thousand.

Next, the questions we asked, and why we asked them.

In as much as our general aim can be expressed as an attempt to get the inside dope about motorcycling, we decided to get the dope inside by generating a little interactive contact with our subjects. Merely watching them, or hanging around the outskirts of the vehicle/verbal traffic did not prove very productive; in fact it was often confusing. This was probably a function of our own motorcycle naivete, and the tendency to find certain encounters with certain cyclists (motorcycle policemen in particular) "too threatening for words". In the field there was a rough inverse relationship between the readiness to assume the merely spectator stance and the ability to comprehend a situation. Deducing correctly that this was getting us nowhere, the decision was made to screw one's courage to the sticking point and stick to direct questioning.

Now to the matter of the particular questions; this will take some explaining ...
associated with motorcycles. Being a bit reflexive about it, we are necessarily constrained to saying something academic and sociological about the behaviour of motorcyclists. Without being too dogmatic about it, since these matters are hardly settled in sociology proper (whatever that may be), we shall explicate first what being "academic" and being "sociological" entails, and then elucidate what is meant by "saying something about something".

The ground rule of academic work is that the report be completely and correctly reasoned, which is to say, logical; and, as an extension of this standard, for the sake of brevity and clarity, that it be systematic, setting forth the inherent logic in a concise, readable manner. Not all of sociology will cling to this custom (praise be!), nor should it, but in the realm of academic sociology one must be thoroughly (painfully?) systematic and logical. This explains why right now you are probably asking yourself, "Why doesn't he cut all this preamble and get on with the booze, the bludgeoning, and the gang rape scene?"; that is, if you are bothering to read this part at all, though the words "booze ...bludgeoning...gang rape" have probably caught your eye if you are skimming.

Sociology, or any piece of it, is a study of social phenomena; any more elaborate specification of the term will
raise issues of considerable contention, since stricter delimitations of the legitimate and necessary characteristics of sociological endeavor are not universally agreed upon. However, even our very squat definition does point out at least three generic traits of work in the field, three standards which are themselves loci of unresolved debate over how best to achieve them, but which are nonetheless serviceable criteria of what qualifies as sociology.

Primarily it must be a study: its aim is to apply the mind in acquiring an understanding of social phenomena. A sociologist attempts to apprehend and interpret the object of his study in order to grasp its meaning; this is an aim he shares with those in any field of knowledgeable endeavor, being distinguished from some and likened to others only by two further criteria of sociological effort.

Sociology is a study of phenomena: of information that is presented as being intersubjectively apparent to the senses. Though not all sociologists will subscribe to rampant positivism, they do share a common, if only vaguely defined concern with "the facts" or "the real world"; here the social student parts company with, for example, the metaphysician and his meanings.

Finally, it is a study of the social: as having to do with human beings in situations requiring that they have
dealings with one another. The field shades off into other social studies, for example, economics and social psychology, but the sociologist is at least distinguishable from the physicist, his data and interpretations.

Thus, sociology is that branch of knowledge (if knowledge needs be hackled) which seeks to understand the intersubjectively sensible phenomena of human beings in relation. Sociologists say something about people interacting; in this rough and round about manner we have delimited the field as a whole. It is not our intent to be any more didactic, dogmatic or precise than this, there is enough of that in the field already. In this, and the section that follows, we are purposefully fuzzy, interested only in general guidelines for the accomplishment of our paramount practical goal.

The key to this report, should one wish to triangulate it in the darkling field of sociological endeavor, is the sort of something we shall have to say about motorcycling. Again, the caution is not to haggle these distinctions into a sociology of knowledge, or a knowledge of sociology, but to keep in mind that they arose from and are guidelines to a particular bit of fieldwork. We are not explaining how sociology is to be done; we are claiming that it is sociology and explaining how we did it.
Saying something (academic and sociological) about the intersubjectively sensible phenomena of human beings in relation has gone by many a moniker: theorizing, analyzing, explaining, rendering, accountable, etc., ad infinitum. They are all studied attempts to arrive at some understanding of certain phenomena. That understanding can be characterized as a mental event or state of the researcher's consciousness, such that, having apprehended the sensible, and subjected it to interpretation, he now feels that he has grasped the meaning of it; whereas before he did not quite understand it, or did not grasp the meaning of it in quite that way, or he did not comprehend it at all. Suddenly, aha! he figures out what the hell is going on, and now tries to devise a way of fixing it in his own head, and of imparting this understanding to others.

The question arises, whence that meaning? Has the investigator, in gathering and explaining his data, grasped a meaning that was somehow inherent in the phenomenon, has he given it yet another meaning, or has he injected meaning where none existed before? If we may assume (without starting and enormous theoretical debate) that, though the general aim is understanding, there are many different ways of comprehending the same perceived events, and that each of these modes of apprehension is legitimate (that is, not to be shitted on or otherwise disparaged), providing it meets
the other standards of academic sociological effort, then
the researcher may let the whole matter hang, or he may pick
precisely the sort of understanding he wishes to attain.
The latter alternative is the approach of this report for
there are specific sorts of meanings that we are after.
What this study seeks is an understanding of the meanings
inherent in motorcycling behaviours, a point that needs
further (but take heart, not endless) explication.

By "meanings inherent in motorcycling behaviours" we
intend our subjects apprehensions and interpretations of the
events they themselves produce. If our aim is to make sense
of the social phenomena, then it is not absurd to assume
that our subjects will have already arrived at some comprehen­sion of what the hell they are doing, and it is these
meanings that we are after; that we, in turn, seek the
meaning of. It must be stressed that the researcher's
eventual grasp of the meaning of a situation is not identi­cal to his subject's understanding of it; rather, his is an
understanding of an understanding, meanings he has grasped
from his apprehension and interpretation of their meanings,
and, of course, an understanding subject to the criteria
of academic sociology (hmm..). Taken as a whole, this study
might be cognominated a study of the social phenomena of one
set of participant meanings (though not of the phenomena of
participant meanings in general/the abstract), and your triangulation would be complete. (Happy now?) Let the ignorant armies of higher theoretical and methodological critique clash by night; we return once more to practical matters.

The first task of this report was to gain access to our subject interpretations of motorcycling; hence, our question, "What do you get out of it?", "it" being the motorcycle milieu of the subject in whatever context the cyclist wishes to speak of it (for example: riding, owning, racing, in general, at this moment ....). Obviously, and intentionally, this is a rather vague question. Whatever else the researcher said during the encounter, and we tried to say as little as possible, consisted of positive nondirective feedback; the aim was to keep the subject talking for as long as he wished, about whatever he was willing to say he got out of it. The objection could immediately be raised that one is only going to get those accounts of whatever the hell is going on that the subjects have individually or collectively judged fit for public consumption (the public being our fair researcher, and whoever else is suspected of involvement).

One can never tell if the responses represent what the phenomenon "really means" to the motorcyclists, though one can be fairly certain that it is never the whole truth and
nothing but the truth. Our reply is, "Ah, quite so, quite so, but 'tis the very beast we sought."; on the basis of field experience (groan) we have concluded that this researcher was never going to get any closer to participant apprehensions than by asking for them outright.

Should anyone wish to know what (else) motorcycling is really all about, let him go and ride one; no one bared their deep dark secrets to us, and it is not legitimate sociology to smudge the study with the researcher's own innermost feelings (objections re inevitable biases aside).

A real advantage of this question is that it can properly and safely be asked of just about any motorcyclist, in just about any situation, by almost anyone, providing it is at all adequately staged. Some care is required, since introducing it too abruptly invites hostile or defensive replies, which are not answers to the question but responses to threat or irritation. Introducing it too late in the encounter clogs the researcher with extraneous information that the subject has stated or has already made up his mind to state. The question must be the focus of the interview incident, providing some measure of coherence in an otherwise nebulous data gathering situation.

Questions such as "Why do you own it/ride it...?" were rejected because they call for self justification, rather
than conversation, putting the subject on the defensive. Other possibilities, "What is it like?", "How do you feel when...?", were discarded because they elicit reams of random description/narrative instead of organized subject interpretation. "(Will you) Tell me about it?" is hopelessly naive, inviting kidding or suspicion.

The question as posed is phrased in "street" language; being reasonably asked of any subject from any observer vantage point, it is unlikely to arouse covert reactions that colour the overt reply. The query (apparently, after asking it almost two thousand times) demonstrates a general positive interest in the subject, harmless curiosity, not prying interaction voyeurism that demands details (the perils of which we have already described for your enjoyment).

The word "get" is one of the widest in the language, not only in terms of its social distribution (discussed above), but its connotative scope. It covers any experience from passive reception to seizure. It is not restricted to notions of rewards and costs (except in the minds of social psychology students, a couple of whose replies proved fascinating if unfollowably unfathomable). To go out in the street and ask, "What is the meaning of it?", or "What does it mean to you?", will provoke incredulous stares, laughter, and the odd request for religious tracts. There appears to
be no more suitable term for the meaning, significance, sense, import, intention or interpretation of something, that can be phrased in a simple, unobtrusive question.

One objection that could be raised here is that the interviewer may be raising the question in the subjects' minds for the first time; that in fact it is a non-salient question, and that he is injecting meaning where none existed before. This sort of criticism is countered by noting the very general nature of the question. It is assumed that the subject has at least thought about the motorcycle experience, if only in process or memory, and that if nothing else more coherent and to the point is obtained from him, at least some of these thoughts will be. Recall that it is precisely these most general meanings, in so far as the subjects choose to reveal them to an enquirer, that this report is interested in understanding.

The study has assumed that the presence of the milieu may be meaningful for the cyclist. It follows that there is a similar possibility that the visible cyclist (milieu-situated) or non-cyclist identity of the researcher will have a significant effect on the course of the contact sessions. In the interest of clarity and productivity we have stuck to a single research personage, that of a fellow motorcyclist. Even this simple categorical determination
conceals a collation of near-infinite situation-specific variations, but the alternative, use of dual disparate identities, or, worse yet, switching identity in mid-session, proved impossible to interpret. The interaction effects of different observer identities could be studied with a much larger population, or, more likely, in a more controlled interview situation; their interpretation was beyond the scope of the study, and we opted to "go native" in the interest of getting on with it. The simplest way to accomplish this is to carry a motorcycle helmet; more elaborate versions include side sliding in on a Harley dresser, decked out in boots, colours, cut offs, and copious quantities of dirt and oil. We played it by ear, and generally had a grand old time. 'Nuff said about clarity.

A much more puzzling "fact", and one for which we have generated a more complete account, is that asking the question, one cyclist to another, generated a much greater quantity and a much higher quality of responsive information. Cyclists were far more willing to answer in the first place, stuck closer to the point, and gave longer, more elaborate replies if they were talking to another cyclist. Approaching them as a non-cyclist (that is, one who is not immediately perceived as a cyclist) was either fruitless or frightening. Hence, in the interest of clarity, productivity (and frolics) we have taken our unobtrusive question and gone as unobtru-
sively native as possible.

While we are on the subject of field work gerrymandering we would do well to mention some things that might have been interesting but never quite got off the ground. First, we never ran into enough passengers (figuratively speaking) to warrant any hard and fast conclusions about what they get out of it, (as opposed to what the driver gets out of it, in the context of the complimentary role of the passenger, etc., etc., etc.). They are not out and about in great numbers, at least in proportion to the number of single riders, and when they were, either they did not have that much to say (the onus in the interview being on the person in command of the focus of the milieu), or they did not say much that was different/revealing. Secondly, it was not worthwhile to compile an inventory of motorcycle milieu artifacts and differentiating characteristics. Such details were unnecessary for an adequate understanding of subjects' replies, and recording them for subsequent analysis was out of the question. The only milieu distinction which was significant for a large proportion of the subjects, and around which some mathematically sampled "meanings" study might be attempted, was the size of the engine (with the necessarily related features of manufacturer and model type). It was not particularly useful for this report, and
we have only considered milieu details where it was fruitful and practical to record them.

Neither have we attempted to be systematic about possible variations in interview sessions due to the presence or absence of other motorcyclists/non-motorcyclists, the area of the city/province/continent, and the time of day/night/year. Where such features were important for motorcycling, we have mentioned them; but for the purposes of this study these variables (and any others you would care to bring up at this time) have been assumed "random"/unimportant. We are trying to say something about motorcycling, not everything.

Brief consideration can now be given to the manner in which information was recorded in the field. It would not do to spoil the unobtrusive stance we had so carefully cultivated, so of the many available recording methods, some were rejected outright. Films and tapes were too cumbersome, distracting, and intimidating; they only provide a partial record, and they divert the attention of the observer. The still camera was slightly more feasible, since there are situations where it is legitimate to "take a few snapshots". However, this was discarded because it could not constitute a uniform source of data. Concealed recording devices were subject to all of the above limitations, and were an enormous
psychological liability (or physical, if discovered). The method we finally chose was the quasi-eidetic redintegrative technique of "rushing home and writing it all down". With a little shorthand and a lot of practice, it served the purpose well.

Having described how we set things down, we must still delimit what, out of the total informational possibilities of the complete body of encounters, we decided to record. To do this, let us settle on some simple standardized terminology, so that we can be certain that we are speaking of the same tidbit in the informational goulash. Accordingly, by the following terms, let us denote:

**Meanings**: The subject responses in the raw. That is, it is assumed that in replying to the question, "What do you get out of it?", the subjects were explicating what their motorcycle milieu situated behaviours meant to them. Any one meaning is what any one subject would isolate as "some (single) thing that I get out of it". Thus, "meanings" refers to the data as the subjects have/would constitute it. It does not matter if a given response is referred to as one or a number of meanings; the ways of constituting it can be (and were) as varied as the subjects. We are only using the term synthetically, to encompass the entire body of data and to indicate that the responses were, indeed, what we were after.
An Element: A part of a subject response on the basis of which congruity/incongruity among the meanings is determined. This, in contrast to the above, is our analytic term. An element can be anything from a key word or phrase in a response to the tone in which that response was delivered. In "meanings" we have denoted the various senses that the subjects make of their behaviours; by "elements" we denote how we, as researchers, shall make sense of those meanings. What is required is that an element occur in more than one response, and that there be a number of elements which differentiate those responses according to a certain meaning system to be devised.

The subject responses were, on the whole, extremely varied, and voluminous; we received a great deal more in reply to our question than we had ever anticipated. Accordingly, we cannot hope to make sense out of each and every subjects' reply, nor can we adequately account for the entire corpus of information (it was not even possible to record the major portion of it in all its complexity). Instead, what we shall attempt to do is provide an account of the "common sense" facets of motorcycling. That is, we have selected only those words, phrases, ideas which occurred in a significant number of subject responses (the criteria of significance being "it seems to me I've heard that song before"; we rely on the field judgment instead of mathematics). These
tidbits which we abstract we christen "elements" as denoting something common in the meanings of more than one subject.

The factual/logical relations, within the chosen set of elements, determined both by the subject responses and our ability to comprehend and record the shared facets, will eventually constitute our initial Section Two schematic understanding of the "common sense" of motorcycling behaviours, meanings which the researcher has given to those portions of the meanings which his subjects (unwittingly or otherwise) share. Certainly, it would be possible to select other features of a phenomenon for explanation, just as it is still possible, as we shall see below, to formulate many different accounts of one selected set. But one of the striking things about motorcyclists, (at least in the researcher's mind) is that, in addition to having so much to say, they said so much that was common. Hence, we have developed the following terms to deal with the shared aspects of motorcycle situated meanings and behaviour.

A Theme: A block of meanings lumped together, on the basis of their containing some set of common/congruous elements, as intending about the same thing (and not/as distinct from some other thing/theme). The construction of themes from elements of subject responses is a process of redaction, of summary and translation. The researcher uncovers some further common sense (other than the simple co-occurrences
which cause him to cull the isolated elements) among the meaningful responses of the subjects and thereby reduces them to an agreed upon thematic order. As explained above, this second-order summation is dependent upon the logical/factual order of the basic elemental co-occurrences. The same is true for the following term.

A Cluster: A block of themes lumped together, on the basis of their containing some further set of common/congruous elements, as intending about the same thing (and not/as distinct from some other thing/theme). This is a process of third-order redaction, of finding some additional meaningful order among the themes we have constituted. The clusters will represent the most summarized way of making sense of the meanings which were originally elicited: they are the shortest story that we can tell.

The degree to which it is possible/necessary to systematize the reality "out there" into some conveniently comprehensible "story" depends on the nature of the phenomena under investigation, the researcher who performs the butt work, and the particular audience for whom the explanation is intended. The whole affair, in addition to whatever else it may be, is an eminently practical enterprise. Since it has never been our intention to formulate general solutions to abstract theoretical/methodological problems in the social sciences,
the preceding terminology is not advanced for debate on any such unpalpable grounds. It is rooted in a practical problem: how to say something useful/interesting/"factual" about cycle-situated behaviour. The final/finite fruits of following this procedure are loosely conceptualized as "a story", and nothing more elaborate, because it has not proved useful/interesting to embark on any further self-justification of its "academic" and "sociological" merit.

The schemata of "meanings, elements, themes and clusters" may strike the reader as suspiciously nonabstruse; it looks like it was lifted from any high school literature course. Quite so, and the practical reason for such artlessness is the self-imposed constraint of consultative feedback, discussed below. The decision to explicate the "common sense" (as well as the decision that elemental co-occurrences constitute intersubjective facets of meaning) is also grounded in the phenomenon under investigation. In a similar manner we may account for the trichotomous nature of the redaction procedure. The end is to formulate an adequate account of whatever the hell is going on. If it takes three tries (levels of meaning/abstraction in the seminar parlance), fine. It could have taken fifty, but then this would be a book; if it had taken one, we would have a movie. Since it is sociology, three is a (peculiarly) popular number, having its origin in (as yet unspecified) researcher-audience
considerations.

On the other hand, the procedures by which reality is eventually reduced to such terms may seem too abstruse; indeed, they are altogether hidden in the researcher's own head. Again, quite so, for quite practical reasons. We have no discernable body of data, for how should we record it, much less analyze it (other than by the above means) in all its (alleged) plenitude? Where lurks the intent "set of elements", supposedly replete with logical and factual connection? There are but a few selected elements spotted throughout the text "for illustrative purposes", and they have been reconstructed from memory/shorthand. The reader is left with only the themes and clusters of Section Two, and some further reflections on the matter in Section Three.

Our only justification for this set of theoretically/methodologically/(factually?) questionable procedures is the following. We have already alluded to the difficulties/discrepancies of doing that which is "classical", (ie.) acceptable, a priori, on grounds of scholastic entrenchment) in any investigation of continental cycling, especially when programmatic precedents number but two. Bearing this in mind, and sticking fast to our most general purpose, we barged ahead and did it. Section One contains the explication of how and why (to the best of our knowledge, and at times
it was not clear to us exactly what we were doing or why). Sections Two and Three contain the explanation of what it was that we found, for all our bumbling. In toto, they constitute one possible story of what the hell is going on in the field of North American motorcycling behaviours.

We have twice mentioned that having decided on a particular set of elements, themes, and clusters that are worth explaining, it would still be possible to generate several quite different accounts for those "facts". The researcher is in a position to judge what constitutes an element, etc., since he is the one familiar with the intersubjective facets of subject responses. However, we shall have to set some additional criteria of what shall constitute an adequate account. We have derived one such criterion as follows:

We have assumed that motorcycles and motorcycling are meaningful aspects of our subjects' lives. Thus, they are able to provide us with the raw data for this study in the form of answers to the question, "What do you get out of it?" From this corpus of information we have selected certain clusters, themes and elements as worth comprehending. Now, it is not unreasonable to assume that since our subjects have, on the whole, a coherent grasp of their own motorcycling realities, and are able to impart this to the
researcher, they may also be able to comprehend and account for the shared aspects of those motorcycling realities. This requires that the researcher inform his subjects that there are certain clusters, themes and elements, where they are not already aware of them as such, though usually they already were, another feature of motorcycling that needs explaining. Then he asks his subject, "What do you make of it?"

The criteria of an adequate account of the shared features of motorcycling behaviour is that it should be comprehensible to the motorcyclists themselves. In addition to this, it must be academic and sociological, which compounds the fieldwork problems. Under the rubric of this criterion, an inadequate account runs not only the risk of "failing to meet the standards of proper academic endeavor", but of being called "a load of bullshit". Adequacy is achieved by the formalized procedure of "consultative feedback".

Our procedure has been to go back, after determining what motorcyclists have in common, and ask a representative sample of motorcyclists what they make of it. By sample we mean approximately one hundred who fit the definition of a typical population element (there was not time for more). By representative we mean representative of the common
elements of a meaning. Thus, the encounter parameters are the same. A subject is approached by the researcher gone unobtrusively native, and asked, "What do you get out of it?" On the basis of his reply, the researcher determines if this subject represents one of the common features of motorcycling behaviours. If so, the usual procedure was for the researcher to generate a cover story, such as, "You know, somebody else once mentioned something like that."
The question can then be posed, "What do you make of it?", "How do you figure it?", "I don't get it, do you?", etc., which are all "street language" for the generation of a suitable account.

Quite obviously, a process of selection and redaction similar to that involved in the initial determination of elements is occurring here, but on a smaller scale. The intention here is not to point out that an infinite regress is inevitably involved, but to employ the procedure of consultation in the generation of the final account. The criteria is designed to systematize and legitimate "being fair" to one's subjects, so that, having pumped them for data, one does not cast them aside like empty vessels before the final analysis is made and the votes are in.

In practice, the final explanation was hinted at in the initial data, and partially worked out in the researcher's
mind before consultation began. But consult we did, largely in Vancouver, but with forays up and down the West Coast through the winter of 1971. Over much beer and one hundred further encounters the "image behaviour" explanation of "things in common" was ultimately hammered into shape. The final account is not only academic and sociological, but comprehensible to the subjects themselves.8

It is long past time to get a glimpse of that account, so without further ado we shall tabulate the schematized findings of Section Two. The procedure has been to give each cluster and each theme an appropriate title. Each of these is discussed, at whatever length is appropriate/feasible/interesting in a separate chapter of Section Two. Elements of subject meanings/responses appear in quotes to illustrate what is involved in each case.
None of Your Goddamn Business

Schema of Elements

Creepy Feelings

Clusters:

Positive

Negative

Clusters: Wishy-Washy Enthusiastic Gripes Bummers

Themes: Transportation It's a Job Mechanical Bride Kicks Machismo Weather Mechanics Malice Anxiety
A word of caution is in order: the preceding schemata is a way of making sense of subject responses; it is not a structure for immediately classifying those meaningful replies, and, more importantly, it is not a typology of subjects. Let us consider these two critical qualifications in order.

