ELITELORE

By

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DEDICATION TO

Michelle, Marie and Garrick James Wilkie
ages 4 and 6 with whom it is so interesting to discuss their
images of life in Latin America

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to Edna Monzón de Wilkie (UCLA Latin American Center) for assistance in preparation of this study. Many of the ideas offered here were developed in seminars we presented at a number of universities, including the University of California, Berkeley (1968); University of Massachusetts, Amherst (1970); State University of New York, Buffalo (I 970); California State University, San Diego (1971); and Baylor University (1971). '

The term "elitelore" is drawn from my "Oral history of `Biographical Elitelore' in Latin America," a paper presented to the Social Science Research Council Conference on Folklore and Social Science, New York City, November 10, 1967. I am grateful to the scholars who attended the Conference for their criticism and wish to give special acknowledgment to Professor Philip D. Curtin (University of Wisconsin) for his incisive formal commentary. With regard to criticism of my subsequent thinking, thanks are due to Professors Paulo de Canralho-Neto (UCLA) and Margaret Todaro Williams (University of Southern California).

Latin American oral history materials upon which the present study is based originally were gathered with support from Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley, with research cooperation provided then (as now) by Professors Albert L. Michaels (State University of New York at Buffalo) and Lyle C. Brown (Baylor University). For examples of oral history interviews with Mexican leaders, see James W. Wilkie and Edna Monzón de Wilkie, *México Visto en el Siglo XX: Entrevistas de Historia Oral: Ramón Beteta, Marte R: Gómez, Manuel Gómez Morin, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, Emilio Portes Gil, Jesús Silva Herzog* (**México**, D. F.: Distributed by Cuadernos Americanos for the Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Económicas, 1969).

Editing of this Mexican volume was aided in a large part by funding of an Oral History Center for Latin America while the authors were at Ohio State University (1965-1968). Since 1968 the Latin American Oral History Project has been based in the UCLA Latin American Center. Not only has the Center provided a unique interdisciplinary environment to conduct research, but invitation of Latin American leaders to discuss at UCLA our transcription of their lengthy oral history interviews has done much to develop research in the young field of oral history.

Preface

The idea of elitelore offered in this study has its roots in biographically-oriented research conducted with national leaders by my Guatamelan wife and myself under the auspices of the Oral History Project for Latin America in Mexico (1963-1965) and in Bolivia (1966-1967). Usage of the term to summarize conclusions about the relationship of life histories to the views of political elites has been further developed through continued Project tape recording of interviews with leaders from Brazil (1967) and Costa Rica (1969).

Since oral history may involve tape recordings of either elite or non-elite views (not to mention non-political and,/or topical history), I have tried to place my discussion in a context which goes beyond Latin America. In this regard, several clarifications should be made. First, because the word elitelore may call to mind the term folklore, as is discussed in Part I, it should be noted at the outset that the terms are not directly related. Suffice it to say here that whereas elites and non-elites operate with folklore, only elites operate with elitelore.

Second, in writings which seek to move towards theory in any area of knowledge, the scholar may promise much more than can be delivered. By noting at the outset that this study does not attempt to develop all aspects in the task of providing a framework for research in oral history, I hope to have avoided this problem to some degree. Also, for example, I have not discussed here the interesting research aspect which relates medical diagnosis to political explanation; as noted by Fred I. Greenstein and Michael Lerner, there-is often a close connection between existing physical and mental states. And this connection is quite complex because it is difficult to determine which state "causes" the other, especially when both are interrelated with a multiplicity of social variables (see Edwin A. Weinstein, "Denial of Presidential Disability: A Case Study of Woodrow Wilson," in Greenstein and Lerner (eds.), A *Source Book for the Study of Personality and Politics* [Chicago: Markman, 1971], pp. 100-116). And for aspects related to oral history which are only tangentially discussed here, the reader may be interested in Lewis A. Dexter *Elite and Specialized Interviewing* (Ev~inston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970) and Lawrence C. Watson, *Self and Ideal in Guafro Life History* (Wien: Acta Ethnologica et Linguistica, 1970).

Third, research in elitelore can be applied to many historical epochs, but it is developed here in relation to the contemporary era in which the tape recorder has permitted widened dimensions for research. And, although scholars from any discipline can and do use oral history, because of the thrust of research in the Oral History Project for Latin America, discussion is here focused on investigation by historians.

Finally, it should be noted that the term elitelore is intended to bring together under one rubric a number of connotations included in such terms as self-view, world view, ideology, and political culture, etc. Although all terms are potentially misleading, I hope that (in stressing the importance of leaders' views of the past from the historical perspective of the present), the concept of elitelore is sufficiently clear to point new directions in oral history research.

Contents

Introduction

What is elitelore? In the concept to be presented here, the term refers to the body of (a) self-perception; (b) self-organization of ideas about personal (as well as group) past; and (c) self-justification for actions through which a leader develops a meaningful life-history framework. The idea of "lore" is appropriate for several reasons. First, it gives a connotation of personal "wisdom" gained through accumulated life experiences. Second, the idea of lore connotes the building of myths and selfdeception necessary for ego-protection as the leader struggles with worlds of complexities which he only partially Understands and/or of which he may be unaware. And third, the term indicates that this body of information is *generally not put in written form;* rather it represents a way of life which is taken for granted by the leader. In short, because these views are related more to a stream of consciousness than to a literary organization of ideas (which make lives appear to be more orderly and rational than is usually the case), the oral history interview is discussed here as offering an especially useful way of understanding the role of the leader in recent times.[1]

Since Latin American leaders do not as a rule write their memoirs or leave political testimony, a gap in our knowledge of twentieth-century affairs exists. To add this dimension to analysis in social science, the word elitelore is used here to give conscious force to the collection of data which have been previously neglected or only partially tapped by the; interview method. Latin American elites have sets of beliefs, sayings, myths, and legends about themselves and about they- country's history which often are not written down (even if they should per chance keep a diary or write memoirs) but which they take
for granted. Elites tend to develop views about themselves or about historical events which they do not investigate or examine. On the basis of these beliefs, they make decisions which have broad effects. Leaders rarely have time to delve into the past to find out how events might have happened; or to check the limitations of their knowledge; thus, with the passing of time, they accumulate a set of beliefs which often do not necessarily have any foundation in "truth." In general, their lore is passed on informally by affiliation with groups which form because of affinity in outlook, and through which wisdom concerning how to gain and hold success for specific ends is communicated in discussion and/or competitive imitation.

Although extended uses of elitelore are not the subject of the present study, as is suggested in Appendix A the development of composite biography, classification of types of responses, and the application of psychohistory offer related approaches to investigation. While the use of psychohistory, for example, may be viewed as a significant method of research, it does not play a central role in the immediate task of recording the

[1] Oral History Interviews (tape recorded) and Interviews (not tape recorded) cited in this study were conducted by James W. Wilkie and Edna Monz6n de Wilkie, unless otherwise noted.

life histories and views of leaders. Regardless of their own unconscious motives, leaders tend to act on their conscious perceptions of self and environment. Granted that it may be important to understand unconscious motivations, as seen here the first task of research is to examine the interplay of conscious perceptions which themselves interact with events to influence and/or change the course of history.

In order to accomplish the relatively intricate aim of setting forth the concept of elitelore, this study is divided into six: parts and two appendices. Following a discussion of the dimensions of elitelore in Part I, the role of non-Latin American leaders in constructing the heroic myth is taken up in Part II. Parts III and IV deal with the development in Latin America of images, such as those which involve self deception and which are held by leaders in contrast to their ghost writers. Part V treats the transmission of elitelore; and Part VI discusses the problems and methods recording elitelore through oral history interviews. Two appendices conclude the work, Appendix A dealing with the extended study of elitelore discussed above, and Appendix B developing the idea that popularlore is an aspect of folklore which hitherto has only been impliedly developed by the oral history method of a scholar such as Oscar Lewis. Judgment on each section should, of course, be suspended until all the parts have been fitted together.

Part I

Defining and Studying Elites

Use of the word elite is developed here in broad terns. In one sense discussion follows usage by Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari, editors of *Elites in Latin America (1967),* who see elites serving as leaders of the peasantry and labor movements, for example, as well as of the military and the Church.[2] In another sense discussion follows the work of Vilfredo Pareto who wrote:

> So let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity and to that class give the name of *elite*. . . So we get two strata in a population: (1) a lower stratus, the *non-elite*, with whose possible influence on government we are not just here concerned; then (2) a higher stratus, the *elite* which is divided into two: (a) a governing *elite;* (b) a nongoverning *elite.*[3]

With regard to Pareto's definition of elite, analysis by Professor Suzanne Keller is important for the purposes of the present study because it makes a distinction between "elites" and "strategic elites."