First, we must emphasize that the replies to the question, "What do you get out of it?" were tremendously varied, so varied as to defy simple sorting into slots. It was almost immediately apparent, however, that there were certain recurring phrases, images, references, (in a word, elements) that ran through almost all of these responses, and that constituted a very important part of those meanings. This set of elements transcends the enormous variance and subjectivity of the particular meanings; a simple classification scheme would in no sense exhaust the data and it would be difficult to put one response in one box or to break that response up sensibly into two packageable bits.

What we have done instead, in the interests of telling an economical story, is to first abstract those elements which occur in more than one response and which differentiate significant aspects of the individual meanings. The schemata is a system for classifying those common elements according to some system comprehensible to all concerned;
it is not a direct paradigm of meanings. Hence, meanings is only a synthetic term, there is no need to compare or distinguish different meanings, or to define what would constitute one unit of meaning.

There is a practical reason for this initial procedure of abstraction. Subjects find it rather offensive when the student makes a direct comparison between their reply and some other subject's response. This is tantamount to the student saying in each and every case, "Yeah, I know exactly what you mean.", when, in fact, it is quite apparent that he does not. By abstracting only certain bits of information from the subject's reply, and working out the intersubjective sense of those elements, the student preserves the (very meaningful) individuality of the proffered reply. Quite often, this was accomplished by the simple device of saying "You know, somebody else mentioned something like that...", thus preserving the respondent's dignity, and transferring the discussion to a more "abstract" level of meanings.

A similar practical constraint is the reason that the schemata has no pretensions to being an exhaustive classification of motorcyclists. Subjects, having volunteered important information, can get quite put off (putting it mildly) if they are then pigeonholed on the basis of that information; this is tantamount to the student saying, on the
basis of the briefest possible acquaintance, "Yeah, I know you, you're one of those." It would be possible to undertake such a typology of motorcyclists (or students, or professors) or a facile direct classification of responses, but the author would certainly not wish to attempt it.

(with any set of subjects, no matter how meek and cooperative they appear) under the methodological constraint of consultative feedback.

It is worth noting that the reply of any one subject could contain the elements of any or a number of themes; quite different meanings and elements would likely be elicited at different times and in different settings (such was certainly the case in those instances of known repeats); and they likely had a great deal more on their mind than they chose to reveal at the moment and which others, at other times and places, spoke freely about. All this was obvious from the subjects' responses. What is not obvious (or, what was never obvious to us at the time) is whether the subjects are distributed in some patterned way, correlated with some other measure of subject characteristics and/or across the schemata that we have. The responses, and any other residual notations made by the by, revealed no such pattern. This is congruent with the previously mentioned constraint against pigeonholing, and is supported by the frequent assertion that, "everybody's...(quite apparently)... on his own trip".
There are certain cases where a certain theme or cluster was disproportionately associated with an easily identifiable class of subjects. Where such was the case, we have noted so, and tried to account for it; but such interviews were few in number and should never be taken as the hard and fast rule. It was far more common to find that there are certain subjects who quite closely embody the sense of a given theme. They are, in the eyes of other motorcyclists, and often in their own self image, a walking, talking "ideal type". Sometimes this working man's "ideal type" approaches near-mythical proportions (in the sense of, nowhere at large), for example, Peter Fonda's "Captain America"; but, sooner or later, you happen on a pretty good facsimile. In such instances, the "ideal type" will be used for illustrative purposes only, without implying any complete typology. Thus, while our story explains a very meaningful aspect of the motorcyclists' existence, it in no way exhausts the meaning of motorcycle-related behaviour, or explains the differences among motorcyclists, nor does it pretend to. With these cautions and with this outline in mind, we can (at last! ) begin to detail the preliminary findings of this study.
1. For example, Vancouver's own Black Death Motorcycle Club.

2. Dealers, claiming to be in the know, and basing their estimates on industry figures or A.M.A./C.M.A. literature, pegged the numbers at between three and ten million. The modal estimate was five million.

3. See the chapter on Machismo, Section Two.

4. The work of A. M. Nicholli on The Motorcycle Syndrome, and J. C. Quicker, A Typological Account of Motorcycling. See the Appendix for a review of these articles.

5. We say, "mathematically and phenomenologically (by which we intend, simply, 'in the realm of arithmetic and in the minds of the participants')" because it makes no difference whether or not behaviours are like integers if we treat them as such. The point is, are people equivalent to things, and if not, why comprehend them in that manner, even for purposes of analysis?

6. See Section Three.

7. Again, see Section Three.

8. Though we would have to leave out all the big bullshit words and substitute a couple of cases of beer. The final version is hardly perfect in this regard, it is merely a step in the desired direction. We only contend that the essentials of the story are comprehensible to all parties concerned.
SECTION TWO
CHAPTER ONE

NONE OF YOUR GODDAMN BUSINESS
There is one set of responses which does not fit our schemata, and which cannot properly be regarded as "data". It is only by stretching the point that we can make sense of them at all, since although they appeared to be quite meaningful for the subjects concerned, they do not represent a direct reply to our question, "What do you get out of it?" This block of undata is entitled "None-of-your-godamn-business", since that phrase, besides occurring quite frequently, captures the essence of other, more circumspect/respectable replies. Specific replies ranged from an evasive, "Oh... don't really know" to, "Fuck off, Short Pants!" The point seems to be that these subjects had no intention of replying because the student had no business asking in the first place.

This set of replies does not include the vague response where the subject genuinely did not know what he got out of it. Significantly enough, there were very few replies of this sort, a fact we shall make much of in Section Three. Almost all the subjects were willing to give the question a try, and many waxed eloquent in the attempt. Occasionally, part of the subject's reply would be an evasion of the question, as a way of introducing a hesitant response, or to close off one that had become too tricky. In these cases that part of the reply was simply ignored, since it did not
happen often enough or in enough similar situations to make much sense of it. Even the most voluble of subjects could abruptly shy away from further explication of his meanings. We did not include such responses in this set, but instead took what data we did get.

There were, however, a small number of all manners of subjects who evaded the question outright. At this point, since we are dealing in first impressions and preliminary ways of organizing the data, it is too awkward a task to make adequate sense of such evasions, though, we shall have cause to refer to it later in Section Three. The title itself stems from an incident in which a subject volunteered to answer for the price of one flagon of suds. Several steins later the enshrined titulus was finally forthcoming in the form of an elongated, eloquently enunciated, beer belch.
CHAPTER TWO

TRANSPORTATION
It is a simple thing to assert that the motorcycle is a mode of transportation, a means for getting from point A to point B, but, at least in the context of North-American-culture-as-we-have-encountered-it, this sort of statement runs the risk of being a bit simplistic; rather like saying, "What do I get out of sex? Why, reproduction, of course..."

Correct as it may be, it just does not seem to wash. Let us illustrate this point technically/technologically.

We (North-Americans-as-you-encounter-them) have at our disposal a large number of mechanical "modes of transportation", some common, some quite uncommon, and in this framework the motorcycle can be classified, generically, as any land-locked, motorized conveyance capable of traversing firm, clear terrain on two wheels. It can go anywhere a car or truck can (small town deputy sheriffs permitting) and some places they cannot. In the latter application, it has occasionally replaced the horse in agricultural and "frontier" pursuits such as ranching or prospecting. Under certain specifiable transport circumstances, however, the edge must go to the automobile: the cycle cannot carry more than two people (by law, and by design); it cannot convey more than a few cubic feet or a few hundred pounds of baggage, and even that must be elaborately strapped down; it will not negotiate snow or ice; it exposes the driver to all
the vicissitudes of weather, season, and climate, as well as a constant onrush of cooling/limb-frosting air;\(^1\) noise, and the seating pattern, virtually preclude all but the most rudimentary communication; cycles are more difficult (in the sense of requiring the greater development of a greater number of perceptual and motor skills) to drive, and to learn to drive, than the average automobile; they are more hazardous when the accident, injury, and fatality statistics are added up.\(^2\)

With this catalogue of technological disadvantages, small wonder that for the vast majority of North American point A to point B situations, most people drive cars (trucks, campers, whatever safe, snug, four-wheeled vehicle they can get their hands on). In fact, "It's a wonder anybody rides the danged things at all...", at least under the guise of "a mode of transportation".

Still, people are using them to get from point A to point B; they are in ever-increasing evidence on streets, highways and parking lots, though still vastly out-numbered by "more practical" conveyances. To get to the point, some of our subjects did indeed say that what they got out of it was "transportation", or "wheels", "back and forth, everyday, back and forth"; but they seldom left it at that, because, as we stated earlier, such a bald-faced statement just does
not wash. The response was well-nigh invariably given some qualifications, typically by comparing the motorcycle with other possible modes of conveyance (as if in querulous anticipation of the next question, "Well, heavens, why don't you drive a car?") and producing some points in its favour. Those who gave the barest thematic element, "transport", were rare birds. As an aside, we often had the distinct impression that these subjects were holding back, that they were afraid to admit what they really got out of it; not that they were simply unwilling to tell us, but that they were ashamed to admit it. Later on, we conclude that these people probably never get into any of the motorcycle-on-stage roles, but they still liked to hang around in the wings sometimes. However, that is getting much ahead of ourselves.

The simplest elaboration of the basic transport theme is "cheap transportation, cheaper than driving a car", and, at upwards of one hundred and fifty miles per gallon, it is a hard statement to refute; but few motorcyclists are in a position to say that, and very few did. We turn again to "the facts", technicalities available to anyone who at any-time has begun motorcycle shopping. Nothing is cheaper than a small, used motorcycle, except possibly the bicycle, current rage in "(poor) people's transportation", and the public transit. If you take the bus, you can beat the lot, but it is not quite as convenient in the door-to-door, day-
or-night sense, a point once mentioned in defense of a well-worn Honda 90. However, one point that is never mentioned but is quite probably an operating assumption is that in our culture a great deal of meaning/value is attached to owning one's own private mode of transit, and to owning a costly thing (and even the cheapest will get you over the hundred-dollar-investment bundle). Here we infringe on the thematic realm of the Mechanical Bride.

Moving up from the lowest price range, one could still get a used, four-wheeled "clunker" for the price of the smaller/smallest new cycles. Subjects, however, counter this practical admonition by stating that they cannot place their confidence in a very much used device, but they can "rely on a new machine". This element is, of course, cultural heresay, devoid of statistical test, and anecdotally qualifiable with "(so and so) knows (somebody) who drove that old wreck two hundred thousand miles before it died". The never-mentioned underlying assumption here, and on up the price scale, is that greater prestige accrues to he who owns the shinier, newer thing, even despite parity of cold cash investments. Here again, "cheap transportation" is often too simple a statement of meaning.

A notch higher on the cost spiral and you can get a good used car for the price of the great majority of new and
used motorcycles. Pecuniary praxis aside, and Hai Karate ads notwithstanding, "everybody knows you can't make out on the back seat of a motorcycle" (we only met one person who claimed he did, regularly). Worse yet, the most expensive of the cycles will get you a brand new small car, or better if your uncle is in the business. Some more stray flak: motorcycle insurance coverage costs as much as one-third to one-half more than the same amount of automobile coverage, and it is frequently required by law; license, registration, parts and repairs run about par; helmets are a mandatory expense. It is not surprising then, in the light of all these possible objections, that no one on anything over two hundred c.c.'s (the smaller/smallest bracket) had the unmitigated gall to say flatly "cheap transport". To this extent, then, the theme partitions the population.

One fellow said it was "easier to park", but he was kidding.

Another cluster of elements under this thematic mode we shall term collectively "fizz", for they seem to be the result/replay of advertizing froth about being in "the pepsi generation". Occassionally (very occassionally; by and large motorcyclists/the public are a much more hardbitten lot) we got a reply that motorcycles are a "young/fun/neat-keen/lively" mode of transport. Even without laborious statis-
tical documentation of distributions:

Take a look around you! Who's riding them? Young(er) people! Ta Da! (Blend in motorcycle commercial theme music gradually, driving beat, sound of wind rushing past,...). Certainly, (Moms and Dads), the oldsters have always ridden them; after all, C. Wright Mills was no spring chicken! And (again hazarding a glance/guess) more and more of those middle-ageds are Catchin' On! Yes, the image is lively, young at heart, that ole cultural god, pure-fairy-white-GOOD-CLEAN-FUN! — end commercial; no further criticisms.

The motorcycle is a young fun way to get from A to B, and a number of informants told us that that is what they got out of it as a mode of transport. Grey-suited, attache-cased businessmen, families on cycle outing ("There's a Honda for Dad, a Honda for Mom, and TWO of the kids!"), and most conspicuously, women fall into this otherwise thematic category. It is important not to confuse "FUN!" with that darker demon "Kicks", whose evils we shall shortly dwell upon, for none of our subjects combined these antithetical meaning presentations. For an explication of this partitioning of the population by sex, see the discussion of "Machismo". For now, we note that there were very few women riding motorcycles (unless Women's Lib. is practising somewhere I don't know about), and for the most part "FUN" is what they got out of it...or what they say they got out of it...or what they are allowed to say they got out of it...

Another facet of this theme is the rather distinctive meaning elements associated with "touring", long distance
travel, usually with connotations of "vacationing" or "taking it easy" by motorcycle. Mechanical considerations confine this activity to those who own the larger machines (four hundred and fifty c.c.'s out of a possible twelve hundred, if you love cutting points, but there are exceptions: "I had a friend who crossed the Rockies on a 250 Yamaha, once. Coasted most the way down the other side."). They can be found anywhere between any two geographically distant points if the weather be good. Piled high with one or two people and appropriate doses of knapsacks, bedrolls, tarps, tents, dangling frying pans, band-aids and oil; touring alone or in "packs" of a hundred or more (absolutely terrifying to meet on a freeway; unspeakable on some lonely back road), off for the long weekend or "I don't know...forever I guess...or till our money runs out." One couple travelled in high style, towing a tent trailer. A meaningful element here is the "romantic Gypsy" stance, the camp-push on-camp-push on ("even if it's only for our holidays") procedure designed to "really get you away from it all"; just "lotsa gas stops, not many food stops, a little money...and nothin' else but what you can tie on". That's touring.

One final clutch of elements in adumbration of this theme, voiced by a few, were the ecological considerations. In the tones of a live issue and the terms of eco-consciousness, some subjects replied that the motorcycle was a less
polluting form of (private?) transport, the lazy man's ten speed. Invariably, they were people who had only recently purchased the machine. More seasoned cyclists did not feel obliged to cite these meanings in their defense. This facet of the theme, rather uncommon for the moment, could crop up more frequently in the near future, what with the general growth of eco-consciousness, and the insidious effects of the 1972 model advertizing.
CHAPTER THREE

IT'S A JOB
There are those for whom the motorcycle is a way of making a living, and their usual reply to our question was, quite naturally, "It's a job." This is one of the few thematic structures that partitions a clearly identifiable portion of the total population, though necessarily, not in each and every response in which it was given. That group of motorcyclists for whom this was the stock reply was, again, as might be expected, the urban motorcycle police patrol. Certainly there were other groups and individuals in other motorcycle-dependent occupations who made this rejoinder, but in these situations it was not so likely to be the only theme to which they would refer. For the moment, however, let us consider the plight of our two-wheeled minions of the law.

The constabulary of the drafty chariots, when they deigned to reply at all (and there were a disproportionate number of instances of, "None of your godamn business!", for reasons we really have not adequately determined), stated simply that this was how they made their living and that was about all there was to it, or "What else should I say?", or "That's all I'm going to tell you, son." The question arises: were they revealing all or anything that they got out of it? Is that all it means to them (meaningful as that may be)? We are forced to reply that, like "just transportation", it did not always wash. Paralinguistic information, particu-
larly the rapid assumption of a stance of smug belligerence (arms folded, sitting back tall in the saddle, cruel lower lip curling slowly into a grin...maybe even fondle the gear-shift with a calm, leather-gauntleted hand), suggested unspoken elements of Machismo. So maybe it is only our own paranoid interpretation, but at this point in the encounter they reminded this researcher of nothing so much as the hard core Biker.¹

On rare occasions, a policeman would volunteer/let drop that he got a "kick" out of riding bikes for a living, or that he liked "looking after the machine".² Since they are normally on downtown traffic duty most of the day, no one made remarks about "the fresh air", except in jest. In those few instances where elements of other themes surfaced as meaningful aspects of on-the-job behaviour, the subjects felt constrained to return to the confines of the role of patrolman by stressing that "the most important thing about it is doing the job".

Frequently one finds that the motor minion has a pre-history of motorcycle related behaviours, riding bikes in the army or even as a hobby before joining the force. The patrolman must request motorcycle duty; he is not assigned to it otherwise, and "previous experience" greatly increases his chances of getting the assignment. There is a surfeit
of hopeful volunteers. But even in the cases where the subject has chosen a line of work he enjoys, the emphasis is on remaining in the public servant role. Over coffee, back at the garage, the outside researcher is still one of the public, and cannot readily crack this facade (if indeed it is a facade, which, for many, it may not be; but it still won't wash). In "doing it for a living" the policeman conforms to an elaborate set of expectations; those of "the public", fellow officers, and superiors, to gloss over the matter. Which is to say, he is first and foremost the (appropriate) policeman, and must behave accordingly. Being a motorcycle policeman does not give him a freer range of expression and behaviour than other patrolmen. On the contrary, subjects felt circumscribed by a comparatively narrow set of permissible actions. Much of motorcycle patrolling is still modelled on the mounted cavalry unit, where orders are received en masse, by word of mouth, from a (comfortably patrol-carred) "commanding officer" before anything can be done.

Apparently, the only highlights are parade duty, where they escort everything from visiting heads of state to radical marches - "queens to queers" as one young mustachioed officer put it; mercy runs, on the rare occasions when a patient is rushed from one hospital to another, the ambulance preceded by a flying wedge of cycles; and "chasing
speeders who give us a run for it". The situations where such "Kicks" are permissible/expected behavioural themes are few and far between. "Mostly it's a helluva boring job". Riding motorcycles is not all of what you might expect; it is only one small way of making a living.

It is worth noting that not all motorcycle police are men. In San Francisco (at least) women are assigned to the motor patrol. However, they are given only traffic ticket duty. They cannot, for example, apprehend speeders, nor can they leave the machine to take on the duties of a beat patrolman. In a word, they are "metermaids". Technically, they are not even motorcyclists, for they are issued a Harley 45 motor tricycle, renowned as "slow", "unbreakable" and "untippable". This ignominious traffic duty they share with about an equal number of "metermen". The "real police work" and riding the real police motorcycles goes exclusively to policemen.³

Elements of this basically economic theme are also likely to emerge among certain other readily-identifiable occupational groups, though, as we mentioned earlier, it is seldom the sum of the reply, and does not partition our subjects so clearly. Other subjects who gave this reply were professional racers, stuntmen, salesmen, and shopmen, all encountered en milieu, some on, some off the job. For
all of these (and probably others whom we did not turn up) the motorcycle is one or the principal means of securing a livelihood, though it also meant a great deal more, especially for the first two groups mentioned, with appropriate variations in the elements of their replies. Not infrequently, the basic "Job" response, coming from these individuals, was clearly a put-on, alluding to the preponderent significance of the other behavioural themes. Since we shall have cause to refer to these people elsewhere, we shall not illustrate our present theme with elements of their replies. When, in addition to meaning something else, the milieu is also remunerative, it will be self evident. The elements of the employment theme do not appear to be correlated with the incidence and distribution of the other themes. Our stock, workaday datum, "It's a job" stands drab and alone; few subjects were in the position to mention it in the first place, and no one cared to expand on it much. This might prove fascinating for the student of occupations, but since it forms only a small, partitionable segment of motorcycling, and since our subjects did not elaborate the point, we shall expatiate it no further.
INTERJECTION

SOME NOTES ON CLUSTERING
Looking back over the last two themes the reader may be struck by the distinct impression that this has all been pretty wishy-washy stuff; if those are the kinds of answers people gave we'll never get to the gang rape scene. Quite so, and we may as well break the news right now: THERE IS NO GANG RAPE SCENE IN THIS THESIS (capitals for those of you who may be skimming). Now, to continue. The elements we have been dealing with so far are indeed quite limpid, both in comparison with what is to come and in the manner in which they were articulated by the respondents. Responses of this sort, or these portions of responses were generally languid and lenis. They are important answers nonetheless, forming a significant portion of that which is motorcycling.

The modulation of the responses is an important factor to be considered in interpreting them. It is not just a matter of what was said, there is also the manner in which it was presented. Intonation is one other element of respondent meanings, and, as might therefore be expected is linked in patterned ways with the abstract conceptual content of those meanings/responses. For the purposes of analysis then, we may title the Transportation and Job themes "Wishy-Washy", for that is exactly what they were.

This will also serve to distinguish them from the next group of three themes: Mechanical Bride, Kicks and Machismo. The meanings represented by these three were all presented in
an enthusiastic manner, again, both in themselves and in comparison with the previous group of collated responses. They are all fortis, strongly articulated with a great deal of energy and emotional intensity. Subjects exuded vitality, often unrestrained vehemence, in explicating these motorcycle meanings. Accordingly, let us entitle this next group "Enthusiastic", and proceed with an examination of the first.
CHAPTER FOUR

MECHANICAL BRIDE
A sizeable portion of the respondents indicated in diverse ways that they were "men who love motorcycles". From such replies we have drawn a theme, and christened it "Mechanical Bride", for this phrase captures the essence of very important, very prevalent motorcycle associated meanings. The theme can be broken down for purposes of discussion into three major components, or groups of elements, which we shall consider in turn. These are the subject, the affect, and the object components, or, men, love, and motorcycles respectively. Together they constitute our explanatory principle of a large range of motorcycle related behaviours, examples of which will be provided. It is our contention then, that there are those subjects for whom, in given situations, the motorcycle milieu is nothing so much as a Mechanical Bride.

We have implied that the subject component of this theme consists of elements that are commonly/culturally defined as male. This is not to assert that only men embody the meanings of the Mechanical Bride; a few women (few, in part because female respondents as a whole were few in number) manifested affect-object elements of mechanical infatuation. We shall consider their replies shortly. Nor are we asserting that the theme of the Mechanical Bride is disproportionately masculine. On the contrary, if anything is disproportionately, or at least noticeably male dominated,
it is continental cycling taken as a whole. This particular theme has a masculine subject component probably by default; it is no more chauvinist than the rest (and far less chauvinist than some aspects of cyclist behaviour\(^1\)). One might speculate that this theme is one immediate source of feminine underrepresentation, but that would take one into the realm of historical/causal analysis, areas that are beyond the immediate delineative concerns of this Section.

We are stuck with it: loving motorcycles is a thing that men do and/or a masculine thing to do. Having established that, let us take a look at who these people are (in a typical, not a typological sense).

The most common respondent, or the role in which subjects most commonly responded, was the "weekend warrior". This is the popular term for the motorcyclist who manifests elements of the Mechanical Bride theme "in...(his)...spare time". This part-time devotion constitutes the base level requirement for a subject to participate in the meanings from which our theme is derived. If this is what he gets out of it, then he is someone who consciously apportions that which he defines as leisure time to "getting off on messing around with bikes". At the other extreme are those men who devote their entire professional and much of their private lives to bizarre two-wheeled artifacts that remotely
qualify as motorcycles (they are seldom even "street-legal"). In these airy regions we have the motorcyclist as "customizer", or as "racing/scrambles/motocross, etc. champion". These men are few and far between; we never encountered a genuine example, though the current title holders, George Barris and Bart Markel respectively, as well as a number of up and coming contenders, were frequently a topic of conversation.

Between the highest and the lowest rides a veritable host of subjects for whom the Mechanical Bride represents an important facet of what the motorcycle milieu means to them. Subjects do tend to cluster towards the lower end, for purely practical economic reasons; being "the best" is a rich man's game. Often the best our subjects could attain was to incorporate their love of motorcycles into their working and weekend lives by such means as the following: doing odd jobs on friends' bikes "for a case of beer, a few bucks", hiring out as a part-time "custom painter...weld jockey...parts hustler", or (the hope of many a weekend warrior) being employed by a motorcycle repair and sales shop. (Alternately, one can aspire to write for any of the California based cycle magazines which cater to this aspect of motorcycling above all others, probably because it is the most respectable.) There is also some considerable opportunity for advancement in the "fly by night" new and used
parts and tools trade, at least on the West Coast where milieu thefts are quite high and prosecution rates very low.

For such subjects, motorcycling is a source of remuneration, though generally not the sole source. However, there is a very important difference between their replies and the sorts of answers which gave rise to our It's a Job theme. For these are the men who "love" motorcycles; it is their Mechanical Bride, not merely a source of income. Since this is a critical thematic distinction, and one which, to a certain extent, does partition the population (since most policemen did not volunteer elements of the Mechanical Bride or other themes), we shall focus the discussion on the affect component of this theme. How does a man love a motorcycle?

An imperfect analogy (since the analogous field is not so exclusively masculine) can be drawn between motorcycling and golf. What golf means to a golf nut, motorcycling means to those who responded with elements of the Mechanical Bride. To qualify as "a bike nut" one does not simply like motorcycles, the milieu, and anything/everything connected with motorcycling, one is not merely attracted by or attached to motorcycles. The affect component is much more than a state of mild emotional enjoyment. "You gotta love 'em." Subjects actively woo the contraptions; they manifest vary-
ing degrees of devotion, of steadfast loyalty and everythousand-miles service. To be under the influence of the Mechanical Bride is to evince elements of a very great interest in motorcycles, to take great pleasure or delight in a machine. In what (masculine?), (bizarre?) ways does the affect component manifest itself among the population?

The first feature to note is that the motorcycle production and related industries are geared specifically to the meanings/behaviours this theme represents. The business end of motorcycling serves to support a set of behaviours by producing a range of motorcycle milieu artifacts. By pushing/purchasing these artifacts our subjects (most of whom were not in the business end of things) foster meanings that we would designate as containing affect-object elements of this theme. We cannot offer any exhaustive classification of these artifacts and the behaviours that are commonly associated with them. However the meanings field is loosely organized by the people involved in the production-purchase relationship. This much at least will prove enlightening.

Concerning the cycles only, there are at present one hundred and thirty-some-odd stock production models that can be purchased as is, over the counter, from a handful of major manufacturers. No two are directly comparable, so the basic artifact field and the meanings associated with the
act of purchase are correspondingly diverse. Still confining ourselves to the behavioural focus of the milieu, but moving beyond the basics, the "non-stock" artifacts and associated actions are acknowledged as falling into one of two categories of non-production, customized or modified motorcycles: "show", and "go". "Show" designates chiefly those elaborately chromed contraptions exhibited on the circuit of cycle association "shows", though some "show" cycles never get off the street and into the display circle. "Go" is a broader category, including any of several forms of sanctioned or unsanctioned competitive racing, though, again, many a "hot machine" never sees a track or a timing light. Bridging the gap between the "stocker" and the "full custom/hauler" are a range of accessory and service industries, offering artifacts the owner can bolt on himself, or professional modifiers he can hire. But the business end of "the cycle boom" of the late sixties and early seventies, catering as it does to the Mechanical Bride meaning complex, extends beyond mere motorcycles. The other artifacts of the ever-expanding milieu are all offered for purchase or hire. Again, exhaustive classification is pointless, for cyclists themselves have settled on a few behavioural patterns that we may offer as illustrative/typical.

Usually a helmet is purchased, anything from an austere white egg to a chrome Nazi helmet. Next on the list of
priorities comes footwear: old shoes will do, combat boots are better, buckle Biker boots are "class", and reinforced racing boots are for the rich. Moving along another notch it is a toss up between special clothing and tools, with a price range for every pocket. Last on the list, and reserved for the very dedicated few are "the colours". These include a club jacket and emblems (which may be "A.M.A. sanctioned" or hard core "grease") and personal touches like gauntlet snaps, slogan patches, beer openers and chromed chain belts. Studs are on the way out, as are tattoos and earrings, because they "show your head's in the fifties". This, then, is a quick outline of the visible physical manifestations of the Mechanical Bride theme, when and where it is evinced. What exactly is going on, though, in our subjects' heads; what did they say it meant to them?

There are a number of intense, typically masculine delights associated with the above-mentioned facets of the milieu. We shall explicate these elements under the headings of purchase, maintainence, and modification. The most basic of these is purchase; one really has to acquire a milieu to enjoy it. The process begins with window shopping, visiting dealerships, perusing the want ads, acquiring pamphlets, specification sheets, and tidbits of "expert...inside" information. The climax comes when, for better or for worse,
the purchase is made. This entire experience is best described as "a head trip"; it is the first phase of "really getting into bikes"; it is remembered fondly long after the original machine has been traded away. The institutionally and informally elaborate sales process caters to the prevalent mania for owning, the desire to possess things new and used. We will not go as far as to postulate the satisfaction of an "acquisitive instinct", but the power/meaningfulness of the purchase experience should not be understated.

Having acquired at least the basics of the milieu at whatever "stock" level one can/wishes to afford (and there is an immense range offered) one can quit there, just supplementing the milieu occasionally, artifact by artifact, in order to re-experience the purchase phase. Subjects frequently expressed their great joy in the typically masculine North American state of being in charge of, or in the presence of, or even interested in a piece of complex powerful machinery.

This can develop into a peculiar state of affairs. The individual will begin to "identify" with his machine, ascribing to himself, by virtue of his association with the milieu, characteristics that were initially attributes of the artifacts alone. Thus, we have the "Harley Davidson Man", to name but one, a phenomenon wherein certain groups/individuals
will purchase a Harley (usually the most expensive/elaborate 74 Electra Glide or "dresser") because it is "the best/the finest/the most/whatever". Then comes the twist. The group/individual will begin sporting Harley jackets and T-shirts, Harley jewellery, Harley (anywhere) stickers, and Harley flags in order to more fully participate in a man-machine myth of indestructibility/mechanical excellence/"Performance"/whatever. This basic manifestation of the Mechanical Bride is done not so much for the show as for the pure love of it. It is an act of devotion to a device. "You can get real far into it."

Not everyone is content to quit there. Optional/additional delights await he who chooses to maintain his own milieu. This can be as simple as twice-monthly wash and wax or as elaborate as a winter motor rebuild. We have already mentioned "the rites of spring" in which most cyclists participate. The operating masculine/cultural factor here is the joy of working with tools and one's own hands. Scores of subjects stated that they "loved to tinker/mess around/fix/tune/ fiddle with" their bikes. Sooner or later they succumb to the urge to "work on it a little". From then on "it's a lot like eating peanuts". The motorcycle would seem a logical progression for the "mechanically inclined" boy who dismantled bicycles and lawnmowers in his earlier days. Also, "It ain't as compli-
cated as a car." The cycle is peculiarly suited to men who love machines; it is a nearly ideal Mechanical Bride.

But why quit there? A small fraction of the subjects went the whole way. For "show" or "go" they "modify/customize/hop up" a stock motorcycle milieu with purchased or fabricated artifacts, everything from fuel injectors to fire suits. The results are the epitome of this theme, products of pure devotion. In the post-Nader era when the automobile industry is gearing for safety standards and economic recession, motorcycle sales go on booming, notably in the more "exotic" reaches. Motorcycling has become the haven for those who would formerly have been "hot rod enthusiasts". Motorcycle shows and racing meets preserve all the flavour of a late fifties custom car craze, with acres of chrome, blondes, bikinis, coloured spotlights and angel hair.

This, then, is the essence of the affect component of the behavioural meaning theme we have dubbed the Mechanical Bride. "The whole thing is, you gotta spend a lotta time on your bike." The investment of time, money and effort by men in widely varied areas of motorcycling, solely because they delight in doing it; this is the key to these sorts of meanings. In doing so, they plug into a range of cultural artifacts/enculturated experiences that are typically masculine and necessarily machine-oriented. There are only three
minor points left to explicate: what about riding the things, what about the women, and what about the object component?

The reader may have surmised correctly that Mechanical Bride behaviours seem to have a lot to do with "shop" or "down time" activities and not too much to do with what the device is eventually intended to do. How important, in the context of this behavioural theme, are riding smoothly from point A to point B on a well tuned stocker, taking best in show with nine hundred pounds of chrome and metal flake paint, or having the lowest E. T.? They certainly are not critically important, at least not in the sense that if it still will not run or does not win, the cyclist will not love it anymore. The onus is on the preparation, on investing the time, resources and labour. If one's efforts come to naught it may be frustrating (some subjects had some very unkind words for their beasts), but it does not spoil the fun of trying, and it apparently does not put a person off motorcycles completely. Two signs in a parts littered garbage bear this out. "Old bikers...(like old golfers)...never die." "You can swear at 'em, but you can't swear off 'em." When one's efforts come to frustration, the experience is more of a "Kick", rather than something which is necessarily involved in the "Mechanical Bride".

What about the women? Well, this may come as more bad
news for Women's Lib., but of those very few female respondents who manifested elements of this theme, only one regarded it as a natural thing to be doing (that is, she did not find it inappropriate for her to love messing around with machinery). The rest qualified their behaviour in much the following manner. "I'm doing it to prove to my husband/my boyfriend/myself that a woman can do these things."

'Nuff said.

Finally we come to the object component of this theme. It is important to examine how elements of subject responses characterized the milieu artifacts in this "love" relationship. First and foremost, we must stress that the motorcycle and its attendant objects remain as objects, even in the aforementioned cases of "identification". There is no notion of a personal/human relationship between a man and the manufactured. More importantly, our theme is void of any sexual connotations. A man's devotion to his motorcycle, as we have encountered it, is not to be understood in any quasi-Freudian sense of penis extension or sublimated sexual gratification. Though, as we shall see in Section Three, it has important implications for subject behaviour, most cyclists are not quite that "hung up".

In point of fact, we encountered only one such "problem case" in the course of this study, a rather sad soul named
Brian who spends his days and nights in public astride an immaculate white Harley, as an elaborate cover for his black leather fetish. Also by the by, could someone explain why the B.M.W. bulks so large in homosexual literature?

Having renounced any sexual involvement, we are left with the sterile Mechanical Bride. "Mistress" is too sexual a term, and too loaded with implications of guilt. Bride it is, perhaps best understood in the sense of "bride price". For the investment of a certain sum, in dollars, days and diligence, a man can openly attain immense satisfaction.
CHAPTER FIVE

KICKS
Of all possible thematized/unthematized responses to the question, "What do you get out of it?", this was by far and away the most recurrent. We have brought together in this theme elements of literally hundreds and hundreds of replies. The title itself is a well-worn respondent term for the behavioural meanings we will be examining; it cropped up in certainly the greater portion of appropriate answers. We will present some initial discussion of the general connotations of the theme as well as the limits within which it applies, then move on to an exposition of its elemental features.

The first thing to note is that "kicks" are not to be confused with "good-clean-fun". Fun denotes the sportive frolic, gay amusing entertainment, the pleasures of merriment. This is definitively not what our subjects were implying. Fun is far too pristeen, and dull by comparison. This is not to say that respondents did not use the word "fun" in describing their experiences; what we are asserting is that they did not use it to any of the light and lily-white effects outlined above. They were extolling the pleasures of something much more powerful than Pepsi.

The best scholastic/behavioural homology for the term is a "state of excitement", variations on this being a close runner up to "kicks" in the field also. "I get a kick out of it...it's an exciting experience...a gas...cheap thrills."
It is excitement, generally in the passive senses; subjects were not roused to greater endeavours by motorcycling, except in abstruse senses that are not relevant here. A kick is first of all an experience, one that arouses strong feelings, great energy in the respondent. Anything that is a kick will induce a state of agitation. "Man, I get to shakin' all over." Such things/actions are mentally/physically intoxicating for the subjects. They are titillating (but not in the sense of being coequal with active sexuality). "Sometimes it can be like coming."

The behaviours in question were variously described as "electrifying...racy...dramatic...high...sensational...soul stirring...spine tingling...breath taking...hair raising...rip roaring...a scream". The net effect seems to be anything to do with motorcycling that galvanizes a respondent out of his boredom/present state to a relatively higher level of excitation.

There do not appear to be different types of kicks in the sense that there are a number of qualitatively distinguishable transient states which are regularly attained at different times and/or by different subjects. Each individual had about the same relatively "higher" state in mind in discussing these meanings of motorcycling. It is the absolute level of the experience that varies most widely:
a given behaviour may be more or less successful in producing the desired effect; some individuals seem to get more of a kick out of it than others; different individuals have undergone different ranges of experiences. For the purposes of this argument, we can adopt one commonplace characterization of such variance and state that the behaviours and their associated meanings go from "mild" to "wild". This would cover the range of run of the mill events from "a Sunday spin" to "heavy jammin'", relegating a few extraordinary kicks, such as ramp jumping, to somewhere off the "high and wild" end.

How is this theme distributed across the population? Once again, most everywhere, excluding only the policemen and the riders of the smallest machines (oh, poor maligned Honda 90!), though, since this was the most popular of the themes, there were some exceptions in both of the above cases. Concerning the smaller machines, we should also note the current proliferation of "mini-bikes", machines of low stature and miniscule displacement. They are apparently emerging as a new Kick in motorcycling, as well as being the stamping grounds of the very young. We have digressed.

Almost anyone was likely to proffer some elements of this theme in the course of replying to our question; of all the themes this one is the least likely to be related to any
possible "typology of motorcyclists", unless some "external" measures were considered too. To narrow it down a bit though, we can note that particular individuals may have their own favourite times/spaces for indulging in kicks. We cannot attempt an exhaustive analysis of the temporal/spacial relations involved here, since we did not substruct the responses of subjects according to this scheme. Neither can we be certain of where such individuals would sit in relation to the entire population. It seems fairly obvious that such distinctions as day or night, street or highway, road or cross country or track would be relevant time/space situational considerations for an activity such as motorcycling. We would agree that this is so, at least for certain individuals/groups; in what manner it is generally functioning is not yet known. In the context of this theme, we would assert that some respondents did align themselves with particular situations where time/space factors were overtly operating (racing, to name but one), the object being to get the maximum "kick", out of it. We have digressed even further.

Returning to the how and the wherefore of motorcycle-focused excitation, we note that whereas the "Mechanical Bride" was concerned with the more stationary manifestations of motorcyclists' behaviour, "Kicks" invariably involves some movement on the part of our population. The exception here is the subject who gets a kick out of taking the best in show
trophy for his customized creation. He has not moved an inch. However, we would argue that this has very little directly to do with motorcycling, and a great deal to do with a more general form of organized competition. Winning a race is much more relevant to the theme we are considering.

At its simplest level, in the sense that it gives one a "mild kick", riding around on the motorcycle gives one a sense of something to do. If nothing else, subjects said it "relieves boredom". The same might be said for getting a kick out of "tinkering around with my motor", but we have included these under the preceding theme since a state of tremendous agitation hardly seems to be the end in view. Herein lies the therapeutic effect of "just going for a spin". Subjects cited the rhythm of the basic riding activities as well as the "change of scenery" as the operating factors at this level. Riding a motorcycle requires both hands and both feet, as well as variations in posture; the world is continuously unfolded in an uninterrupted, near spherical panorama. It is much more of "something to do" than going for a walk or riding in a car.

A slightly stronger kick is the sense of accomplishment involved in controlling a small, mobile bit of one's environment. This is the intense satisfaction of mastering the skills of riding to the degree that one feels "in command". Here also
is the end result of the Mechanical Bride activities, "the proof of the pudding", as it were. After much effort, "I did it! The damned thing works!" More than one individual mentioned that this was the sort of kick that he did not obtain in his workaday life. Motorcycling is for many a form of recreative recreation, for it provides more than "something to do"; it gives a sense of "getting something done". "I can always count on my bike. I kick it over, and it either starts or it doesn't. I built it. I take care of it. Either way, it's my doing."

Moving out of the mild into that which is wild we encounter what is often labelled "the motorcycle experience" in advertising copy and respondent ravings alike. This is one of the "real highs" experienced by a great number of subjects. At this level, property, specifically the motorcycle milieu, is recognized/overtly utilized as an instrument of self titillation. We return also to some more specific consideration of the factors of time and space.

Actually, if one were to read only the advertising copy, one would conclude that the "motorcycle experience" consisted in easing the mind; if you own a motorcycle you can "get away from it all" at a moments notice. Examples of this sort of publicity include Honda's "two-wheeled freedom" and Yamaha's "sometimes freedom is just knowing it's there"; here again we have an industry gearing itself to a prevalent behavioural
theme. However, with Puritan and work ethic hangovers they cannot go so far as to mention such a powerful potentially uncontrollable experience as "Kicks"; they have to employ it in terms of "getting out from under it all".

Not surprizingly, then, the participants' versions of the motorcycle experience present quite another set of behaviors. Responses containing such quasi "fun" elements as the above were relatively few in number. The real excitement does not consist in the pseudo freedom of temporarily getting out from under; that would necessitate actively fooling oneself, or at the very least an airtight compartmentalization of activities. The experience as it exists is an integral one, it manifests no such elements of self deception or circumscription. Instead of "easing the mind", the cyclist tries to "clear his head". It is another case of re-creation, "a turn on". "You put everything down, and you go out jammin' for a while. Helps you think straight."

To distinguish this level of kick from the milder versions, the rider becomes actively preoccupied not simply with the handling of stimuli; that would be "just something to do". Neither is he preoccupied with novel ways of handling that is the kick that comes with the sense of accomplishment and the development of riding skills. Instead, he is pre-occupied with the handling of novel stimuli. To explicate:
it goes without saying that the rider is preoccupied with what he is doing. All levels of kicks entail this excitation to higher energy levels. Also, riding (and just about anything else) can be conceived of as a process of handling stimuli. "You gotta pay attention man, otherwise you fuck up, Ha!" But what, pray tell, do we mean by new stimuli?

For the answer, we shall have to digress from our data into an abstract discussion of activities in general. Subjects did not feel up to any such theoretical self mutilation "Jeeezuz, man! Is that all you wanna do? Talk, talk!"; so, we have had to do it on our lonesome.

Consider the set "all activities", defining an activity as any block which a subject can consistently substruct from the totality of his experience. "The motorcycle experience" is one such activity. Now, obviously, there is no clear division between "static" and "moving" activities, but for the purposes of the analysis we may say that most activities are more or less static and involve comparatively little in the way of physical dynamics. They are, for example, spoken of as occurring in a certain (single) place. However, some occasions do have a requisite velocity, beginning somewhere around "taking a walk", and extending up to (and theoretically past) "the fastest man alive". Going for a ride to look at the scenery is a moderately slow occasion, for example. Interestingly enough, a lot of culturally re-creative activ-
ities seem to involve moving from place to place.

More specifically, riding around on a motorcycle obligates/enables one to handle a relatively novel form of stimuli, variable spatial inputs. The environment no longer remains firmly in place while time marches on. Time and space move by together, in a direct $S = V/T$ relationship that can be regulated at will. The motorcycle experience is an activity that respondents could turn on, moderate, and turn off as required in order to clear the head with entirely different perceptual/behavioural orderings. Of course, the greater the velocity one can manage, the bigger the kick, but more of that anon. "Sit back and watch the road, groove on the trees going by." "Get out and ride around for a while." "It's real mellow." "Riding it to work sets me up for the day. On my way home I can forget." This much is available to anyone who can ride, and therein probably lies the reason that kicks is the most widespread of our themes. For the great mass, motorcycling means a wild thing to do. "Everybody loves to get out and roar around once in a while."