> The concept of elites is used to describe certain fundamental features of organized social life. All societies - simple; and complex, agricultural and industrial - need authorities within and spokesmen and agents without who are also symbols of the common life and embodiments of the values that maintain it...
> For virtually every activity and every corresponding sphere of social life, there is an elite: there are elites of soldiers and of artists, as well as of bankers and of gamblers. This is the sense in which Pareto (1902-1903) used the term. There is, however, an important factor that differentiates these various elites, apart from their different skills and talents: some of them have more social weight than others because their activities have greater social significance. It is these elites - variously referred to as the ruling elite, the top influentials, or the power elite - which arouse particular interest, because they are the prime movers and models for the entire society. We shall use the term *strategic elites* to refer to those elites which claim or are assigned responsibilities for and influence over their society as a

[2] (New York: Oxford University Press.)

[3] Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society,* translated by A. Bongiorno 1;4 vols.; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935), 111, pp. 1423-1424.

> whole, in contrast with segmental elites, which have major responsibilities in subdomains of the society.[4]

The present study is interested in the strategic political elite, however one must note that when intellectual, religious, or economic elites on a national-local continuum attempt to influence society, it is necessary to include them in the study of elitelore. (Thus, given this definition, the term elite obviously is not limited to those persons who control traditional political and economic power, such as "bourgeoisie elites"). On the top end of the political spectrum, elites are usually literate and informed, even if not always intellectually oriented; and compared to elites on the lower end of the continuum, their lore is relatively more sophisticated.

Since the elite lead and the non-elite follow, life is viewed from differing perspectives. Whereas the latter develop lore which allows them to make sense out of situations beyond their control, the former develop a special lore to justify, their attempts to control society. In developing their lore, leaders may well find it advantageous to enchance their power by adapting and "using" some elements of folklore (selecting from the broad range of folklore which they share with the populace as a whole). This does not, of course, involve "folklore of the elite" but one aspect of elitelore.

The study of elites through their lore may cause some readers to wonder if the term folklore is not a logical counterpart of the elitelore concept. Although a new aspect of folklore is discussed in Appendix B, it should be noted here that the terms have different orientations. Because folklore does not generally involve investigation of unique cases (as does study of elitelore) but instead examines lore in terms of shared experiences, its contribution to social science is quite different from that of elitelore. Whereas the task in studying elitelore is to tape record a body of data before generalizations can be drawn on the nature of elites, the field of folklore long since has amassed the data necessary for the task of drawing generalizations. In any case, however, the study of elitelore yields much needed historical information necessary to understand and to interpret lives of leaders and historical events.

In a related vein, it should be noted that political scientists have tended to ignore political biography. As Professor Lewis J. Edinger has noted, political scientists have preferred) to leave study of individual political leaders (and particularly the relationship of personality and political behavior) to other disciplines, mainly because for the behaviorally-oriented U.S. scholar the "science of politics" has involved: [5]

> (1)a decided preference for quantitative analysis of objectively selected data, (2) an insistence on the need for an explicit conceptual

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[4] Suzanne Keller, "Elites," *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (17* vols.; New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), V, p. 26. See also Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, and C. E. Rothwell, *The Comparative Study of Elites; An Introduction and a Bibliography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952), p. 6, who have defined "elites" as those persons with greatest access to and control of values: "Besides an elite of power (the political elite), there are elites of wealth, respect, and knowledge (to name but a few)."

> framework, (3) a demand for a research design which permits replication, and (4) a strong emphasis on research and analysis specifically focused on the development and elaboration of theories of political behavior.[5]

One reason for the behavioral approach is seen by Edinger as follows:

> American politics is group-oriented. Thus results in a general reluctance to admit the existence, let alone the crucial importance, of the hero-leader who continues to fascinate scholars in other countries, especially in Europe. Thus probably helps to explain why political biography . . . has never enjoyed the same vogue in this country as it has abroad. Further, American political scientists tend to be more actively and extensively involved than most scholars in the political socialization process and the operation of the political system in general. They not only preach but practice political "group dynamics," wherein the political boss and the dictator are perceived as aberrations.