However, it does not stop there. The last great thrill begins in the realm of higher and higher speed. Riding at a breakneck pace is "a fantastic charge". Like Machismo, the theme becomes romantic in its upper reaches, and the two blend into a single reply. This is where one may find "the daredevils", "the speed demons", professional and amateur
racers, and many an aspiring "weekend warrior" and "sidewalk commando". Evel Knievel is the best known living archetype, the product of motorcycle related industries publically attaching themselves to the most exotic manifestations of a prevalent behavioural theme. At this level the general object is to violate any or all rules of the road/common sense/self preservation, and, in so doing, obtain "the ultimate kick".
CHAPTER SIX

MACHISMO
At last we have come to it, the theme everybody's been waiting for, "Machismo". By this term we intend more than simply masculinity, for the theme includes elements that would sully Superman. The essence of machismo, or macho, is malevolent manliness, masculinity with a mean, nasty twist. The cyclist who experiences macho feels more of a Satan than a superhero. Machismo is virility stained with virulence, the twin embodiment of manhood and evil.

Next to "Kicks", this is the most pervasive of cycling behaviour themes. Its elements are the night beasts of the citizen's worst dreams: the sex, the sadism, the savagery, the satanic fantastic fiends; and, we contend, it lurks in the black heart of many a motorcyclist. The theme was voiced by all manner of subjects, furtively, leeringly, boastfully, belligerently. It is much of what a great many get out of motorcycling.

"Machismo" is also one of the few behavioural themes that clearly partitions the population, but in a rather unique way. Though there were many who evidence elements of it, there are certain individuals, identifiable as a class on this and other grounds we shall consider, who were best able to express the associated meanings complex, who were the best(ial) embodiment of this theme. They have even provided us with the name, machismo, using it with much the
same connotations as we do. They are, of course, the Bikers, and they constitute, for our purposes, a walking talking ideal type. There is no need to improve, refine, or modify their behaviours. They are the perfect manifestations of this theme, the stuff that nightmares and motorcycle movies are made of.

It is not a simple matter to identify a "true Biker". Thanks largely to American International, perpetrators of an endless chain of cycle flicks, the popular culture contains a set of signs and symbols that the average citizen can/does use to "spot the bastards". This set includes such sure-fire emblems as clothes, crud, and cop hassles.

Unfortunately, clothes do not necessarily make the macho man, largely because the Bikers have their imitators. Satan's Choice tell the story of what happened to "a real straight dude" they caught wearing an imitation of the Vancouver Chapter's colours. "Har! They call him the Moron now!" It was also alleged, but difficult to verify, that some cyclists purchase or prepare a full set of "gang" insignia for which there is no such organization. In a related vein, we did encounter one fellow in the near perfect disguise of a Vancouver motor patrolman, complete with blue shirt, white helmet, aviators, leather gauntlets, belts and jump boots, striped britches, and a full dress red Duo-Guide with bubble
gum bulb. Missing were V.P.D. insignia, siren, police radio, and gun; only the incriminating items that would constitute "impersonating an officer". He said he "got a charge out of scaring people shitless". At any rate, the reader can see that it is difficult to tell what you are looking at.

Concerning crud, it is another "well known fact" that Bikers are "greasers", using it in their hair, and hardly ever washing it off their skin/clothes. Also, those ruffians are always in trouble with the police. Unfortunately, neither of these signs are adequate either. Chains, cases, and tires throw a lot of dirt and oil, so we met a lot of people who were awfully cruddy but who turned out not to be macho; more often, they were subjects who were deeply into the Mechanical Bride. Also, it turns out, after talking to a lot of cyclists and going through it countless times ourselves in the course of the field work, that owning a large motorcycle, particularly a "chopper" makes the police shakedown an everyday/night hazard. The police have just as much trouble identifying a real Biker for their own purposes—at-hand.

We are forced to the conclusion that there is no single visible criteria or milieu artifact that identifies the macho Biker. Neither is the display of machismo sufficient sign, since, we contend, this behavioural theme is very widespread.
It is no longer a question of a satisfactory research test, it is a matter of the subjects' lifestyle: in the words of a member of the very Angels, "Man, we don't hafta check 'em out, we just recognize 'em." The Biker is an identifiable strain, at least as far as other Bikers are concerned. It is his entire lifestyle that is self-evident, and the key to that lifestyle seems to be a version of the following: "The most important thing in the whole world to me is my bike. You can do anything you want, but don't touch my bike."

That is what it means to be a hard core Biker, and that is the way of identifying one. His is a "motorcycle" lifestyle. Milieu associated behaviours are the major ingredients and prime determinant of his day to day existence. It is not sufficient for our purposes that someone presents himself as a Biker and/or that other Bikers (so defined) concur. There are "Biker gangs" whom other cyclists acknowledge are mere "chickenshits". The Biker must continually demonstrate to others, as well as to himself, that there is nothing as vital as his motorcycle. The tales of such self-evidencing feats are legion; two examples will prove interesting.

"Charger (alias Charger Charlie the Child Molester) busted his leg once. Dumped it and smashed himself all up. His scoot was still running so he rode back to the coach house, blood soakin' through his leg an' everything. He made sure it was locked away real good before he let 'em take him to the hospital. A broken leg won't start to hurt for a coupla hours anyway."
"We were down in Chinatown. This hack driver tells Gus to move his chopper outta the taxi stand, and Gus don't let on he hears him yellin'. Then the asshole gives the bike a hit with the fender, pow, like that, see. Show him he means it. Gus bombs over. Punches him in the mouth, Pow! Hauls him right out the window and we stomped the fuggin' asshole right there in the street."

An individual, or a group of individuals who call themselves Bikers, but who fail to measure up in terms of their life style, are "marshmallows". Again, two examples from many will suffice.

"George's old lady was bitchin' at him when he got out of the slammer the second time. He's got kids and a house. So he sold his garbage wagon. Now he tells everybody he's building a drag wagon in the garage."

"You know those Gypsy Wheelers think they're so fuckin' tough. But Animal and Larry they went over and kicked the pres's bike over in front of the Cecil. Hoofed it over, leakin' gas, battery out. The Chickenshits didn't do nothin'. Just stood there like a bunch of fuckin' dames. Real marshmallows."

Having pinpointed the Bikers, we can begin an examination of the thematic construct "Machismo". The major elements that make it up are the belligerent B's: "my bike, my buddies, broads, and beer". We shall examine them in a slightly modified order, beginning with the masculine base of "Macho".

When the Biker speaks of "my buddies", he intends not simply his friends, but at least the fellow members of his motorcycle club/gang, who may or may not be his friends, but who must be his buds. The important thing is the companionship of other men, however amicable/inimical that may be at
any given time. The typical club motto, sometimes officially included in the statutes of the club charter, will be some variation on "all for one, one for all"; for example: "Angels forever, forever Angels", "A Commanchero is Always Right", "Brothers".

These are the men with whom the Biker shares/creates his lifestyle, whom he is prepared to defend with his own life (or so it is said; this often extends at least as far as getting busted for the same offence). It goes without saying that they are all men who ride motorcycles. More prosaically, a Biker spends his time drinking, riding, shooting pool, eating, sleeping (Yes Virginia, it's all true), partying, "getting up scratch", and "just buggering around" with members of his club, or some other club with whom they are on friendly terms, the latter circumstance being comparatively rare. He is loath to pass the hours in the company of "citizens", that is, non-members who are non-Bikers and usually non-cyclists. Elements of tribalism and ingroup-outgroup distinctions aside, the point we are making is that those whom the cycle gang member regards as fellow human beings are, virtually without exception, male.

This is not to hint at homosexuality, or to postulate a fraternity of phallic extensions. Our respondents like "broad", but on about the same level as they like beer. It
is the company of men, Robin Hood intent on gang rape, that is important to the Biker. Such elements of meaning form the masculine base for Machismo. Of malevolence we shall have more to say in a moment. In any event, among the company of men, Bikers continually reaffirm their manliness, by engaging in masculine activities, masculine talk, and by doing the ordinary (and extraordinary) everyday things that Bikers/people do in the consciously/conspicuously exclusive company of men. By this means, our "Machismo" theme is given a startling preeminence in the life of the Biker. The basis for macho behaviour is almost always present. Hence, they are a near perfect ideal type.

Some idea of the meaningfulness of this all-inclusive "boys' club" phenomenon may be gained from the initiation ceremonies that form an important part of the motorcycle gang organization. The archetype for these "rites de passage" seems to be the well known Hells Angels' treatment of "prospectives". The proceedings are necessarily quite severe, but each club is free to devise its own depraved details, sometimes cloaking the rites in "mystic secrecy". However, the pattern is common enough to illustrate the point.

A prospective will ride with the club on official and unofficial outings for a period of two weeks, after which time his name is brought up at the next general meeting. If
he is voted in (that is, "recognized"; he has not undergone any specific "test" during this time) the initiation commences.

During the meeting a pail of urine and feces has been collected. The prospective dons his new club colours, and the bucket is dumped over the whole works. (Alternately, only the jacket is doused, then trod underfoot by all concerned before the prospective can claim it). After the ceremony, the new member may scrub himself, but not the jacket. The colours are worn that way until they rot.

We come next to the wellspring of much that is malignant in the Biker machismo: beer. Actually, beer is but one of a whole universe of substances, broadly classified as "booze and dope", that are variously assimilated until a state of intoxication or incipient toxemia is produced. Then and only then are gang members at their best. Beer is merely the most popular pollutant, probably because it is traditional and one of the cheapest of the lot.

All such substances are designed as far as our archetypal Biker is concerned, as "ways to get your head bad"; which is to say they are a means/an excuse for being generally horrible to everyone who is not "one of the boys". By chemistry/culture they induce aggression, atrocity, debauchery, rancor; rowdyism, pachydermatous punchouts, and all
those other "groovy good times" for which Bikers are so rightfully famous. Without "something to fuck up on", machismo is not half the fun it should be. Hence, "D.F.F.L." badges (Dope Forever, Forever Loaded) are popular among cycle gang members. Psychedelics are transformed in the motorcycle milieu: "Don't gimme none of that 'peace and love' bullshit, man. I do it to get loaded." Or, "I'll take anything. Just give me some pills." I gotta get wasted."

If one is smashed out of one's mind, one has the license/inclination to perform any and all motorcycle situated behaviours which we would designate as "Machismo". By getting their heads bad in the company of other men, subjects were able to exhibit virulent, virile behaviour. The best example of this is the "punchout", which is any memorable, violent confrontation between Bikers or between Bikers and citizens in which some or all of the cyclists were predictably not in their right minds.

It's a Friday night at the Anchor. Three well-lubricated members of The Slaves are perched around a table, and one of them, a bit louder than the rest, is attempting to get a rise out of "the fucking longhairs" who also frequent the establishment. When verbal hassling doesn't work he grabs a passing soul by the buckskin fringe, spinning him onto their table and upsetting the unfinished beers. The victim, visibly terrified, still tries to scrabble his way out of the situation without losing his cool.

His attacker berates him for "wasting good beer, you creep!" This is sufficient signal/provocation for the two other Slaves, and all three gang members set upon the unfortunate fringed fellow, throwing him to the
ground and "putting the boots" to him. The bouncer does nothing; adjacent patrons give them plenty of room.

Satisfied that he has been "stomped", and seeing that they're not going to get a rise out of anyone else, the three Bikers leave, albeit a little unsteadily, for where their snoops are parked. It's looking like a good Friday night.

Finally we get to the broads. In the area of their relationships with women, as everywhere else, Bikers manifest elements of malignant manliness. A capsule assessment of the situation would be that our subjects seemed determined to keep the "pig" in male chauvinism. One very important thing that they get out of riding a motorcycle is a prescribed way of relating to females. Interestingly enough, this applies to females of almost any post-pubic age; "grossing out grannies" is considered a real laugh, and "chicklet chompers" are fair game too. Our satanic cyclist is able to initiate/maintain/terminate a conversation/ liaison/marriage in a specific manner solely by virtue of his being "one of the boorish vultures", "a regular brute".

Macho extends far beyond being able to "pick up chicks because you ride a bike". It necessitates interacting with women not as another human being, nor as "a man", but as a Biker: one who truly values only the company of other men, and who regards women as objects of pleasurable abuse. In the company of women, the motorcycle is a symbol and guarantee of a subject's virility and brutality. It was a
common Biker assertion (and an equally common female complaint), that they are "only interested in one thing" when it comes to women, and that that one thing "ain't the kind the citizen gets". Women are for sexual and sordid purposes only. Such is Machismo; a few examples are in order.

Blind Bob is a member of the Satan's Choice who enjoys sitting on his chrome glory wagon until some girl he likes "gets within strikin' range". Then he reaches into his silver studded leather saddle bags and pulls out a long black bullwhip, nicknamed "Rattler". He toys with it lovingly until he sees that the young lady in question is watching, then snaps out, six feet or more, catching her about mid-tie-dye-T-shirt.

Laughing like a lunatic, he hauls her in, and if she hasn't hollered cop by now, he hefts her onto the pillion, still wrapped up in "Rattler". Fires up the glory wagon; and roars off, clenching the whip handle in his consumately obscene grin. Now the rest of the boys stand around telling atrocity stories about what happens next. They consider it highly entertaining.

"Pussy scarfing" is a favourite macho stunt of Los Brevos, the idea being to "gross out the chick you're putting the make on." Iggy, also known as Pig Pen, is hustling a fairly straight looking girl late one July night in Memorial Park. She's talking to him, just getting over her nervousness, when Iggy slams her on both shoulders. She goes over backwards, and Iggy grabs her behind the knees, hoists her upside down and begins chewing on the crotch of her levi's.

She's screaming; he's swinging her around and going, "Mmmmmmmmmmmm good!" Finally, he puts her down with mock gentility. She's off into hysterics and the darkness. Afterwards, he says his only regret was that she wasn't wearing a dress.

Finally, let us consider the motorcycle and its attendant milieu, the sine qua non, focus, and principal preoccu-
pation of the true Biker's existence. It is one thing to assert that the bike is the most significant thing in one's life; many of our hard core respondents maintained that this was so, and we have advanced it in a preceding section as part of a reliable identifying procedure. However, it is quite another matter to specify what meanings are attached to/derived from the milieu under these circumstances. We are interested here in delineating those elements of malevolent manliness that the ideal/typical Biker subject gets out of his bike.

First, there is the matter of the motorcycle-centered life style. The day to day existence of the "bike bum" must be understood both in terms of what it directly embodies, and in the comparative context of other surrounding life styles. We have already touched on the immediate culturally masculine content manifested by gang membership. It is also a "manly" thing to be in the presence of a powerful machine, either alone with it or in the company of other men/machines. The Biker is seldom far from his bike. Several claimed to keep them in their living rooms. Alternately; all or a portion of a club will live in "the coach house", sleeping/eating together on a large oily floor inside a jumble of motorcycles and milieu artifacts. These elements of the life style are consciously regarded as establishing the self evident manliness of the Bikers' existence.
It is in the comparative context that the implied/intentional malevolence of this masculine cycle-centered existence comes out. In comparison to what he might have been the Biker regards himself/is commonly regarded as unsociable, selfish, unstable, self-sufficient, filthy, unsuccessful, degenerate, "a fuck up". Such elements/attributes be at the heart of the Biker-citizen dichotomy so often referred to by our subjects in order to explain themselves to outsiders and to each other. The milieu based life style is regarded as unique, the Bikers' own and only the Bikers'. Parallels are acknowledged, for example, in names such as "Gypsy Wheelers", "Gypsy Jokers", "Comancheroes", "Hobos"; but "Nobody can touch us. We're the ones, the one percenters." The atypicality is consciously chosen, selected from the range of other available life styles, "I could get a job tomorrow, but I wouldn't be happy."

At least it is conceived of as being consciously chosen. Bikers, for the most part, without any hard and fast measure, appear to be that which would be designated as "lower" class, coming from unskilled backgrounds, possessing little in the way of job market qualifications. Those who do work, when they do, find employment in unlicensed garages, assembly lines, construction labour, seasonal/occassional help, warehousing, etc. Few can (or want to) practice even a "trade" on any regular or part time basis. However, this is but a
quick approximation, and is quite by-the-by, since the subjects' apprehensions of the situation do not include any such measures.

Coming up on the central point, this life style is more than an alternative to other "straight" forms of existence. It is an open assault on the citizens' way of life. The citizen includes "everybody else, hippies, cops, storekeepers, you name it". Counter culture is hardly a term for this group. Their own moniker, "Outlaw", is more to the point.

The life style is manly and malevolent. Our apprentices of Satan regard citizens as "a bunch of namby-pamby grease-balls", and wish them collectively to the devil. The Bikers' day to day existence is one protracted affront to "everybody else"; and without everybody to offend, it probably would not be the same. The dirt, the noise, the raunchiness, the irresponsibility, and the tremendous levels of hostility and violence are by and large the calculated antithesis of everything they notice around them. When not out in public actively "calling citizens down" by their behaviour, they are busy "running them down" in private conversations. In this latter behavioural realm a special place is reserved for "the Man", the supremely salient authority symbol of all lesser straight forms of existence. Subjects can swap a near endless list of stories of "what the...(Bikers/Cops)...did to
the...(Cops/Bikers)...". These elements of machismo are not to be confused with the simple theme "Malice" to be discussed shortly. The tone and content of "Macho" tales are quite different; they are told with great gusto, and it is the Bikers who always seem to gain the upper hand, if only for the duration of the story. The Bikers' life style, then, is created and nurtured in the ongoing confrontation with the rest of the society as they encounter/conceive of it.

This could be one explanation for the fact the motorcycle gangs are an exclusively urban phenomenon, circulating primarily in the core of larger cities. A fair approximation of this state of affairs would be; the more citizens there are to offend, the more macho the motorcyclist. Small town "gangs" are pretty sorry looking by comparison; the East and West Coasts of the United States can boast the greatest concentration of hard core "cycle savages", being the domains of the principal chapters of the "Breed" and the "Hell's Angels" respectively. Canada's most malefic group is undoubtedly the Montreal chapter of the "Satan's Choice". Other sociological explanations might be advanced for the curious fact that only the big cities can boast of "the truly bad ass boys", but we feel that this one will suffice for our needs since it forms an integral part of our subjects meanings/consciousness. Making the milieu the most important thing in one's life obligates one/gives one the opportunity to be
a mobile critique of all more established, less masculine life styles.

So much for the cycle life style in general. The topic is a bit abstract and intangible, even for those who live it. Elements of Machismo surfaced far more commonly in more particularistic discussions of the motorcycle milieu. To illustrate this, we offer some brief description of the peculiar version of the milieu utilized by the Bikers.

"To join a real Chapter, you hafta own a Hog." The Biker begins with a new/used/stolen Harley 74, largest of the production motorcycles, and proceeds to "strip it", removing such amenities as seat springs, shock absorbers, bumpers, side bars, saddle bags, turning signals, head and tail lights, gas tanks, the front fender, the front brake, the front wheel, and numerous other "unnecessary" items. This is known as "rippin' all the useless shit off a garbage wagon". Then, to the limit of one's resources/knowhow/skulduggery, the skeleton cycle is rebuilt. A "peanut tank" is bolted on/"bondoed" ($) onto the frame, giving one a maximum gas range of eighty to one hundred miles, something that subjects often bemoaned but which the would not dream of changing. A massively extended front end, preferably a "springer", but "a glide and seven over slugs" will do, is welded on to give the bike increased "rake and trail", and
incidently making it tremendously difficult to steer. This gives the machine the classic "chopper" stance prized by Bikers and bike freaks alike. If there is any money left over by this time, custom upholstery, custom paint, and chromed everything are the order of the day, with the result that Bikers are often bust under an obscure California law that prohibits any vehicle modifications that could "dazzle" an oncoming driver. Finally, the minimum number of lights, mirrors (an iron cross shaped mirror is one currently popular model) and other safety devices are reluctantly attached in order to make the creation"street legal". There you have it.

Now, on to the rest of the milieu.

The "prospective" must acquire boots: "with steel caps, great for stompin' heads". He must avoid wearing a helmet wherever possible: many clubs have their own "amusing" story of what happened to the lone, overzealous patrolman who attempted to ticket ten or more of them for such a minor fraction as this on a very deserted stretch of road. After undergoing initiation, the dedicated Biker will always wear the colours in the presence of other club members/when riding his Hog. The "classiest" colours are a denim jacket with the sleeves crudely ripped out and professionally prepared club emblems and top and bottom rockers carefully sewn on the back. The black leather jacket is not as macho as it once was. With the expansion of professional and amateur cycle
racing it has come to denote a (too) high regard for the safety of one's own skin in the event of a spill. However, leather pants and oil-stained leather gloves are still highly prized. That about covers the basic milieu; anything else is usually optional, and the overall effect will vary from chapter to chapter, club to club. With this picture firmly in mind, we can begin to explain what the motorcycle and all its assorted paraphernalia means to our Biker subjects.

First, there is the fairly obvious matter of the comparative context operating here, as it did in the case of the life style. Not only is the Bikers' behaviour more masculine and malevolent than the lives of those who surround him (at least in the eyes of the Biker), so is his motorcycle with all its attendant artifacts. This is to be expected since the milieu and the life style are so inextricable/interwoven for this particular class of subjects. It is worthwhile (and entertaining) to examine elements of the meanings with which these objects are invested. In the end, the milieu comes out fairly dripping with machismo.

The terms associated with the motorcycle milieu are virile and virulent. The motorcycle is "a Hog", huge, overblown, animalistic, swinish; or it is a "chopper", with connotations of aggressiveness, violence; or a "scoot", capable of great speed. Subjects would gleefully wrap their
tongues around the polyphonic stridulations of the lexicon of modifications to the Hog: "stroked, ported and blown"... "seven over slugs"..."chrome springer"..."jockey stick"... "suicide clutch"..."strutter"..."panhead"..."shovelhead"... "hard tail"...and so on, ad infinitum.

Of course, we must consider that in the first place, it is a motorcycle, and not an automobile, with the implication that the Biker has greater skills in the ancient and manly art of "horsemanship" than your average commuter; but where does he sit in relation to the vast numbers of fellow cyclists? Well, the Bikers claim, and in most cases rightfully so, that they ride "the best". This is not "the best" in the relatively innocuous sense of the "Harley Davidson Man", which we discussed previously; though there is undoubtedly some of that Mechanical Bride element present. Indeed, the public tends to confuse the two, and A.M.F. has been plagued for years with the image that only cops and Hell's Angels rode their products. A Hog, however, is "a different breed of bike".

A Hell's Angels' chopper, to take the extreme, is regarded by its owner as "the most powerful motorcycle in the streets". The engine is "bulletproof" ("highly reliable" would sound too citizenish). It is huge...a monster...a real mother...a hauler...a stump puller. To a certain extent this
is true, for the basic model has for years been the largest production motorcycle in the world, with longevity that is legendary. Of late though, Honda, "those tit-headed Jappos", have produced a model that has proved equally as "powerful" and "bulletproof". Not surprisingly, these are fast becoming highly modified choppers in the United States and Canada. Among motorcycle gangs this trend has taken an interesting twist. Bikers are not renowned for their liberal views; a quick assessment would be that their ideology is decidedly "redneck". Consequently, they are not usually mixed along ethnic lines, and rivalries can form according to these situationally significant distinctions. It is the "minority" gangs, and not the Angel whites, who are adopting the Honda 750 to their needs. Time and some statistics may or may not bear this out, but the trend has been noticeable in the course of this study particularly among the Negro and Chicano clubs.

Returning to the archAngels, their most masculine/potent Hog is used very aggressively, producing behaviour we would term machismo. Two examples of this, one an individual effort, "street draggin'", and the other a mass event, "the iron parade", should prove entertaining.

Street draggin' is a blood sport, enjoyed wherever anybody is foolish enough to be a taker. You pick up your intended victim by pulling up to a stoplight together. Sometimes glances are exchanged, but brief conversation of throttle roaring is all that's required. No leaning forward, no fancy tactics, just remain consumately cool. Ooze confidence, not so much that you scare the competi-
tion off, but just enough to rattle him.

You ease the clutch, the light changes, then you wipe his ass off. You win. Don't look back, he should have known better. It's as simple as that.

Los Bravos stage their arrivals at the park with consummate showmanship. The best performance occurs at dusk when, without warning, Memorial Boulevard fills up with pairs of headlights. The evening air pulsates with the distinctive chunka-chunka rumble of twenty Harley V-twins. There they squat, spotlights in the darkness, waiting for the light at the entrance to the park; running their engines up and down, up and down; laughing.

Green. They're off, spilling all over the street in wheelstand and the blue haze of tire-smoke. The herd accelerates into the parking lot until the pres coolly holds up his hand. It's brakes on in a hideous squall. Strangled engines spit fire up those long, unmuffled skyscraper pipes. Everybody's watching by now, waiting to see how they'll sort this tangle out.

But sort it out they do, laughing and screaming. Cake-walk the bellowing beasts backwards into neat, diagonal rows. Then the throbbing dies, switched off one by one after a final pull on the throttle, and the mammas dismount. There they are, astride chrome, more chrome, and metalflake; the absurd angles; naked moving parts. Streetlights wink off a thousand shiny unknown things. People begin to turn away, going back to what they were doing, giving the barbarians plenty of room.

The boys dismount in the comparative quiet of yells, belches, and the engine's cooling ping. It's intermission. The show will resume later this evening and the whole movie will run itself out in reverse when the pres gives the order to, "Roll 'em, boys."

All of the preceding milieu meanings are fairly obvious, since they constitute part of the public presentation of the motorcycle gangs. This much, at least, might have been explained without asking them what they got out of it. However,
ask we did, and in the course of the encounters we also uncovered some meanings of the motorcycle milieu that could not have been foreseen. Repeatedly, replies contained references to/elements of a particular kind of experience that was not part of the obtrusive public/private behaviour of the Bikers. When asked specifically what the motorcycle meant to them, gang members would often begin with, "It's a power trip." Accordingly, we have organized the major transsubjec-tive elements of this meaning/behaviour/experience and christened them the "Power Trip".

To begin with our own, and the respondents' use of the term is not to be confused with another more common connotation which this nonce word has acquired. Thus, it is sometimes said of someone that, "They're on a power trip", or, "They're power tripping/a power tripper", or simply, "Power trip!" These are the pejorative uses of the phrase, indicating that someone is lording/attempting to lord their authority (real or imagined) over someone else. This is taken as a prima facie reprehensible action, and the preceding cries are the reaction of the bystanders/victims. This is not the sense in which we are using the word, neither is it likely that the respondents were intending any such opprobrium in reference to manner in which they interpret that which is near and dear to them. Instead, we have distilled entirely another meaning of the term from the responses.
The set of experiences it refers to are not to be equated with elements of the previous theme, "Kicks", either. The means of producing the two different sorts of experience can be identical: what is, one has a motorcycle, and there are certain behaviour patterns that one goes through with this device in order to produce a state of being that is, by definition, other than normal; but the states that are produced are quite distinguishable, particularly in the case of the Bikers, where we have come to expect elements of machismo. The Power Trip is not something that is simply exciting or enjoyable; it has its blacker side, both in terms of how we shall explicate/evaluate it, and how the subjects themselves experience/express it. The two preceding qualifications of the term will become clearer as we reconstruct the behaviours, so let us begin our examination of the major elements of power tripping.

First of all, a power trip occurs because of/in the mental presence of the machismo connotations which are given to the motorcycle milieu, particularly to the cycle itself. Thus, the bike is conceived of as a brutally powerful device, the embodiment of raw mechanical power, capable of producing irruptive physical effects. This is a necessary precondition of the power trip. Next, the subject places himself, either mentally or physically, in the immediate presence of the locus of primal force. This can be as simple as sitting
astride the machine when it is running. Then the power trip can begin.

Power tripping is primarily a mental event. "It's a real head trip (too)...a mindfucker." The subject begins to "rip out on the cycle". He formulates an extravagant fantasy, a sequence of imaginative mental images that are grotesque and unrestrained, about himself/the machine. As distinct from mere imagination, this "trip" is a more elaborate and bizarre mental voyage or daydream state. As distinct from pure fantasy, it is always an inward, subjective sequence about or concerning the self/that which is near and dear to the self. Subjects employ the neologism "trip" to call attention to the trance-like, inward looking quality of the behaviours/meanings under discussion.

So far it all sounds slightly strange, but relatively harmless. We come to the crunch. Since the extravagant fantasy begins in/near a macho object, the trip takes a sanguinary turn; it becomes a power trip, containing images of behaviours/events that one would recognize as elements of machismo. Actually, "Power Trip" is more appropriate than "Macho Trip" because the state can be characterized as something more than grotesque imaginings of virulent and virile behaviour. A real participant "theory" of social power seems to be involved here. The trips are patterned on a common
theme: the subject forms a series of extravagant mental images about himself as being very "powerful", that is, as being able to command or change the behaviour of others directly in accordance with one's will. This can be as simple as imagining that by being astride the steed one is inspiring dread in those who are watching. Or it may extend to phantasmagorias of malefic proportion.

Here we may see clearly the distinction between "Kicks" and the "Power Trip". The latter is not simply the excitement of control, of turning the throttle and turning on an experience. It is an imaginative state that shades over into "non-throttle" areas. It contains imagined effects on others, as well as effects on the self, and it takes no regard for the (imagined desires of) those others. It is a bizarre fantasy of naked power. Property has become not merely an instrument of self-titillation, but of phantasmal aggression. Neither does it require the actual motive presence or the motorcycle. To trip out, a Biker did not have to be riding, he only had to begin thinking about the machismo contraption. An example or three is in order, and then we may move from a discussion of Bikers to the consideration of the manifestations of the Machismo theme in the population as a whole.  

"When I think about what it is to own this chopper, I figure I can do anything I want. Anything, you know? Like I can go where I want to go, screw around, and nobody can stop me. It's a great trip."
"I think about my bike all the time. It's great, feels real good. Even sittin' in the shitter. (laughter). Feel myself goin' through the changes boomin' down the street right in front of all the citizens...and the chicks. (laughter).

"When a brother gets hurt, I get really mad. I get on my chop and ride around by myself. Thinking about it. Figuring out just what we're gonna do when we catch the dude that did it, see? Have to work out all the details. Maybe first we'll cut his balls off, then hang him up by the thumbs. If he's carrying a piece, we'll shoot him in the mouth with it. Justice. Gotta have it all worked out ahead of time."

There are a number of other identifiable population types who also exhibited elements of "Machismo" in our encounters with them, though not, of course, to the degree which the Bikers embody this theme. All of these individuals/groups are recognizable on other grounds than their response presentations because they carry on their person some mark of these alternate identities/affiliations. The first of these, and the hardest to recognize, we shall call the "Lone Wolf", since that term, or some version of it, is often the respondent's own name for the role.

The Lone Wolf, like his namesake, is apparently a vanishing breed, a carryover from "the fifties". We met very few of them (though they may always have been comparatively few in number), all advanced in years as far as motorcyclists go. They embody meanings that are no longer popular in motorcycling as a whole. They go by names such as: "Mad Dog", 
"Hermit", "Bull", "Rogue" (as in rogue elephant). The way to spot one is to look for such troglodytic titles on the backs of their cycle jackets; the name/self-styled designation generally lies about where the top Club rocker would be on a set of colours. There is usually no central emblem, though one fellow did sport a beautifully embroidered wolf's head; and the bottom Chapter rocker (which in this case could only give a point of origin, since no formal organization is being invoked) is usually absent. The jackets, gauntlets, boots, helmets and goggles will often be army or air force issue leathers, something no longer available.

This sort of subject is the self styled recluse, at least as far as motorcycling goes. He wants no part of any formal/informal organizations like the A.M.A. or a gang. This makes him a carryover from the days when these two sorts of groups were publically competing for the (alleged) allegiance of the cycling public. Today most cyclists could not give a damn about either sort of organization, but they do not therefore become Lone Wolves by default.

These respondents were patently into a number of other themes such as "Kicks" or the "Mechanical Bride" (all of those whom we encountered at any length either owned or possessed beautifully restored/maintained motorcycles from days gone by), but we have chosen to discuss them here because
Machismo is such a critical part of their everyday presentation of self.

The Lone Wolf would take pains to communicate, often by means of tales of "what I did to so and so back in such and such", that he was someone who is potentially very macho, no matter how nice he may seem at the moment. He will raise no fuss if left alone, but when provoked he will react violently, with manly malevolence. What would provoke him is difficult to say, but we could hazard a guess that anything which could be defined as threatening his anarchistic milieu situated behaviours would invite his virulent wrath. It is not surprising, then, that a Hermit would begin and end the encounter with a snarled, "What's it to you?" We can only conclude that our unobtrusive stance was not sufficiently threatening to turn them all off. Note particularly that these solitary cyclists manage to convince themselves and others of their potentially masculine and malevolent nature without constantly/ever being in the company of other identically-manifesting men. On the other hand, or, perhaps because of this, they seldom if ever have to exhibit such macho behaviours. A strange breed.

Another rare but fascinating variety of biker is the small-time stunt man. These individuals can usually be found touring with the cross country fairs. We say "small time"
only because that is where the individuals we were able to dig up stand in relation to the rest of motorcycling's dare devils, and because they more than the other varieties of encountered stunters oozed machismo. The very small time and the one big time stunt man questioned were into "Kicks" and the "Mechanical Bride" instead. We shall return to our middle range dare devils in a moment, after discussing/dragging in the police again. The reader is cautioned to remember that we are illustrating some additional facets of a behavioural/response theme; we are certainly not asserting that all Lone Wolves, Exhibition Stunters or Motorcycle Police are potentially malicious men.

Recall that as a field worker we often had the feeling that our Police respondents were nonverbally evincing elements of Machismo. Add to this the finding that all manner of subjects asserted that the patrolmen were on "some kinda weird power trip", that is, power trip in the pejorative sense. The same derogatory assertion was sometimes made with reference to the Bikers, when the subject was speaking of gang behaviours that we have analyzed internally as embodying elements of the fantastic fantasy power trip. Finally, it appears that neither the police, not the previously mentioned stuntriders were talking, at least not about Machismo. There they both sit, tall in the saddle, arms folded, the beginnings of a malefic leer, astride "the world's most powerful motor-
cycle". What can be made of it? Is it the same sort of thing that the Bikers were willing and able to discuss? Are the stuntman and the patrolman on a power trip? Is part of what they get out of it meanings that are very, very macho? We cannot say with any measure of certainty; but we do not mind asserting that there were times when it sure as hell seemed like it. If it is the case that this is what is going on, then our analysis of the encounters would go as follows: both the motorcycle policeman and the state fair stuntrider have the capacity/opportunity, one because of his on duty legitimated authority position, and the other in the carryover role of death-defying exhibitionist, to manifest something which others cannot/do not, smug machismo. As is the case with Lone Wolves, we have here instances of implied thematic meanings, non-demonstrative machismo.

So much for the identifiable population types. Fascinating as they may be, it is time to give some (comparatively) cursory consideration to the significations of machismo among the great mass of respondents whose lives are not quite so exotic. This is, after all, something of an ethnography, not just a bit of teratology.

To begin with, let us examine the more mundane instances of these motorcycle associated meanings which we discussed under the headings "Buds...Broads...Bikes...and Beer",
excluding for the moment any discussion of the "Power Trip". We have already pointed out in several contexts the massive masculine overrepresentation in motorcycling as a whole. Indeed, this entire thesis, seen from another perspective, is a male-oriented scrutinization of things manly. Ergo, just as it was in the case of the Bikers, any man riding a motorcycle is engaging in a culturally virile endeavour; he is alone with a powerful machine or in the company of other men/machines, and one would suspect that elements of machismo might begin to take root in such masculine mulch among the population-at-large. Our own conclusion, after listening to a lot of people shoot their mouths off, is that this is indeed the case. We have found that many of the motorcycle associated meanings which the hard-core Biker manifests are shared by the cycle-situated citizen. Into the valley of Macho rode the fair researcher.

Certainly, it was nothing matching the scale or severity of the cycle gangs' behaviour. Bikers are, after all, "the 1% ers". If a sizeable proportion of our respondents went around acting like that, motorcycling would look a lot different than it now does. Respondents who voiced elements of a watered-down machismo were not into the life style of the Biker, and consequently did not feel the license/obligation that goes with the bike gang existence. Nonetheless, the evidence was there, and it formed an important part of motor-
Machismo crops up in many of the quasi/non-biker or "chickenshit" organizations. It is as simple as "meeting the boys and raising a little hell". "Stirring up trouble" is, of course, an activity of many groups/organizations, not just the motorcycle clubs. Among the cyclists, though, "hell raising" can be patterned after specifically Biker behaviours. Fights with rival clubs over "turf" or home territory seem to appeal to the younger "greaseballs"; it is one more aggressive assertion of manhood brought on in the presence of other males. Clubs with an older membership take delight in feats of collective daring-do. More than the kicks of riding are involved here; the events are designed to prove one's own/the club's machismo. Regularly scheduled "runs" involving one or more clubs are utilized as masculine arenas for competitive/combative behaviours.

Turning from "Buds" to "Beer", beer drinking is almost a cliche among cyclists everywhere. Whenever two or more cyclists are gathered together for any noteworthy motorcycle occasion, beer is traditional/mandatory. "Working on bikes, you drink a lotta beer." "At the club's last picnic, they drank eighty-one cases." This much is innocuous, but it can go as far as "getting drunk and roaring around". Intoxication becomes the excuse for aggressive, violent motorcycle focused
behaviours. The belligerence, and the rowdyism while under the influence are not necessarily a conscious imitation of motorcycle gangs; it may only be one small part of the macho cultural ethos that surrounds alcohol, particularly beer drinking bouts. Consider the Engineers. Nonetheless, it was there, and it was regarded as an integral part of motorcycling by our subjects, so we offer it in this context.

Much the same can be said for the cyclists' relationship to "Broads". Our run-of-the-mill respondent may or may not have been aping the actors in the last Savage Seven movie he saw, but the macho resemblances, in terms of elements of his reply, were quite strong. Riding a motorcycle is acknowledged as "a good way to pick up chicks and get laid". "They ask you for a ride. You go real fast and they jam their boobs against you." This male chauvinism apparently does not attain/aspire to the macho extreme of the Bikers' inimitable "gross outs", but motorcycling is at least the current refuge of many an aspiring Cagney, Bogart or Newman. "Paul Newman is macho, man." In addition, this behaviour was at times expressly modelled on the feats of the cycle gangs. "When I saw those Breed guys pick up chicks, I just had to go out and get me a Harley. It works."

If all this seems a bit wishy-washy and speculative (would you admit you were a frustrated Hell's Angel?), the
theme is more apprehensible in the case of the motorcycle milieu. Part of motorcyclists' "members' knowledge" includes the acknowledgement that a Hog, the pride and creation of the motorcycle gangs, "is the supreme bike". It is not at all far-fetched to "bet that everybody'd give an arm and a leg to have one"; but not everybody can/does, the main reason being the money involved. "one of those babies can run you fifty bills; and the insurance, shit!" Consequently, our respondents did the best they could, which usually meant buying "the biggest/fastest/meanest/best bike I could afford". The idea is to come as close as one possibly can, without the necessity/unfortunate circumstance of the bike becoming the most important thing in one's life. Also, stuck with something around 500 c.c.'s, it is still possible to add some of the "extras" or to perform some of the "custom touches" originally devised by the cycle gangs. Iron crosses, springers, denim cutoffs, all these abound among the hoi polloi; and they are often acknowledged as "balls...mothering...macho" milieu artifacts.

However, even this is tentative, and as often as not Buds, Broads, Beer and Bikes would mean something other than the malevolent manliness associated with our machismo theme. Yet, way back at the beginning of this discussion we asserted that the theme lurked in the black heart of many a non-Biker. If it appears only off and on (but it does appear, this much we are sure of) in these four areas of relevance, where does
the bulk of it lie? The answer is, of course, in the "Power 
Trip". This experience, rampant among the Bikers, abounds 
among the citizen cyclists too. "It's a power trip" was an 
astonishingly common reply.

The parameters of the experience seem to be the same as 
those outlined by our hard core respondents. The motorcycle 
must be regarded as a locus of tremendous force. Hence, no-
body on a Honda 90 mentioned elements of the trip. The sub-
ject aligns himself closely with this potentially irruptive 
device; the resultant inward experience always involves the 
motorcycle in some capacity. It may be as remote as keeping 
in mind that one owns a motorcycle. Under these conditions, 
power tripping can and does occur in even the most harmless 
looking subjects. The same extravagant fantasies, bizarre 
imaginings, grotesque inward sequences of virile and virulent 
behaviour, they are all there. As one female put it in 
alluding to this curious fact, "Motorbike riders are in a 
strange space."

As might be expected, the citizens are not so open 
about this sort of thing as the Angels; violence is repressed/
frowned upon/tinged with guilt. Some subjects were quite 
proud of it, but the majority of references to a subject's 
own power tripping behaviour were round about, sometimes 
furtive, or blurted out after a great deal of hedging. Res-
pondents were also reluctant to go into a great deal of lurid
detail. The mere admission of "power tripping" was in many cases enough to establish and cover the subject. Why some of them mentioned it at all is a puzzle; this issue is discussed more generally in Section Three. In any event, this aspect of Machismo is present, perhaps more often than it was acknowledged. It is at least more significant for cyclists than the belligerent B's we have explicated previously. To close off the chapter some examples are in order.

"I really get my rocks off riding my fatbob, you know. Whenever I'm hot about something it comes out. Knowing I've got it is really important."

"Before I got my second bike I'd lie awake at night and feel myself making the shifts, popping the clutch and squealing away while everybody was watching. And their jaws would drop down to here, get it? (laughter) It was great."

Everybody does it at one time or another. You start to dream about what you're gonna do to somebody. You roar up on your chopper. Everybody's scared half out of their gourds. Then you whip out your chrome chain belt with the hand tooled buckle. Take somebody's head off with it. Then you put the belt back on, still dripping, and you zoom away. Bikes are weird that way. They make you mean."
INTERJECTION

FURTHER NOTES ON CLUSTERING
Looking back over the last five chapters one could assess their tonus, whether vapid or vehement, as being fairly positive. They are all concerned with meanings that are, in the minds of the respondents who evinced them, "good things". Lest the reader doubt this, especially in the case of machismo, we will emphasize that all the response displays, or portions of displays which gave rise to these themes were fairly felicific. This holds true even for the boredom of the patrolman and the belligerence of a biker (even the demonic may be eudaemonic). In and of themselves these are positive elements of meaning, and we shall refer to them as simply that: the "Positive" themes.

They are also positive in comparison with the next four themes. All of the responses which gave rise to these latter systematizations are "Negative" in tone. They vary in other emotive aspects as we shall see, but they do share an element of "bad times" that forms an inextricable part of the response display. Bearing this analytic/phenomenal distinction in mind, let us examine the first of these themes.
CHAPTER SEVEN

WEATHER
The first, though not necessarily the foremost gripe consists of all elements concerning the topic "weather/season/climate", something which most respondents had some complaint about. Either right off the bat, or later in the encounter, subjects would get around to grumbling about "how miserable it is/was/will be to ride in rain/fog/smog/sleet/snow/hail/Los Angeles/the blizzard of '71". Sometimes there was an added element of foolhardiness or bravado, as in, "riding up to Trail when it was cold enough to freeze the nates off a brass baboon", but usually the tone of the conversation never rose much above or sank much below the level of the daily gripe.

Interestingly enough, subjects seldom mentioned how nice it was to be riding on a warm/sunny/smogless day. The man at the gas station might say that, with envy in his voice, but it was not a topic of conversation among cyclists. If it happened to be a beautiful day, or if the subject was extolling the pleasures of riding on what must have been a warm/sunny/smogless day, his speech focused on the joys of motorcycling. The conversation would not then get hung up on, or degenerate into a discussion of the vagaries of weather, season and climate.

All in all, motorcyclists are quite sensitive to the quality of the atmospheric environment, but in a predomi-
nantly negative way. Thus, in so far as he thinks/will talk about it, it is largely a question of how it inconveniences him. That is what he gets out of it, that is what it means to him, varying degrees of "a pain in the ass". We have already considered why this should be so \(^2\). In so far as the weather be good, our respondents ignored it, and concentrated on the motorcycle focused aspects of the experience. At most, someone might grin and acknowledge, "Beautiful day for it." The rest of the time is spent "getting down to it".