Another reason political biography tends to be ignored is seen by Edinger, however, as related to the nature of biography in general:

> Political biographies have tended to fall into certain categories which are marked by how much significance is attributed to the subject's personality or to his socio-political environment. The purely descriptive biography assumes that "facts" *per se* are enough to enlighten the reader. Sometimes this approach has led to huge chronological compendia. Often the nature of the sources and the selection of the data has introduced a hidden bias in such studies. Unsuccessful leaders, especially, tend to be slighted, for material on their lives is frequently far less readily available than it is for their more successful rivals. Moreover, failures are not usually popular subjects for biographies, although they are, from the point of view of the political scientist, no less important.

Thus, Edinger is especially critical of traditional study of life histories:

> Autobiographies and "authorized" biographies never tell "the full story," and even the biographer who strives to give a complete picture - warts and all - is necessarily selective in the data he uses. Secondary analysis of such material is almost invariably difficult

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[5] Lewis J. Edinger, "Political Science and Political Biography, Reflections on the Study of Leadership," *Journal of Politics 26 (1964), pp. 423-439,* and pp. *648-676.* Quotes are adapted from pages *424* and *429-431. Cf.* Dwaine Marvick (ed.) *Political Decision Makers* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, *1961).*

> and frustrating, if only because the original writer did not ask the specific questions of his data that the secondary scholar would like to have answered. Primary sources like letters and diaries may be more rewarding, but unhappily the invention of the telephone and other modern methods of communication have led to a diminishing reliance on the written word and even the keeping of diaries is less popular than it was. From the point of view of the rigorous social scientist, the remaining primary data is not only unsatisfactory because it is incomplete, but because it usually does not lend itself either to analysis in depth or comparative analysis by statistical methods. Moreover, neither the dead nor even the living political leader is accessible to scientifically-designed interviews and projective tests, nor is it possible to apply the kind of experimental techniques which social psychologists employ in the study of leadership in small groups and other more or less controllable situations (e.g., the interaction of students or office workers).

Although leaders may not submit to the kind of interviews suggested by Professor Edinger, the Oral History Project for Latin America has shown that in-depth oral interviews are indeed possible and that on the basis of rapport established in such interviews, often it is feasible to administer psychological tests.[6] Thus, it is possible to approach elitelore from unstructured and structured methods.

While Professor Edinger offers a model for the study of political biography, the term political biography is itself too delimiting because in essence it is aimed only at political leaders. Also it is not postulated on the possibility of developing the oral history interview in which the scholar is able to confront the historical personage, figuratively if not literally. For purposes of this study, then, the term political biography is subsumed under the concept of eliteloric investigation.

With regard to developing the concept of elitelore through the oral history method, given the broad number of terms and definitions already in existence, the scholar may be discouraged from attempting to add such a new term to our lexicon, especially when older related terms have not necessarily been accepted. Paraphrasing Professor W. T. Jones, it may be noted that what some writers call world views others call primitive categories, cognitive maps, ethos, forms of life, experiments for living, ideology, theme, style, superstyle, ultimate cosmology, pattern, world hypothesis, and climate of opinion.[7] Professor Jones attempts to solve the problem by using the term world view to define these concepts as follows:

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[6] Psychological tests have been administered, for example, in Bolivia with the cooperation of Professor Kenneth Craik of the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research of the University of California at Berkeley.

[7] W. T. Jones *et al.,* "World Views: Their Nature and Their Function [a Debate]," *Current Anthropology 13 (1972), pp. 79-109.*

> The world view of any individual is a set of very wide-range vectors in that individual's belief space (a) that he learned early in life and that are *not.readily changed* [emphasis added] and (b) that have a. determinate influence on much of his observable behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, but (c) that he seldom or never verbalizes in the referential mode, though (d) they are constantly conveyed by him in the expressive mode and as latent meanings.[8]

In my view, this concept limits much too rigidly the creation of world view to early years. This definition gives an almost passive quality to the formulation of belief structures and perhaps is better suited for investigation of those anthropological problems which are concerned with non-elites.