Only a handful of respondents were willing or able to discourse on what differences of climate meant to them, so we mention it only in passing. Here again, talk was of "how much worse it is...(here/there)...than...(there/here)."

A far more prevalent complaint than, "Ain't it a bitch of a day?" concerns the topic "winter". Here, if one takes a continental perspective, motorcycling begins to look a bit peculiar. We have mentioned that the raw numbers of cyclists decline drastically wherever there is a winter, despite the fact that the worst of Nevada's winter can be a nice Manitoba summer's day. If mere meteorology was wintertide's measure then cycling would seem too seasonal to be true. However, it is our subjects' conception of winter that is important for motorcycling, irrespective of what the weather men has to say. Winter is a significant season for the great
mass of motorcyclists, and, in general, we detected elements of minor to middling mental misery.

A ritualized series of behaviours is involved here: "winter withdrawal", and "the rites of spring". A very meaningful, though predominantly distasteful part of motorcycling is "putting your baby away for the winter". This prolonged abstinence (three months as a minimum), broken only by occasional trips to the garage or "a peek under the tarp to see that she's alright", makes the next season's riding that much more enjoyable. Here the "rites of spring" come into play. Along about March our pining rider can begin charging batteries, changing oil, checking tires, pricing accessories, indulging in the pleasures of the "Mechanical Bride" theme. All this time he looks fondly forward to that first big spring ride, savouring the "Kicks" it will bring. And all the while he can grumble about how miserable the winter has been.

So much for the weather. Now, what of mechanical remonstrations?
CHAPTER EIGHT

MECHANICS
Like the preceding, this is a fairly widespread response theme. Almost anyone who has been riding for any length of time will have some public pet peeve about the beasts. Elements of mechanical carping ranged from precisely what was wrong with a respondent's own contrivance at that point in time, "I hadda take it into the shop 'cause my springer went Sproing! Har Har!"; to a dissertation on the faults of an entire brand of motorcycles, "Trumpets are the shits, man. Tranny leaks like a fuckin' sieve." Another common version of this theme was the saga, "Lemme tell you what went wrong with...(the widget)...in the middle of...(exactly the wrong place, miles from the nearest parts department)".

As a counter to these complaints, subjects did extol the virtues of their own/somebody else's/a whole class of machinery. However, this seems (to us) to be a very different sort of meaning, elements of which we would include in a discussion of the "Mechanical Bride" theme. Note also that there is no such enthusiasm/gripe combination paralleled in the case of the "Weather" theme.

A finding which surprised us at first was that nobody had anything really horrible to say about the central artifact of the milieu. There were complaints, and they were colourful and extensive, but nothing of the order that would lead us to classify them as elements of a "Bummer".
are some exceptions to this; not all aspects of the milieu are so charitably regarded. We shall discuss this under the theme "Malice". On the whole, subjects spoke positively of motorcycles, especially when one balances these minor grievances against the three more powerful, enthusiastic themes. This finding could be regarded as a behavioural tautology: people like what they do and/or do what they like; but only if further explication was restricted to the particular behaviours from which the finding was deduced. Instead, we pose the question: Why is it that motorcyclists (say they) like the damned things? In Section Three we attempt one answer. For the moment, however, let us limit discussion to the thematic aspects of these grievance elements.

It appears then, that once again part of what our subjects get out of motorcycling is a small "pain in the ass", and that such minor grievances about the foibles of gadgetry are most akin to complaints about the climes. The following is an explanation for this assessment of the matter.

"Weather" and "Mechanics" are but two instances of those things that "everybody talks about", (but nobody does anything about). They are the lowest common denominator of the set: possible topics of conversation with a stranger/near stranger in a public place. This would seem fairly obvious for the weather; everybody has done it a hundred times. We
have, therefore, noted the particular motorcycle behaviour meanings associated with this most general topic, as well as the comparatively high importance and overall negative tonus cyclists as a class give to the subject. The case does not seem nearly so obvious for the mechanical grievances. Try considering it as "shop talk", and ask yourself what two things could two relatively unacquainted members of the sociology department (unacquainted, in the sense that all they know about each other is that they are both sociologists: they have no idea about the other's position on issues of tenure, confidentiality, headship, statistics, etc.) talk about coming up in the Angus building elevator? Why, the weather/sociology of course. This is precisely our assessment of the schematic status of beast bitch responses to our question. Subjects were simply "talking shop" with someone who was only/at least another motorcyclist. In as much as this sort of reply or portion of a reply was fairly common, then that much of our data was just shop talk; but talking shop is still an important part of motorcycling. It cropped up at least equally as often between subjects and bystanders engaged in "motorcyclist" conversations.

A much more puzzling fact is the following: in addition to the two "safe" themes, why did we receive so much more, and so much more that was vital in reply to our question? Why did subjects, when approached by a virtual stranger with
an unusual, though unobtrusive question, not confine their speech to the safe topics? Certainly, some did, and others replied, "None of your godamn business", but the majority had a lot to say and said a lot that was meaningful. Furthermore, it seldom seemed that we were being "put on". Our proffered explanation will be found in Section Three.
INTERJECTION

FINAL NOTES ON CLUSTERING
Our final emotive classification groups together the preceding two chapters, and distinguishes them from the last two "Negative" systematizations on the basis of the following elements that are inherent in the presentations of the themes. As we have already explained, "Weather" and "Mechanics" are both "Gripes". They consist in minor complaints and grumblings about two common topics of conversation. Their presentation is generally unstressed. Subjects were not plunged into lugubrious melancholia at the thought of rain or repairs. Like the "Wishy-Washy" themes, these are lensic meanings we are dealing with, though of course the gripes are negative in tone.

In contrast to this, the final themes contain elements that are both negative and forceful. To distinguish them from "Gripes" let us call them "Bummers". In responding with elements of these latter systematizations our subjects were decidedly dolourous. All in all, they appeared to be having a miserable, though extremely meaningful time of it. Let us begin an examination of the first of these somber themes.
CHAPTER NINE

MALICE
The first thematic "Bummer" is constituted by many recurrent elements of malice in subject responses, other than those already considered under the heading "Machismo". The reason for making this distinction is that there are two quite different response presentations involved. Machismo was a subjectively enjoyable state of affairs; but even very similar circumstances could produce a bummer with malice as the appropriate/attendant reaction. In the course of the encounter this distinction was not difficult to observe, particularly because of paralinguistic "macho" communications which were or were not brought into play. In addition, elements of malice were fairly randomly distributed across the population, not constellated as was the case with machismo.

By "Malice", we (and the subjects) intend active ill will directed at other people/activities/things. Responses evincing such elements were most typically the ongoing "What the fuck can you do about it?" heavy bitch. Very occasionally they contained some more programmatic elements, such as alleged plans for revenge, but such responses were likely to become more enthusiastic, and strayed into the province of "Machismo". In any event, our subjects were voicing/giving vent to a real hatred of something defined as external to the self. We encountered no one who actively detested himself/some aspect of himself in a motorcycling context, nor, as we noted previously, were motorcycles the objects of ill
intent. The object of malice, then, is something other than the self/the near and dear to self, and it is the product/effect of someone else's actions. (Hence, no one wishes the worst for the weather, except in the personification of the weatherman.)

If this sounds very much like the respondent we described as a Lone Wolf, recall that we are dealing here with something that is prima facie "a bummer... a royal pain in the ass". The cyclist is assuming the stance of indignant victim of something/someone else's actions. This is hardly a very "manly" stance, however malevolent it may be. It is not merely an aversion for organization, "the rules and regulations" either, though that certainly plays a part in it. The cyclist is reacting to any and all forms of "action", anything that "hassles" him. This is best classified by examples, so let us give some consideration to the roster of dispicable external phenomena. For a great many people, these specific complaints are part of what motorcycling means. Each of them is a bummer, and subjects evinced protestations of active ill-will.

Heading the list of things that any and every cyclist can hate are helmets, most maligned object of the motorcycle milieu. By far the most prevalent and petulant complaint about motorcycling-as-it-stands was, "Helmets are a goddamn
nuisance/a piss off/a headache/good for shit/chicken shells/a fuckin' drag." The state of California has for years hosted a running battle between the government and free spirits over the issue of compulsory helmet legislation. To date, the cyclists have emerged uncovered, and resistance to any such edict has escalated to a permanent lobby. Winnipeg witnessed a more spontaneous display of ill-feeling when the provincial legislature attempted to push through this ruling. In the space of three days a protest was "organized", at least to the extent where at an appointed time thousands of grumbling cyclists converged on the Manitoba Legislative grounds. Naturally, this attracted an even larger crowd of standees. While the mood of the crowd was not particularly hopeful, the elected representatives, discovering the enfranchised barbarians at the very gates, flew into a panic. The bill was dropped instantaneously.

This is the only area in which cyclists have "really got their shit together" in response to outside aggravation. The mood is definitely not macho, no one seriously suggests lynching the legislators; but it is evolving beyond a simple malice. In the near future it may constitute something unprecedented in motorcycling behaviour: rationally organized resistance. As for the rest of our subjects' squawks, they contain no such proposals for action. Most closely related to the helmet issue, but without the elements of organization,
were the odd complaints about compulsory liability insurance, license and registration fees, speed limits, hospital zones and restrictive vehicle inspection criteria (Manitoba has recently banned "ape hangers", California is attempting to restrict "springers" and "extended glides", Colorado prohibits any "frame alterations").

Next on the list of most odious topics of conversation are the police, and close runners up they were. We encountered a hundred different versions of this complaint. It is a common thing for motorcyclists to loath the minions of justice, be they mounted or no. "I'd like to see 'em stuffed."

At times quivering with rage, respondents would disclose how they got their last speeding tickets/how they had to spend a night in the tank/how two officers in a squad car ran him off the road/etc., etc., etc.. There is obviously a real need for some sort of comparative data here; nonetheless, in the cyclists' own estimation, they are "singled out for a hard time".

After the police come the proprietors and mechanics in the motorcycle sales and service trade. "Those grease mon­kies got you over a fuckin' barrel." They were variously described as "incompetent assholes...theiving gypsies...only out for a fast buck...crummy...bike strippers". Along with the cycle shop "burns" go the illegal "ripoffs". Thefts
were attributed to all manner of individuals and groups, and they are of very urgent concern to the motorcyclist. A bike is very vulnerable to this sort of crime, so a quota of rancor is directed at the "ripoff artists", and another portion is reserved for the perpetrators of vandalism, "those seat slashing punks".

Last on the list, but regrettably still on it, comes "the old lady". The consensus among these respondents was that "women just don't understand". Like the policeman, a subject's "chick" or his "mama" is elevated to the status of a blocking figure and becomes one more object of a motorcyclist's malice.
CHAPTER TEN

ANXIETY
the second thematic "Bummer" is constituted by all re-
current elements of anxiety in the subject responses. There
is an understandable conversational link with "Kicks", par-
ticularly in the uppermost reaches of that theme. Also, the
most belligerent "Machismo" behaviours will be invoked, de-
pending as they do on the possibility of conflict. However,
we have devised a separate theme for the elements of misgiv-
ing because in instances where they occurred the conversation
took a decidedly negative turn; another whole range of motor-
cycle meanings had been introduced into the encounter.

By the term anxiety we intend a state of being uneasy,
apprehensive, or "worried about what will happen". It is a
bummer, but it is not an entirely negative emotional state.
Typically, one finds a few positive elements, such as a mor-
bid fascination with danger, held in tension with subject
apprehensions. A bit of bravado might even intrude. In any
event, anxiety is a tensive state; the overall emotive effect
is an "unpleasant ache". In addition, there is no element of
malice involved. Subjects reacted to threatening stimuli
nonbalefully, probably because of the differences in how
these external factors were conceptionalized. Malice is
directed at the product of someone else's activities: "Cops
are a hassle". Anxiety focuses a respondent's attention on
the near and dear milieu: "I'm scared silly about getting
into an accident on this thing; it's dangerous."
Subjects expressed varying degrees of fear at the presence of the dangerous milieu, but this did not appear to be in any way related to different facets of their behaviour, as was the case with "mild/wild" kicks. Also, they did not elaborate on this theme to any great extent, probably because it is not a particularly "manly" thing to manifest anxiety. Nonetheless, we intuited that this was an important aspect of what motorcycling means. It was impossible to determine if any or all of the respondents who expressed fear were just general worrywarts, or perhaps people who had actualized their latest anxiety in a physical object, and, if so, how these subjects would be related to the rest of the population.

There are some rather obvious examples which might be taken as evidence of such generalized misgiving: some subjects sporting the tattooed/ballpoint inscription "born to lose" or "born loser", or the admission "I'm a fuckup", or the predominance of death imagery in Biker and neo-Biker milieus; but such cases were few in proportion to the proponents of the general theme, and these respondents did not necessarily evince any (other) elements of anxiety. All that we can be certain of is that the apprehensions are present among the population as a whole, and that they are closely associated with the objects of the milieu and the respondents' motorcycling behaviours.
Many elements of misgiving were rather non specific, "fuzzy worries". Replies might never proceed beyond the assertion that "motorcycles are dangerous". At other times the discussion could focus quite specifically on the two greatest fears of the cyclist: injury and death. In this context, there does not appear to be any "accident distribution" such that one might decide whether most motorcyclists blame their envisaged disasters on their own or on someone else's error. Recall that the emphasis is on the danger involved, not the assignation of blame. There are, of course, "favourite accidents to talk about", but these are based either on the respondent's own experience, "Lemme tell you about the time I...", or upon whatever accident statistics they chanced to read, "Left turns, that's the killer...". Specifically not included in this theme is the members' knowledge that automobile drivers "are out to get ya; couple of martinis under their belts and they figure 'I'm gonna get me a Hell's Angel.'". This forms part of the "Malice" theme. We mention it here because as a piece of (astoundingly) widespread mythical knowledge, it functioned as the single most common introduction to the much touchier topic of "Anxiety".

Interestingly enough, injury and death are broadly conceived of as "accidents", and not more specifically as the (reprehensible) result of some particular individual's mistake. This is true in the culture-as-a-whole; the task
of affixing blame is left to a few specialists, the police, the courts and the insurance companies, who are only invoked after the fact. It is certainly true in motorcycling in the context of our anxiety theme, all the more so because accidents formed a peculiarly popular topic of conversation. Discussions about danger/injury/death were decidedly pessimistic, even fatalistic. The onus is on the omnipresent and inscrutable "chance" factors. Once again, as was true of the elements of "Malice", we have the motorcyclist as victim; this time the pawn not of another's reproachable actions, but of uncensured fate.

"Everybody has a bad one sooner or later. Just call yourself lucky if you live through it. Sometimes come out a vegetable though, and that's bad."

"A lot of the guys have bought it. Snake never knew what hit him. He couldn't have seen it coming. Blooey! He used to talk about it a lot, about how it'd happen, and what people should do after he was gone. We had a big party, just like he said."

"Three steel pins, ninety-seven stitches: I take it easier now; it could be the one coming around the next corner. You never know when your number's up, that's a fact."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CREepy FEELINGS
We come now to the final "finding" of our initial field investigations. It is in this chapter that the personage of the researcher figures most prominently, though we have tried throughout to keep ourselves in some corner of the picture. Our last "fact:" could be dismissed for this reason as an a priori research bias, or a mere bit of fancy; but we have preferred to present it as an intuitive insight into the phenomena. More precisely (but not much more), "I've got a creepy feeling about the "Bummers", especially the last one."

Right away, the reader will see that this is going to be a rather difficult one to explain. Nonetheless, we shall give it a try, because it was there, because it is important for Section Three, and because if it had not been for "the creepy feeling that something's going on there", there probably would have been no Section Three, and we would have settled for a schematization of elements of subject responses (for better or for worse). Here then, is something which, like "None of your goddamn business!", does not fit the schema, and for which we shall have to generate some sort of account.

In the course of asking a large number of motorcyclists what they got out of it we received a range of answers. Over time we began to know what sorts of replies to expect; hence, we devised a schematization of elemental themes, or "things you are likely to hear". Moreover, the data gathering situ-
ation was the face to face encounter, a two-way thing, and we gradually became aware of the typical expectations which respondents might have of us. We come to the finding. No single expectation or common type of expectation struck us so forcibly as this: that when respondents evinced elements of malice/anxiety they were replying "one biker to another", with the anticipation/assurance that we, the researcher, would most certainly understand "what it all means". "You know what I'm saying."

As explained in Section One, we consciously calculated the fellow motorcyclist stance throughout, but nowhere, not even among the Bikers, did this identity serve us in such good stead as in the instances of the thematic "Bummers". That is our judgment of the matter, a "creepy feeling", and not much more. Before we begin Section Three, what can we make of it with what we already have, the very responses that gave us this feeling?

We have assumed that all responses to our question represent something that is meaningful to our subjects. Some respondents, most notably the Bikers, also articulated some overt measure of importance for their meanings. By comparison with the other themes, "Bummers" replies may seem relatively non-complex, and might, for this reason be interpreted as not nearly so important in the overall behavioural context. It would be easy to conclude that they were "just scared" or
"just pissed off". Yet, intuitively again, when the conversation turned to things unpleasant, we had the distinct impression that a subject was conveying something that was very meaningful to him, something that should not be lightly regarded for all the proponent's inarticulateness.

Accepting this possibility for the moment, we mentioned that these strongly negative themes came out in the overt context, "one biker to another". We are referring to any form of "group cohesiveness", the enthusiastic solidarity of gangs and clubs. If that were the case, then we might have expected the police, the only other externally organized subset of the population, to respond in this manner, which they definitively did not. We are dealing with a very loose form of communality, the simple possession of a motorcycle milieu. This was apparently sufficient basis for a respondent to assume that his Bummers would be intelligible to and seriously regarded by the listener. By and large, motorcyclists are not an organized lot. The formally structured groups are a minute portions of the total population. The rest, the great mass of motorcyclists, do not even "get together" informally. Yet subjects were patently assuming some sufficient communality of understanding under the rubric of our last two themes. It was not simply the case that the "Bummers", especially the elements of anxiety, were the hardest ones to explain (for many they undoubtedly were); it was also assumed that
they required the least amount of explication. Only the very simple negative elements and the emotively positive ones merited/required a long-winded reply.

Finally, it was our distinct impression that this all had something most directly to do with motorcycling. We were not simply expected to understand, one reasonably homologous human being to another; we are not dealing with any universal "death consciousness". Yet, neither are we implying the other extreme, that "only a biker would get it". However, we were expected to understand, because we were another motorcyclist, regardless of whether or not anyone else can/does share the intended meanings. To quote from our field notes:

"It seems to me that we are very close to the heart of the matter, Watson. It is something involved with "bad times", at least in so far as that's the context in which it invariably arises; but it is no morbid preoccupation with being "bummed out". There is something about motorcycling-as-a-whole which gets at this/this sort of thing gets at/they get out of it as cyclists."

What is there about the cummers that could account for this respondent expectation? In this thematic context it seems to be the "victim" stance, the motorcyclist as feckless pawn ceding to fate and foe alike. There is a tone of resignation that runs through all such responses, a sense of one's inability to do anything about it all, except, perhaps, to wish someone ill. Respondents feel that they are unable to cope when somebody/fate "is out to get you". Apparently there is solidarity in such negations.
Perhaps this is understandable for "Malice" in the quasi-political terms of a "class" consciousness. Here we have the fragmented communality of the "downtrodden". Yet, how is it that such a consciousness came to be produced/disseminated? We as researchers felt a powerful obligation not only to accede that motorcyclists are mistreated, but to acquiesce, as motorcyclists, "What the fuck can you do about it?" Still more puzzling is the case of anxiety. Why should it be that motorcycling is necessarily the provenience of philosophical fatalism? "I'm still around, you're still around. Why do we both talk as if we won't be here tomorrow?"

Section Two contains a number of open questions/unexplained phenomena, of which the preceding is but one. We were not able to unravel them in the course of our initial, "What do you get out of it?" encounters. On the other hand, we did manage to devise and explicate a schema that recounts much that is meaningful for motorcyclists. In an effort to make sense out of the residuum of conundrums, we went back into the field and asked our subjects, "What the hell is going on here anyway?", calling that procedure "consultative feedback". Section Three contains our/their answers to some of these puzzles. To close off Section Two and to illustrate the perplexing and pessimistic solidarity with which this last chapter has been concerned, we offer the following vignette.
All night long the bikers have been packing in, crashing where there's a place, standing around when there's none and nobody they know. Some heard too late, others have been delayed by distance, breakdown, state patrols and the freezing weather; they'll probably go on arriving long after Eddy is laid away. The funeral isn't until eleven. It's quiet. The bars aren't open yet, and everybody's waiting on a common time.

Grandpa Eddy was an old time biker, one of the ones who came back to California after the war and got a Harley instead of a job. He organized the Gypsy Slaves, then after they disbanded worked his way up to president of the Vagos, retiring in 1968. The Vagos aren't an outlaw club, but they aren't sanctioned by the A.M.A. either, and some say that Eddy was the best pres they ever had.

Eddy bought it in mid-November. Side-slammed by some bar-closing citizen, and he died in the street while the driver skipped. He was forty-eight years old, with one child by a marriage that broke up a long time ago. Nobody knows where his wife is, but his son, Arnie, will be riding Eddy's chop at the head of the funeral run.

They got the bike back together, the Vagos and some friends. It was a total wreck, but today they've got it running just like Eddy always kept it. Somebody says it's like having Eddy back with us.

A few minutes before eleven the hearse pulls out of the funeral home, and a block up the street, in a parking lot, the run begins. There's almost a hundred and fifty of them now, not counting the police escort, and they'll pick up more along the route. It's slow going to the cemetery, but nobody's in a hurry, no leapfroggin, no stunts. It's Eddy's last run.

All along the way the procession picks up more bikes. Some are stragglers, still knapsacked and backpacking; others probably don't even know who's being buried. The cortege just comes natural, everyone knows how it ought to feel.

The spectators are a little more confused. On the sidewalks, in cars, they follow with their eyes. A few on bikes look like they might hang in, but then decide not to. There's no honking, no hassles. Bikers are strung out an unbroken half mile now, stonefaced. Above the unnerving bedlam of the engines a tacit silence thunders.
At the cemetery there isn't room to park the cycles and minor pandemonium erupts at the tail of the procession when police herd choppers off the grave sites. Far in front Arnie has found or picked six pallbearers, and they lug Eddy to the edge. The barbarians gather around. Someone unstraps a six pack and the pallbearers douse the coffin between slugs. As the box is being lowered people are already drifting away, running their engines up and down, cursing when they won't kick over. Eddy's time is done. The chain is one link shorter.
FOOTNOTES FOR SECTION TWO

CHAPTER TWO

1. So much so, in fact, that subjects noted "It's a lot more comfortable to walk if it's not too far."

2. For example, insurance companies give the cycle driver just about one chance out of two of surviving a major collision; the cycle passenger gets fractionally poorer odds. Injury is a virtual certainty.

3. Now you know where you fit, Howard; that is, if you were telling the truth...and if I read you correctly...and if...

4. A reference to the "less sound more ground" campaign, a plea/plug for more effective/expensive mufflers.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Drunk on authority instead of beer, purveyors of legitimate force instead of satyrs of naked power?

2. Each patrolman is responsible for inspecting his motor-cycle daily before riding it, and for requesting any adjustments or repairs he deems necessary; so in addition to Kicks elements of Mechanical Bride appear.

3. Not so strangely enough, the Police Academy trains women for real police work, but no women are assigned to patrol duty.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. See Machismo, the discussion of Bikers.

2. This may also explain why some gas stations will have nothing to do with cyclists other than selling gas (they do not even stock the correct oils, though it would certainly profit them to do so). The mechanics are quite capable of catering to the cycle trade, possessing all the necessary tools and skills, but they do not love bikes. Even though it would be a job they refuse to have anything to do with it. Cyclists are at the benevolent mercy "of dedicated cycle mechanics".
CHAPTER FOUR

3. See the Appendix on The Motorcycle Syndrome.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. How about Harley Davidson's latest effort: "A ticket out of a world you never made"?

CHAPTER SIX

1. These would make a fascinating study in themselves, but we had neither the time nor the opportunity to examine these groups more closely. It would be difficult, if not impossible to do so from any "observer" standpoint.

2. This behaviour has to be seen to be believed. For a filmed version of it see the movie "Altamont".

3. Anal retention theorists take heart.

4. Actually, they are far less than 1%. By a rough and conservative estimate, one percent would yield some forty to fifty thousand unwashed barbarians at large all across the Americas, which is definitively not the case. There is no cause for alarm; the Huns are not at the gate.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Interestingly enough few people had any complaints or praise for the conditions of the roads, perhaps because they are rather less variable, but also because, unlike the weather, they are remotely within the realm of human control. They do not constitute such a safe topic of conversation.

2. See Transportation.
SECTION THREE
We begin this Section with a summation of the major features of all the initial data gathering encounters. We must be certain about what transpired before we can figure out what the hell is going on. To begin with, there are two intractable facets of the interaction which will not sit comfortably with the rest. One is the bald-faced rejoinder "None of your goddamn business!", the other is the arcane invocation of the brotherhood of beleaguered bikers. Fortunately, such turns of affairs are the exception to the rule. Most of the encounters went quite "normally"; they consisted in the face to face exchange of mutually significant symbols, prompted by a question, and continuing to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. Let us consider the general features of these more pellucid subject behaviours.

To begin with, they answered the question. There was no necessity to say anything upon being buttonholed on the street. Neither was there any need to stick to the question. It would have been a simple matter to ignore the overture, or to change the subject. In fact, at the start we had some doubts about whether the man on the street technique would work at all, but it did; it worked very well.

Secondly, subjects said a very great deal. Even the least elaborate responses contained large quantities of information. There was no guarantee that the question, carefully considered as it was, would strike a responsive
chord in the subjects. We had hoped for some sort of answer, some pittance on which to construct a thesis. We received far more than we could ever have anticipated. It was our distinct impression throughout these highly productive encounters that not only had subjects thought about this sort of question beforehand, but this was the very question that they had been dying to answer.

So much for the immediately astonishing features of individual encounters. What can be said about these incidents in a more comparative context, by virtue of analytic hindsight? First, the responses contained a great deal that was common. The same words, the same phrases, congruent thought forms, the self-same meanings cropped up again and again. For the moment we can only speculate about the origin of such mutuality, since it was not feasible to arrest the flow of information and ask, "Where did you learn that?" This much was obvious, though; all fifteen hundred of them had not gathered together beforehand to legislate their responses. They had not all seen the same movies, read the identical books, or been together in one place at any one time; neither had they talked about it among themselves to any great extent. They have not "got it together" while en milieu in even the remotest sense of the term, yet they shared much the same meanings for their behaviour.

Secondly, these common meanings formed a very large and
very important part of their responses. Certainly, there was a wealth of purely subjective information that was both characteristic of and unique to each individual respondent. The proportion of individuality-communality would also vary from subject to subject. However, at last an equally significant portion of a "typical" reply would consist of meanings that were common among respondents-as-a-whole. The "subjectivity" of the encounters was far less than might reasonably have been expected; we had anticipated that "everybody... (would be)...on his own trip" to a much greater degree.

In this comparative context, and in the light of this significant conjoint social distribution of meanings, we have devoted Section Two to a schematization of shared elements of subject responses. We feel justified in asserting that this schema represents a large and important part of what motorcycling means in North America. For the purists in the audience we would append all suitable cautions about sampling, predictability and generalization of results. The nine major behavioural themes could constitute "things to look for" in any subsequent examination of motorcycle consociated phenomena. They present one kind of perspective on the phenomena; they are one version of/story about what the hell is going on.

Nine is a pretty small number. One might reasonably look for a much greater variety of meanings among a group of persons whose only a priori mutual characteristic was the possession of
that which was broadly defined as a motorcycle milieu (ignoring for the moment that we are all alienated Americans in the latter stages of cultural collapse, etc., etc., etc.). Accordingly, we feel constrained to account for both the manner and high degree of social organization; we must come up with another story, one that explains both the consensus and, if possible, the two discordant features which characterize some of the encounters.

This, then, was the state of affairs as we presented it to our hundred-odd representative respondents in a series of second generation encounters. The first finding at this level of the investigation was that this high degree of consensus, its manner and form was something with which they were already familiar, or, at the very least, something that they had little trouble "picking up on" and relating to their own conceptions of the matter. It was not surprising to them that continental motorcycling was organized in this manner (or could be conceived of as being organized in this manner - it makes not a jot of difference here) or to this degree.

What is immediately suggested by this and the previous findings is the existence of some inherent underlying principle of behavioural organization. We are not referring to any set of external "structural constraints" which might be operating on the population as a whole. Such
a conception of the matter is foreign to our subjects' and, hence, our own way of thinking about the matter. "It's got something to do with motorcycling." Other analytically "external" perspectives/explanations of the matter are by no means impossible/uninteresting, but that has not been our approach. We shall explain the behaviours from the experience of those who produce it. Accordingly, we began with a reanalysis of the themes as they stood to see if we might distill some essential principles for this organization of the phenomena.

We broke our themes down into negative and positive, weak and strong, because at the time it seemed "a sensible thing to do". These analytic distributions seemed to organize very real differences in the response displays, eventually becoming part of the procedure by which elements of a particular theme could be recognized. After receiving some feedback about this it appears that, in the first place, there is something common to the strong positive and negative themes which is missing from the wilted ones. A crude statement of this underlying behavioural distinction is that those who evince a majority of weak elements in their replies are "just not into bikes". More specifically, in terms of the content of the themes in question, the weak positive themes are "not where cycling is really at". "Transportation" and a "Job" are not the prime cultural connotations of a
motorcycle in the estimation of the motorcyclists, and these themes are not so closely allied to the basic principles which structure the experience of motorcycling. Similarly, the weak negative themes are not "what it's really all about". As we concluded in Section Two, they are just topics of conversation. The information compounded in "Weather" and "Mechanics" is correspondingly less important for the distillation of the essential aspects of motorcycling behaviour.

On the basis of these distinctions which the participants themselves are able to make, and which evidently figure in the underlying organization of the meanings of motorcycles, let us place the impuissant responses on the periphery of the investigation. We must focus our attention on the intense themes, the enthusiasms and the bummers which characterize our subjects' behaviours. Consider those which are vigorously positive in tone: the Mechanical Bride, Kicks and Machismo. In general, they are all concerned with rewards contingent on the utilization of a collation of gadgets, the motorcycle milieu. The experiences that may be had by virtue of owning a motorcycle are very rewarding, and produce enthusiasm/are endowed with strong positive meanings in the minds of our subjects; but owning (renting, begging, borrowing, stealing) a motorcycle is the sine qua non for the enjoyment of those experiences. "Malice" and "Anxiety", on the other hand, are concerned with bummers that are associated
with the ownership of the milieu and which stem from the owner's inability to cope, either socially or philosophically, with some of the attendant experiences.

What this conception of the matter suggests is that, taken together, the intense behavioural themes are all manifestations of some degree of asociability. If this is the explanatory principle which we are seeking, then utilization of the collation of gadgets should be associated with a disinclination to seek company. Motorcycling will be characterized by a dearth of occasions for agreeable conversation and friendly mutual exchange with others. We would expect a significant portion of motorcycling behaviours to be nongregarious, uncommunicative, nonconversational, and generally inaccessible for face to face interaction. Let us look first at the themes and then at motorcycling behaviours in general to see if this is the case. If it is, then we have produced another useful account of the matter.

Note that the powerfully positive themes can be thought of as lying on an unwrought continuum of asociability. While indulging in the pleasures of the Mechanical Bride, a subject must focus his whole attention on a physical object. "Don't interrupt me. I don't wanna botch this." For hours at a stretch and weeks/months/years at a time our respondents could remain happily locked up in a basement, garage or shop.
For those who seek the titillation of Kicks the focus of attention is the self. Whether gratified by the mild relief of boredom or by the wildest risks, subjects were primarily concerned with enjoying the direct physical sensations of riding en milieu. Finally, Machismo is the most overtly social of the themes, depending as it does on the presence of someone else to offend/brutalize with one's virility. However, we can hardly conclude that macho behaviours are thereby gregarious or conducive to friendly social intercourse. They are socially situated, more so than the two previous themes, but their intended meanings are more profoundly anti-social. Even the Bikers, those most convivial of all cyclists, and "the ones who are most into bikes", are sociable in a rather restricted sense. They associate "only with...(their)... own kind", and only by virtue of segregating themselves from commerce with "everyone else".

Turning to a consideration of the powerful negative themes, it will be seen that Malice is likewise asocial. Cyclists do not generally confront the supposed sources of "the hassles", either in the hope of resolving them or simply to "blow off steam". The single most commonly associated behaviour is little more than the inward nurturing of ill will after the fact. If one is plagued with Anxiety, the immediate behavioural effect does not appear to be consociation. The fear of death or injury is the least articulate
of these two primarily inward meaning-states. One's only option would be a noncompanionable railing against the gods.

Or consider the case of the two non-thematized features of the interaction discussed earlier in this Section. "None of your goddamn business!" immediately suggests that there must be an asocial quality to the behavioural meanings we were seeking. The principle would also explain the fact that the powerfully negative themes, especially Anxiety, merited less explication. Subjects relied heavily on an assumed understanding because the meanings in question are by their nature nonconsociative. "That's not the kind of thing you can talk about."

It is extremely important to realize that we are dealing with a thematization of meanings, not of motorcyclists. We are not asserting, by any stretch of the imagination, that motorcyclists are asocial, seclusive troglodytes. It may or may not be the case that our respondents are eremitic, either in terms of their own behaviour or in comparison with some other specifiable population; we are in no position to say one way or the other, except perhaps by an arduous process of extrapolation. What we are arguing, however, is that the meanings associated with the motorcycle milieu, particularly the thematically centric ones, may be understood in terms of the underlying asocial principle. Further, since we stress the participant perspective, there must be something about
motorcycling as it stands which could account for the presence of these less than gregarious meanings.

What is it that our subjects do while en milieu? Whatever it is we would naturally expect that it would be related to what they say they get out of it, and hence to our behavioural themes. Further, we would expect that whatever it is that they do will have some connection with the asocial principal that underlies the most important themes. It seems obvious, almost to the point of being banal, that the most "motorcycle" thing that motorcyclists do while en milieu is ride around on motorcycles. That is, in our own and our subjects' estimation of the matter, the principal behaviour/meaning associated with the milieu. That at least is what everyone gets out of it, "a ride". This point is so patent that it was seldom used as a reply, except in jest. The importance of it is not thereby discounted; it may be the very thing we are after. From field observation we may explicate the major features of a typical ride.

To begin with, "They don't talk much, Ha!", if at all. Riding is a mobile activity, it is, like the Kicks considered in Section Two, an activity which has a definite "velocity" to it. Now, it seems generally true of moving activities that as the speed of the occasion increases, the sociability of that occasion declines. A sociable occasion is one characterized by or affording the opportunity for agreeable
conversation. At a tea party, where everyone is standing around, participants are disposed to hold friendly intercourse, to engage in the mutual exchange or communication of ideas. A cocktail party, along with whatever else it may (or may not) be, is a manifestation of gregariousness. By asociability we intend, of course, a comparative lack of this sociability. Another point to be noted about the velocity of occasions is that there is a point at which face to face interaction, that most gregarious of all forms of sociability, drops off very suddenly. The mere decision to go for a walk obligates one to carry on conversation in parallel. When one goes for a drive in the family car there is no provision for the participants to sit face to face. These are comparatively asocial occasions.

This basic feature of mobile activities is based on the (presumably correct) assumption that actors have a finite capacity for handling incoming stimuli. Again, the faster you go, the more you have to pay attention to where and how fast you are going, "otherwise you'll fuck up, Ha!".

Consider the motorcycle rider. The only form of two-person interaction which is provided for is a tandem arrangement. In the words of one of the few passengers we encountered, "It's a drag just staring at the back of his helmet." (Obviously, there is the possibility for differential involvement in the behavioural meanings we have already examined.)
This brings us to another point: typically there is no passenger. Cyclists do not avail themselves of the opportunity for over the shoulder conviviality, limited as that may be. Neither do they ride much in groups. Clusters of cyclists are the exception to the rule; most of our subjects were solitary riders. Where there are groups of two or more riders, the opportunity for parallel interaction is introduced, but this is immediately cancelled by two factors: noise (which is also operative in the case of tandem seating) and the necessity of maintaining a less-than-sociable distance between the moving milieux. Noise and distance also effectively isolate the cyclists from non-cyclists, as well as the obvious fact that they are moving and bystanders are standing. Even at stoplights, one's fellow motorists are seated on entirely different levels, which is hardly conducive to a tête à tête. Also, much of one's attention is taken up by the requirements of getting moving again. It would seem that there are a large number of physical characteristics of the typical ride which preclude any intimate/highly sociable forms of interaction. Of course, one might ask which came first, the purchase or the realization, but that would take us into the realm of motivational analysis. In any event, we can safely conclude that the activity of motorcycle riding as it stands is a comparatively asocial one.

However, it also seems obvious, if not banal, that motor-
cycling is not a terribly nonsocial activity (one would be hard pressed to imagine just what an absolutely nonsocial occasion might be like - ghastly perhaps). If it was, it would probably not be so smoothly integrated with other more social motorcycle associated behaviours as it presently is. If they are not gregarious, they are still engaged in social behaviour; there is some form and degree of communication that must occur in order to carry the activity off. An examination of this second most obvious feature may afford some additional insight into what is rapidly becoming a most convoluted Section.

Where do they ride? Typically, in that which was commonly identified as "a public place". This designation includes roads, tracks, cross country, almost any imaginable riding situation. Moreover, in these public situations the moving milieux are rigidly segregated (increasingly by law) from the more stationary activities. This is the case irrespective of how sociable an activity those who are not riding are engaged in, probably due to the considerations outlined immediately above: the motorcyclist is not able to maintain any intense back and forth interaction with bystanders anyway. In addition, also as outlined above, the riders are almost equally as isolated from one another. These simple situational considerations, when combined with the inherent asocial principle that clearly underlies motorcycling behav-
iours/meanings lead us to the final account of just what the hell is going on.

Delving into the realm of academic abstraction, let the reader consider for a moment the theoretical construct, Image Behaviour. "Behaviour" seems clear enough, it is any form of human conduct; and since this is a sociological treatise, the term most likely refers to the actions of human beings in relation. Image Behaviour, then, must be some particular form of social behaviour. Having deduced that much, let us assume for the purposes of argument that any social behaviour will involve one or more communicative acts, specifically the manipulation of significant symbols. Without getting too deeply into Information Theory or Symbolic Interactionism, since this is only a device to get across a point, we may set up a short paradigm of the prototypical communication situation.

Social actor A gives off significant symbol X in the general direction of social actor B. This is the simplest communication act, and the "beginning" of social interaction. B picks up on it and returns in kind with some other social symbols signifying generally, "Yeah, I heard you, and this is what I think of it." This second act, from the viewpoint of A at least, constitutes feedback. A picks up on B's reaction, mulls it over and modifies his behaviour accordingly, eventually sending out symbol Y....etc.
Jaundiced as that view may be, it is a useful way of understanding the possible forms of social behaviour in order to see where Image Behaviour fits in. Interaction normally proceeds with this two-way exchange of significant symbols/meanings/behaviours. However, it is the basic communicative act of giving off some symbol that is social, since it immediately sets up a relationship between two or more human beings; the feedback is optional. The crude distinction which was made earlier between "sociable" and "asocial" behaviours/activities may be understood in this light. A sociable relationship is one characterized by a high degree of mutuality in the exchange of significant symbols. Asocial occasions, from the viewpoint of any social actor A, will be deficient in opportunities for evincing symbols and/or for receiving feedback, thus effectively curtailing the two-way flow that characterizes more conversational situations.

By imposing a number of qualifications on the basic paradigm, an account of the mechanics of "Image Behaviour in the abstract" can be generated. Suppose that for one reason or another A receives very little feedback on his behaviour, perhaps almost none; the communication process is a predominantly one way affair. Since this is not suitable for the mutual exchange of ideas it is an asocial occasion. In addition, this is understood as the normal/nonpathological state of affairs; there has been no "communication breakdown".
A lecture would be a good example at this point, with the professor as A.

Further suppose that all B has to do to hold up his end of the activity is to be present; that is the minimum feedback required to keep A performing. It is not even necessary that B pay attention to the symbols A is manifesting. No additional feedback, beyond continued presence, may ever be generated. This immediately reduces B to the status of (possibly disinterested) spectator of A's behaviour. A Monday morning lecture is a good example of this.

Delving into the philosophical for a brief moment, let us take for granted that "we are all social animals" (hummdrummmmm...). In the normal course of affairs we expect to live up to the expectations/react to the feedback of others. Yet this is clearly impossible in the situation we have detailed above: there they sit, all B students, asleep; what is a professor to do? Well, he can stop, go on and do something else; but since this is the "normal" state of affairs we must assume that the "interaction" (such as it is) will proceed as planned. Another option might be for A to "tune out", proceeding by rote without really thinking about it. In this scheme of things, that is virtually a nonsocial occasion (as we speculated earlier, it can be pretty ghastly), since for A and B the symbols have become quite nonsignificant. It is a third communicative option that leads us at last into
the realm of Images: A may begin generating his own feedback.

By now the reader must be quite thoroughly lost. He has been led on a long and torturous route through two and one-half Sections of a manuscript only to be deposited on the threshold of some abstruse concept called "Image Behaviour". Some sort of recapitulation would seem to be in order; if we can see how we got here, then perhaps we might see where we are heading.

Section One outlined the procedures that were employed to generate an account of "something about motorcycling". That much seemed clear (at the time, anyway). Section Two ended up producing a highly redacted thematic scheme for comprehending the extant meanings of motorcycles, then spoiled the effect by including two discordant features, "None of your goddamn business", and "Creepy Feelings", and suggesting that another story might be in order. But it was Section Three, hammered out under the self imposed strictures of "consultative feedback", which laid waste all the semblances of phenomenal organization that the reader may have been clinging to.

If you can still believe it, there is a reason for all this. Consultative feedback, which is behavioural studies talk for asking motorcyclists what motorcycling is all about, appears to be a fairly new procedure (at least in sociology, which may say a lot about sociology). We do not pretend to
understand all of its practical and non-theoretical implications, much less have all the bugs out of it yet; but we do contend that it is a highly productive and fascinating procedure. If nothing else, you find out that reality is not nearly so neat as you had it figured. Section Three is organized in exactly the order in which it evolved, save for the appending of this recapitulation. Such an arrangement preserves "the feel" of the technique, which is a worthwhile thing to do in its infancy. What, then, is this alleged conceptual ordering which has led us so far into the night?

We began with the notation that the behavioural meanings of motorcycles were rather highly organized, and that this fact was not too surprising to the people who produced them. We went on to state that the high degree of consensus, plus the several extraneous features of the first and second generation encounters suggest (note: suggest, not logically entail; a conceptual leap is involved/preserved here) that there is a principle of associability which underlies the behaviours we had been examining.

At the same time, our second generation respondents encouraged us to discard four of our less emphatic themes because their presence in the "sample" could be explained away on other grounds. The reader will hear little more of them; their proper place is in Section Two. This is not to assert that they are an insignificant part of motorcycling
behaviour. However, they are incongruent with the principle distilled from the five remaining themes, a principle which seems to lead on to another account of motorcycling altogether.

So we took a look at the behaviours most typically involved in motorcycle riding; up till this time we had been surveying cyclists, and probably missing the forest for the trees. We deduced that this was a predominantly asocial activity and the central one for all motorcyclists. This, of course, is what our second generation respondents had been trying to tell us all along.

By now we take it as proven that asociality is a useful principle for understanding motorcycling behaviours. As well as reordering the results of our men in the street survey schemata by relegating four themes to the background, it provides one kind of explanation for the particular form of consensus which characterizes the remaining five themes, and in a like manner it accounts for the two disturbing factors which cluttered up Section Two. However, in the light of this reordering, and with this alternate interpretation of the remaining meanings, of paramount concern is the mechanism by which this consensus could arise. We are still left with the puzzling degree of agreement over the meanings of motorcycles, and the intuition that it has something to do with the only thing which the respondents had in common: the asocial experience of riding motorcycles.
Which brings us to the construct "Image Behaviour". The highly abstruse discussion in terms of information theory which directly precedes the recapitulation was actually hammered out diagrammatically on a lot of table napkins, thus rendering it comprehensible/less laughable to non-academics. In general, it is a form of behaviour which occurs when an individual begins to manufacture feedback for his own behaviours in the absence of any more direct reactions from others.