A much more valuable definition of the problems faced in understanding the role of the elites was offered by Professor Philip D. Curtin at the 1967 Conference on Folklore and Social Science where I first presented the idea of elitelore. In his formal commentary on my paper, Professor Curtin noted:

> A few years ago I published a book called *The Image of Africa* [1964] dealing with attitudes toward Africa among the British elite of the early nineteenth century. After reading Professor Wilkie's paper, I realized that this was elitelore. It seems to me that this kind of work with widely-held attitudes, sentiments, badly-understood theory, and the like is an area into which historians of ideas (whatever their label) should move. With the kind of oral-data collection which Professor Wilkie is undertaking, we **could begin** to look seriously at a whole range of problems that have hardly been attacked so far.
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> [One of the areas] involves the range of variation within the structure of elite beliefs. The question can be put another way: how far do individual formulations on any subject differ from those that are dominant or normal to their social class and time. A second problem deriving from the first is the role of intellectual leadership in changing the norm for an elite group. One example in Western intellectual history is the way in which the precise formulations of intellectual leaders like Marx or Freud were disseminated throughout the educated classes of the Western world - and how in the process they were misunderstood and misapplied, how, in fact, very few people who talked about them had actually read through the works of Freud or had actually read the whole of Das *Kapital.* A third problem in this general area would be to ask in what ways the general structure of beliefs impinges on the world of events - and 1 take this to be one of Professor Wilkie's concerns. Finally -though by no means the end of problems in this area - is the question of how events or "the lessons of experience" alter the structure of belief.

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[8] *Ibid., p. 83..*

Professor Curtin's perceptive evaluation of the possible uses of oral history implicitly take us beyond the intellectual issue as to whether or not autobiography has value. Whereas John A. Garraty, feels that "the weaknesses of autobiographies is that they result from a person's self-conscious efforts to record his actions or thoughts for future use"[9] the view expressed here is that it is necessary to understand how leaders construct views of themselves.[10] This avoids sterile debate in history as to the validity of oral traditions because we can take into account the "fact" that what people think happens in history may be as important as what actually happens.[11]

An important value of oral history interviews is that they allow the biographer to meet the autobiographer. Whereas all too often the former tends to write about life history as he himself would have acted, in the latter case the personage may be unaware of crucial questions which he himself takes for granted. The conversation gives both the scholar and the historical protagonist a chance to overcome each other's biases.[12] This is not to say, however, that the interview does not have pitfalls of its own, namely such problems as failure of immediate recall, evasive answers, and the easy tendency for a conversation to go in too many directions without following up any particular line of questioning. As discussed elsewhere, these problems are not insurmountable,[13] and in any case, such disadvantages are outweighed by spontaneity which captures the stream of consciousness of the leader.

The term elitelore is used here because, in contrast to such a concept as "elite culture," it carries a more delimited connotation of accumulated beliefs which in many cases involve self-deception. Further, assuming that men attempt to make sense out of their lives by building frameworks which justify their actions and reasons for existence, it is important to

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[9] John A. Garraty, The Nature of Biography (New York: Knopf, 1957), p. 195. (On the history of autobiographical writing, see Anna R. Burr, The Autobiography [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909]).

[10] Cf. John Garraty's own recent use of the oral history interview which. allows U.S. historians to reflect intellectually on the way they have written history: *Interpreting American History; Conversations with Historians (2 vols.;* New York: Macmillan, 1970).

[11] Debate as to the validity of oral traditions, however, may be relevant with regard to the work of William Lynwood Montell, *(The Saga of Coe Ridge; A Study in Oral History* [Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970]) which uses oral history to bring to life a tiny Negro colony existing in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains from the end of the U.S. Civil War to the late 1950's; fortunately one can leave discussion of the folk-tradition validity argument to that volume's competent author. Here it is enough to quote Richard M. Dorson's view that "It is not a matter of fact versus fiction so much as the social acceptance of traditional history" which is important. According to Professor Dorson ("Oral Tradition and Written History: The Case for the United States," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 1 [1964] , p. 2'.30) even "if the event is historically false, it is psychologically true".

[12] In this regard it is pertinent to note that I have attempted at times to link historical statistics to oral history. This has been done by questioning Mexican leaders about patterns in data for periods of their responsibility in public positions. Often these alternative views have not been accepted in my own statistical interpretations but they stand as participant counterpoint or counterbalance to scholarly investigation. See James W. Wilkie, "Alternative Views in History: (1) Historical Statistics; and (2) Oral History," in Richard E. Greenleaf and Michael C. Meyer (eds.), *Research in Mexican History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 49-62.)

[13] *Ibid.;* and James W. Wilkie, "Postulates of the Oral History Center for Latin America," *Journal of Library History* 2 (1967), pp. 45-55.

record the myths, legends, anecdotes, and attitudes transmitted to and/or constructed by leaders who attempt to direct the political, social, and economic destinies of society.

Elitelore involves culture which tends to be transmitted orally or through patterns of emulation in informal ways as is discussed in Part V below. Moreover, because elitelore tends to deal with ideas rather than easily-observed actions, in addition to its relation to the culture of leadership, it involves the study of ideology. Clearly the terms "culture" (the sum total of ways of living built up by a group for transmission from one generation to another)[14] and "ideology" (the body of doctrines, attitudes, symbols, and myths used to justify cultural or political position)[15] are closely intertwined with elitelore.

Latin Americanists face a special problem in investigating elite culture or ideology in Latin America because national political leaders frequently not only have been considered to be personalistically-oriented (in contrast to seemingly less personalistic and more highly ideological leaders of such areas as Western Europe, England, and the United States), but their speeches often appear to be more full of rhetoric than meaning. Thus some leaders may give the erroneous impression to be all things to all men, and they frequently convince outside observers that indeed there is no difference in their political programs. As will be seen below in Part V, however, it is possible to test ideology.

An even more serious problem in understanding elitelore is that generally Latin American leaders do not write political - let alone personal - autobiography. Aside from the writings of such a rare person as José Vasconcelos (who describes his difficult act of balancing the conflicting interests of the Mexican Revolution, his mistress, and his wife), few leaders have opened their lives to public scrutiny. Given the fact that Vasconcelos'

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[14] According to A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *(Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* [Cambridge: Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University Press, 1952]):

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action.

[15] Cf. Giovanni Sartori "Politics, Ideology, and Belief Systems," *American Political Science Review* 63 (1969), p. 398, who notes:

> Discussions about ideology generally fall into two broad domains., namely *ideology in knowledge* and/or *ideology in politics.* With respect to the first area of inquiry the question is whether, and to what extent, man's knowledge is ideologically conditioned or distorted. With respect to the second area cf inquiry the question is whether ideology is an essential feature of politics and if so, what does it explain. In the first case "ideology" is contrasted with "truth," science, and valid knowledge in general; whereas in the second case we are not concerned with the truth-value, but with the functional value, so to speak, of ideology.

In another view, ideology involves "a philosophy of history, a view of man's present place in it, some estimate of probable lines of future development, and a set of prescriptions regarding how to hasten, retard, and/or modify that developmental direction," a view developed by Joseph LaPalombara, "Decline of Ideology: AL Dissent and Interpretation," *American Political Science Review 60* (1966), p. 7.

autobiography, *A Mexican Ulysses (Ulises Criollo, 1936-1939)*[16] has often been considered in reality to be half novelistic, perhaps it is no wonder that leaders wish to avoid cause for ridicule or to show inconsistency. If Latin Americans treasure their dignity, privacy guarantees respect. Also, if the tradition in Mexico of distrust *(desconfianza) so* ably described by Octavio Paz in *The Labyrinth of Solitude (1959)*[17] holds at least partially true for the rest of Latin America, then, a prevalent lack of autobiography is explainable.

The Latin American drive for privacy from public view is related to a cultural view of political affairs. Mexico's exPresident Lazaro Cardenas once told me that political acts speak for themselves; any personal explanation of the "how's or why's" behind such acts only appear to be a defense of such actions.[18] This attitude is expressed in the all too frequent Latin American view that if one speaks out to defend himself or to discredit rumour, he may be admitting guilt; this view stands in direct contrast to that in the U.S. and other parts of the world where, if a rumour is not contradicted, often it is presumed to be true.

In sum, the fact that Latin American political leaders do not feel any compelling need to tell their story to mankind is emphasized by a look at elites outside of Latin America. One often sees in non-Latin American autobiographical writings a need to impart a message to society about the course and greater meaning of personal lives, as may be witnessed in the recent writings, for example, of German, United States, and Soviet elites.

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[16] Vasconcelos' autobiography actually includes four volumes entitled as follows:*Ulises Criollo (1936); La Tormenta (1936); El Desastre (1938);* and *El Proconsulado(1939).* (These volumes originally published in Mexico City by Ediciones Botas, have been translated in an abridged volume by W. Rex Crawford under the title *A Mexican Ulysses; An Autobiography* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, *1963]). Also* see the expurgated edition of these four volumes (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus *1958)* in which portions of the original were omitted because of "el deseo de no contaminar la conciencia del lector."