Having recapitulated, we will plug this little bit of communication theory back into motorcycling and proceed with the authorized version of how consensus could have arisen. Picture for a moment the archetypal cyclist doing that thing which he does most as a motorcyclist and which most motorcyclists do: riding around in public. He is, of course, receiving very little feedback for his behaviour, most probably because no one is paying much attention to him.

However, and this is a very important point, we contend that he is still very concerned with how others many be reacting to his motorcycling behaviours. As a human social actor he wants to understand the significance of his socially situated actions (at least as well as our average respondent); he seeks ways to endow his behaviour with meaning. Now, although meaning is a phenomenon of mind, it is usually the product of minds in relation; it is socially constructed, at least in so
far as social behaviours are concerned.

Thus, even while riding around in a less than gregarious context, it is unlikely that he will easily assume that when he makes a mistake no one will notice, or that when he does not no one is watching. Visibility and the wide vision of the rider are two striking features of motorcycle riding. The cyclist is highly exposed to his potential audience, and at some point or other every cyclist can assume that those other people around him (including, of course, other cyclists) are at least receiving the social symbols of his passing presence. If not, he can always get a bigger bike, with lots more chrome, and no mufflers...

Of course, even if there were any responses, they probably could not get through. At any particular moment our cyclist, mulling over the social significance of his actions, may be stuck for a reaction. In order to create/develop/carry on his motorcycle behaviours/meanings he must have some feedback right then and there. "Yeah, I think about how I look on the street; sometimes I try and figure out what kind of impression I make." Here we have the rudiments of Image Behaviour. In order to continue the symbolic dialogue within himself he is forced to fantasize a reaction that did not get through/was never there. He will try and imagine what sort of meanings another might be giving to his behaviour, then proceed as if it had actually occurred.
Note that this is not anything like the normal interaction process of A responding to B's anticipated reaction by virtue of A being able to imagine B's most probable response. The cyclist is not living up to the expectations of any of his spectators. While en milieu he is not even anticipating that any feedback will get through. It is "normal" for people not to react to the cyclist. In fact, he is theoretically able to fill in whatever responses he wishes, without much risk of encountering any feedback that directly contradicts this. "When I cruise the streets I know all the chicks are watching. I can feel it." Here we have the beginnings of an Image in the first sense in which we shall use the term.

The cyclist has filled in an Image of the other's response, whatever Image suits him best, and has reacted to that Image. Minds are not in relation, but behavioural meanings are being evolved. The cyclist has come to some further understanding of the significance of his behaviour. He has the opportunity to script his own presentation of self, free from any disruptive influences. He has become the sole interpreter of his own motorcycle behaviours.

Thus far, we would seem to be straying rather widely off our intended destination. If each cyclist is able to evolve his own repertoire of Images, how do we arrive at the paradoxical result that the behavioural meanings produced by this
method are highly standardized?

The solution to the paradox lies in the typical behaviours of the cyclists themselves. They are faced with the practical problem of making sense of their own motorcycle behaviours in order to produce these behaviours in the first place. (Meaning and behaviour are difficult to distinguish analytically, maddening in practice.) Yet a major feature of such behaviours, their asociality, precludes the creation of meaning by any in process interpretation of events. The relevant information on which they base their conversation of Images is acquired in nonfeedback situations (nonfeedback so far as the behaviours it is used to interpret are concerned, very remotely).

The process whereby a motorcyclist acquires such an information base is best described as "sensitization". Subjects acknowledged becoming increasingly familiar over a period of time with what is generally known about motorcycle behaviour. Often this process begins sometime before purchasing "that first bike", and it never completely ceases. The source of this relevant information resembles nothing so much as a "culture sink": the books, movies, (but certainly not the same ones, not by a long shot) "the things everybody knows"; and, most important of all, "checking out other bike riders". There are countless examples of the latter: being "able to tell the sound of a Harley", "cruising the iron" at the shops,
giving fellow riders the once over in traffic. Quite manifestly, the relevant information is there in the culture sink; one need only become aware of it as part of the solution to making sense of one's own behaviour. Despite the nonconversational quality of it all, there is no "conspiracy of silence"; there are emblematic and sufficient symbols, and this is the normal situation for cyclists. However, this all seems to be nothing more than a normal part of the more general process of socialization. It could apply to almost any realm of behaviour; in and of itself it is no solution to the mechanism of consensus.

Once again, there is a trick; it is something to do with motorcycling. To illustrate: if one wants to learn what it means to be a policeman, one might read the books (including some written by policemen), watch a lot of T.V., talk with people about it, learn all that is "generally known" about the matter. However, the most important source of information would undoubtedly be other policemen (including such things as police academies, etc.). They are the ones who are "really in the know"; by interacting with them one would ultimately come to some sense of what it would mean for one to be a policeman. The catch is that this is practically impossible in the case of motorcycling. The best way to find a motorcyclist is to see one ride by; which is precisely when he is not available for contact/comment (or so it is assumed; we
found this not to be the case, but in so doing we did something that was inexpressibly "novel"). This is the very reason that motorcyclists are not a very "together" lot. Small wonder, then, that few of our respondents listed "talking to other bikers" high on the list of sources of interpretation for their motorcycle behaviours. The meanings of motorcycling, though marked by a high degree of consensus, are definitely not something which motorcyclists have worked out interactively among themselves.

Instead, the cyclist falls back on the same sort of assumption he makes when he is riding: people are watching. This is an easy assumption for him to make, because as a spectator of other cyclists' behaviour he is also highly sensitized to the significant outputs. As an illustration of this, note the peculiar behaviour of two cyclists passing on a street. As often as not (though this custom does vary somewhat with locale) they will exchange waves of the hand, peace signs, vigorous nods of the head. They will almost invariably glance in each other's direction. These activities connote nothing so much as "I am receiving you". Whatever it is that is "generally known" and whatever else the cyclist can pick up by becoming a spectator (an activity that is perfectly possible when riding) will serve as the basis for the cyclist's interpretation of his own behaviour.

Once again, since feedback is out of the question, some
novel information handling procedures characterize the process. When asked at how they arrived at the particular meanings that they evinced, subjects replied with some variation of "Oh I just picked up on a few things I saw happening, and figured the rest out for myself." Two procedures are involved here; imitation and the conversation of Images. "Everybody's on their own trip", but the end result is a highly organized set of cultural connotations. Wanting to learn the correct meanings of motorcycles and being unwilling/unable to effect any compromise by interactive adaptation, the neophyte cyclist can do no better than to imitate what he already sees. At the same time, in order to integrate the preexisting symbolic information with his own experience, he carries on the appropriate set of Image dialogues in his mind. Eventually he acquires a full set of significations for his motorcycling behaviours, and has at the same time fully internalized the meanings that were known. Receiving little or no feedback for his performances he must measure their success against that which is most visible to him, and he alters his behaviour to fit it. The cyclist socializes himself by the techniques of imitation and Image feedback.

It is important to stress that subjects were not just imitating, or parroting pieces of what they already knew. They are more than winnowers sifting in the cultural sink. The conversation of Images is an inextricable part
of their behaviour. Their responses, their meaning systems, were incredibly well organized and highly integrated with their own experience. Yet at the same time they shared much of their significations with other individuals with whom they had virtually no commerce.

Obviously, the preceding is an ongoing process of socialization, one that never really ends. But having arrived at a point, by such solitary means, where he is more or less "into bikes", the cyclist will surely realize, if he has not seen it clearly all along, that he too is a model for appropriate motorcycling behaviours. We have come full circle to the other, more obvious connotation of the Image Behaviour construct. The cyclist's behaviours/meanings as they are generally known constitute an Image in which other cyclists' behaviours/meanings are made. Having arrived at some sense of his own behaviour by imitating preexisting behaviours, and filling in the gaps with a conversion of Images, the cyclist has acquired an Image which he projects in his behaviour.

This realization, whether he is manifestly into bikes or not, does not automatically afford him the opportunity to effect change on the standardized behaviours/meanings by adapting them to his own purposes. He is still just one cyclist among many, with all the restrictions on feedback which that entails. He will also realize that any entirely
new connotations of cycling which he would like to manifest will have little chance of being understood, since he will have no chance to explain them. It is not easy to change an Image.

Naturally, our major themes can be conceived of as Images which cyclists commonly project. Our initial question seems to have tapped not only the meanings of motorcycles but the process of Image Behaviour as well. A response is what a cyclist gets out of it, but it is also what he says he gets out of it; the Image is the behaviour. Any one cyclist's Image will likely contain elements of a number of themes, and generally they project these themes without any need for questioning. Also as one might expect, the important behavioural themes are uniquely suited to the non-gregarious socialization process. They are all asocial processes in themselves; one does not attempt to teach oratory by taciturn methods.

Both the major connotations of Image Behaviour are required for an adequate understanding of the mechanism by which the consensus arises. If our subjects had not "filled in all the gaps" with a conversation of Images they would not have been so articulate; obviously, they had given the matter a great deal of thought beforehand. At the same time, if they were not conscious of having an image to project, how can we explain that they were "dying" to be asked?
Here, on a sudden, was a chance to obtain some direct feedback from another motorcyclist about the meanings they had been evincing all along. It was "normal" interaction in every way, but it was about Images: my Image is composed of what you see/I say I'm getting out of this. In addition, if consensus was achieved by some other means entirely (other than interactive agreement, which is clearly ruled out), external structural constraints, for example, how could they have known the manner and the form in which this consensus exists?

Finally, the necessary links between the two manifestations of Image Behaviour are provided in the two typical motorcycling behaviours: sensitization and imitation. Together they form the complete mechanism by which the high degree of agreement among otherwise disparate respondents is generated. Lacking the feedback necessary for more individualistic interactive adaptation across a widely varied set of population elements, motorcycling is highly standardized around a few widespread, and inherently asocial behavioural themes.

We have arrived at another account of something about motorcycling. Section Two presented a schemata for comprehending the major extant meanings of motorcycle-related behaviours; Section Three has produced a principle of Image Behaviour for explaining how these meanings are organized.
Obviously, these two different ways of understanding the same general phenomenon are related. It would be useful to return to the field and reinterpret the motorcycling behaviours in this light. For example, the Machismo Power Trip might be seen as an extended conversation of Images. It would also be interesting to apply the concepts of Image Behaviour to other nongregarious phenomena, refining the principle and determining its limits.

The principle is operative in the area of motorcycling as an important factor of behaviour. It must be remembered that it is a tool for comprehending meaningful behaviour; it says nothing direct about the people who produce that behaviour. Cyclists are not, to our knowledge, any different from noncyclists, except for the fact that they ride motorcycles. Neither are we asserting that Image Behaviour is operative at all times/for all subjects. However, it is generally true that when riding subjects do withdraw to a comparatively asocial level of interaction, and it is here that the conversation and the projection of Images may take over, providing access to a highly organized set of meanings for behaviour.
APPENDIX
Nicholi places his study in much the same setting as our own dissertation: the era of the motorcycle boom (though he limits himself to the area of the continental United States for no stated reasons). However, he is prompted by motives more specific than the desire to say something about motorcycle-associated phenomena; what concerns him most is the "epidemic of trauma" (p. 1588) that has accompanied the increase in motorcycle usage. He takes to task the bulk of medical and safety research into the rising number of accidents for ignoring "undoubtedly the most significant causal factor of all— the psychological" (1588). Nicholi's cardinal aim is to say something about "the personality and characteristics of the accident-prone cyclist" (1588), a population diffusely defined as those users of the milieu who have recently had one or more serious accidents.

The subjects for Nicholi's study are nine motorcyclists, all college students (and, incidently, all of whom went on to graduate work, and all of whom married female graduate students—with the exception of one who dropped out into psychoanalysis instead). Interestingly enough, Nicholi
never bothers to state directly that all of his subjects are male. The method of the study involves one to three years of intensive psychotherapy, including two to three hour-long individual sessions per week and a five year followup. From the characteristics common to these nine patient-bikers, Nicholi deduces a recognizable clinical disorder which he designates as the "motorcycle syndrome" (1589). It is an aggregate of concurrent symptoms that serve to indicate the presence and nature of a psychiatric disturbance. Nicholi's hope is that the recognition and treatment of this syndrome will help reduce the injury and death rates for American motorcycling in general.

The author lists and briefly explicates what he considers to be the nine essential features of the disorder.

"1) unusual preoccupation with the motorcycle, 2) a history of accident-proneness extending to early childhood, 3) persistent fear of bodily injury, 4) a distant, conflict-ridden relationship with the father and a strong identification with the mother, 5) extreme passivity and inability to compete, 6) a defective self image, 7) poor impulse control, 8) fear of and counterphobic involvement with aggressive girls, and 9) impotence and intense homosexual concerns." (1594)

Nicholi then appends some discussion of the psychological meanings evoked by the milieu, and views it as having adaptive/helpful and defensive/harmful functions for his subjects. He ends with a number of speculations about
whether or not the motorcycle syndrome is specific to only the accident-prone cyclists.

Nicholi's identity as a researcher is obviously at variance with our own. A capsule statement of the matter would be, "He's not into bikes.", at least not in the sense that his subjects, we the researcher, or a large portion of our respondents are. Consider Nicholi on cycles:

The motorcycle is "a pervasive symbol of the 'now' generation...a lethal instrument of destruction...(producing) carnage...(and) a tragic toll of injury and death." (pp. 1588 and 1594). "Riding a cycle can undoubtedly be fun. Furthermore, it is a fast and economical mode of transportation." (1592)

We can safely conclude that his subjects are not speaking "one cyclist to another." However, despite the difference in research identities/personalities, Nicholi is after what motorcycling means to his population in so far as they are willing/able to articulate it. This is the major similarity between his work and our own.

Nicholi's subjects have all defined themselves/been defined as individuals in need of psychiatric help. They are referred to as "patients" (1589) who suffer from a "clinical disorder" (1589), "a defective self-image" (1590), "poor impulse control" (1590), a "serious ego-defect" (1592). In addition to these specifically motorcycle-associated facets of their behaviour, they have the
(notably non-quantified) "propensity" (1590) to sleep, watch television, and use alcohol and drugs to escape from "a monotonous and painful reality." (1590). They are making progress (naturally?) when they have decathected the motorcycle and invested their emotion in other objects and activities including "graduate work... (and) a girl also in graduate school" (1590). Here, then, is a major difference between Nicholi's study and our own, the subjects' self-definition/the subjects as defined by the researcher. Our respondents, though they might be more or less happy with their scripted meanings, regard themselves as "normal" or "not sick" or, at least, not "afflicted" (1593).

From these differences in identity and outlook flow many of the disparities in content/explication/story line between the two studies. Nicholi's effort contains a large number of things that one tells a psychiatrist/a shrink brings out in you, including: early childhood experiences, relations with father and mother, overtly sexual fears, the inability to compete/succeed, and the causality of the conscious and the unconscious. Since he is using the pre-existing conceptual framework of psychiatry/social adaptation, Nicholi permits himself to conclude that his subjects manifest an unusual preoccupation with the motorcycle (unusual in relation to what/whom?), poor impulse control (what is the optimum level of impulse control?) and a
high incidence of accidents and fatalities (high in relation to what population of cyclists/motorists/???)

a high rate of fatalities when they all survived psychotherapy/riding for the five year followup?). He states that the motorcycle provides full expression of masculinity "even to the physical sense of orgasm" (1591) (orgasm is the optimal expression of masculinity, it is necessarily masculine?), and that girls who are "tall, broadshouldered... (and) who initiate relationships by expressing admiration for the motorcycle or by asking to ride it" (1590) are sexually aggressive, or that the motorcycle milieu is harmful when it replaces the constructive use of time with relatively unconstructive activity (who defines constructive/unconstructive activity; who determines the degree of replacement?).

For all these differences in content/approach, Nicholi with his population of only nine includes elements of a fair number of the meaning themes that are at large among the total population of cyclists. This correspondence is apparently unknown to Nicholi, which makes it a moot point whether some of the major features of the syndrome characterize "not only the patients described in this syndrome but also a large portion of young people today" (1593), or whether some of those features are simply aspects of the more prevalent meanings of motorcycling. Hence, it
does not seem so "unusual" in the light of our own research that "the mere sound of a distant motorcycle stimulates vivid fantasies" (1589), or that subjects express anxiety about injury and death and "openly discuss fear of castration" (1589), that the motorcycle should be associated with "the assertive, aggressive, competitive parts of... (the) psychological makeup" (1591), or that it gives cyclists "a sense of doing something and getting somewhere" (1591) and "a sense of potency and power" (1591). He has even arrived at many the same "positive - negative" and "enthusiastic - bummer" groupings for elements of these widespread themes. "The motorcycle is a highly charged object with many levels of emotional appeal." (1590) "The machine both pleases and terrifies. It gives exhilarating pleasure, but pleasure always tinged with underlying anxiety." (1591)

One of the major findings of our own research was the high degree of consensus among respondents with regard to the information elicited in the course of the encounters; it was so striking that an account had to be generated for it. This congruity among cyclists startles Nicholi also, so much so that he feels justified in generating a psychiatric syndrome. He refers to "the remarkable number" (1589) of characteristics common to his patients, and "the similarity in the conscious feeling produced by the
motorcycle" (1591). More to the point, "As the pleasures and thrills are described in remarkably similar terms (from patient to patient), so too are the anxieties and fears." (1591) On a final note, one of Nicholi's own subjects has hinted at the mechanism by which this consensus is generated when he remarks, "I like the image the motorcycle projects" (1592).
A Typological Account of Motorcycling

J. C. Quicker

Presented at the annual meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association

Not surprisingly, Quicker places his study in the context of the motorcycle boom of the 1960's. The motivation for his work is the conspicuously "negative concern" (1) among academics with motorcycle-associated phenomena. The task is to generate a typological account that will describe and delineate the entire field of behaviour as a prelude to systematic professional study. Accordingly, Quicker devises a system of classifications based in "three related but analytically separable concepts: the type of riding done, the rider, and the type of bike ridden." (2) They involve, respectively, two, two, and three major dimensions. In Quicker's view motorcycling can be understood as the product of the interaction of these three concepts.

The type of riding done involves the dichotomous dimension "where", specifically "pavement" or "dirt". (3), and the five-part dimension "purpose", specifically "recreation, transportation, racing, business, and stunt riding." (4) These two dimensions generate a ten-category typological property space of the type of riding done; some cases are disproportionately represented, others are no more than
logical possibilities.

The rider concept is characterized by the dichotomous dimensions "ability", either "novice" or "skilled", and "professional status", either "professional" or "amateur". (8-9). This generates a typology of four categories into which motorcyclists may be sorted. In Quicker's opinion, there are a large number of possible dimensions upon which to classify people (hence, he generates a population typology in the first place, something which we specifically did not wish to do); and that one of the most obvious, age, is not a "significant...(or) crucial dimension" (8) for purposes of analysis. Quicker is aware that he "omits" the dimension of sex because "the overwhelming majority of riders are males". (8)

This is one of the major drawbacks of his typology; it cannot take into account the masculine meanings of motorcycling, overlooking what we have concluded is a very significant behavioural theme, Machismo. Hence, our assessment of his description is that it is too "sweet" (it is included in the section Sports and Leisure, which is, at least, a start; Deviance would have been a worse beginning). Quicker makes motorcycling sound a lot more "lily-white-fun" than, in our estimation, it actually is. He speaks of "recreation
and leisure" (15) more than kicks.

An allied criticism, stemming from our advocacy of consultative feedback procedures, is that Quicker's typology is too artificial; it is foreign to many prevalent subject apprehensions of the matter, producing such things as categories that contain no cases, or categories that apply to just about any cyclist at some time or other. If one wishes to typologize the population these are not adequate grounds for doing so. This is especially true of the skill dimension where Quicker resorts to the artifice of more or less than one year or ten thousand miles "whichever comes first". (9)

The final concept, the type of motorcycle, classifies the focus of the milieu according to three major dimensions: size, 50-250, 250-450, 450 or over; point of origin or manufacture, either Europe, the U.S. or Japan; and alterations, either stock or modified. This last dimension is a bit less analytic, and at the same time less precise in terms of our subjects' apprehensions of the matter than our own stock-show or go classification.

Quicker concludes on the note that he hopes his typology classifications "create a sense of order for a nebulous yet important and interesting social phenomena where there previously had been none" (at least among academics; this
is definitively not the case among cyclists in our consensual estimation of the matter); we share his contention that it is "quite a fertile area for sociologists." (16)

Since Quicker's paper is only a broadly delineative one, his methods are not as rigorous nor as structured as our own or Nicholi's. He states that his data comes from fourteen years of contact with cyclists in a wide variety of situations, with a corresponding variation in the purposes at hand over that time. Some further insight into his procedures, the method in his madness, can be gained from the knowledge that Quicker is a motorcyclist of some long standing. Without being critical, our own estimation of the matter would be that most of the time he was just enjoying himself, and that the paper is an analytic collation of his own "members' knowledge".

Since he is a motorcyclist, it is not surprising that Quicker mentions elements of many of the major meaning themes. To be sure, there is a conspicuous absence of the darker elements, most notably Machismo. This may serve as some indication of what Quicker "gets out of it". In addition, probably because the framework is analytic, there is no mention of consensus and hence, no mention of the dynamics of Image Behaviour. Indeed, Quicker is not specifically concerned with the participant meanings, shared or
otherwise; he focuses instead on the purposes and procedures of professional analysis. Still, Transportation (4), It's a Job (4), and some of the Kicks (6-7) are there, along with several touches of the Mechanical Bride. (11, '13) Not surprisingly, none of the negative meanings are included since they do not relate to any of the three major concepts used to generate the typology. One final criticism concerns his statement that the motorcycle boom occurred for primarily economic reasons (1). As we have discussed under the heading of Transportation, such an analysis of the matter is far too superficial, if not entirely misleading.