[17] "Octavio Paz, *El Laberinto de la Soledad* (2nd ed.; México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Econ6mica, *1959),* translated by L. Kemp for Grove Press (New York, *1961).*

[18] Interview by James W. Wilkie with Lázaro Cárdenas, August 25, 1962, Uruapan and Apatzingán, Michoacán.

Part II

The Heroic Myth in Autobiography

What is the role of the heroic myth in selected twentieth-century political autobiography outside of Latin America? Because it is not possible here to discuss many important autobiographical works, in sampling some of those related to oral history the work of Albert Speer offers a significant example. Although Speer has written a soul-searching work which probes his own part in the development of Hitler's Germany,[19] some critics have seen such autobiography as an elaborate rationalization for his moral failures. While this judgment has been partially refuted in Eric Norden's penetrating oral history interview with Speer,[20] one also should note the value of Geoffrey Barraclough's analysis of the Speer volume because it calls attention to the "Speer legend" fostered by uncritical book reviewers as well as by Speer. This heroic legend illustrates a use of elitelore, especially because Speer may have selected statistics to put the story of German war production in a falsely dramatic light without necessarily distorting fact.[21]

In another case involving selection of data and delusions of power, one may conclude that if Lyndon B. Johnson's oral memoirs of his presidency as expressed in 1970 CBS television interviews with Walter Cronkite (February) and Mike Wallace (May), tell us anything at all about his own tragic experience with war, they show that when a leader is innundated by data which cannot be comprehended (even with or especially through the use of computers), he must necessarily work with selective information. Even given Johnson's delusions, however, he saw the problem of writing autobiography more clearly than some of his journalistic critics. Whereas David Kraslow claims in his topical analysis of Johnson's CBS television interviews that the public would be better served if Johnson had not given his own "highly selective" view of events,[22] Johnson saw the real issue with more clarity when he dedicated the monolithic Johnson memorial library, where he deposited at the University of Texas, documents from his political career. Johnson said on May 22, 1971: "A President sees things from a unique perspective;" and he noted that his

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[19] Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, translated by R. and C. Winston (New York, Macmillan, 1970).

[20] [Eric Norden], "Playboy Interview: Albert Speer," Playboy, June, 1971, pp. 69 ff. For another very perceptive use of the oral history interview, see [J. Robert Moskin], "Ellsberg Talks," *Look*, October 5, 1971, pp. 31-42.

[21] Geoffrey Barraclough, "Hitler's Master Builder," *New York Review of Books*, January 7, 1971, pp. 6 ff.

[22] David Kraslow, "Johnson's History: He Should Leave It to History," Los *Angeles Times*, May 13, 1971, p. G3. Kraslow is Chief of the *Los Angeles Times* Washington Bureau.

written memoirs[23] would not be meant to tell it how it was, but to say "this is how I saw it from my vantage point.[24]

The very tone of his comments suggests, however, that he might well spend the remaining years of his life comparing his selective information with the thousands upon thousands of his library documents which would help him to see the difference between his own elitelore and complicated alternative views of reality. In any case, Johnson's oral and written revelations of the limited information with which he operated make his papers more valuable to future scholars than if he had not discussed the weight attached to information of which he was aware.

One problem in writing autobiography faced by political leaders (in contrast to litterateurs)[25] is that they are less concerned with self-introspection than with explaining their political life. In this manner the memoirs of the important revolutionaries of the twentieth century, for example, generally have failed to answer questions of universal interest, perhaps because most autobiographers take too much for granted and/or do not necessarily even express their elitelore in a manner which might allow us better to understand them. If one considers the autobiographical writings of some important figures, it is notable that in the Soviet Union, V. I. Lenin and J. Stalin limited themselves to the writings of political tracts; only L. Trotsky's My *Life (1930)*[26] offers a real attempt to understand his life history, but, once he has described his youth, his work tends to become a political harangue. In short, political leaders all too often are concerned more with maintaining their legend than with destroying it.[27] With good reason, they are aware that the life of their ideas depends to a large extent on the survival of their own image.

With the advent of the tape recorder, however, recently some political leaders have set down their story in a new way. In this manner the controversial *Khrushchev Remembers* offers important tape-recorded insights into the life of a Soviet leader who was too preoccupied (even in retirement) to organize in a literary fashion the development of his life history.[28] Here a leader's ideas and the concepts which influenced the period in which he held power are expressed in a near stream of consciousness form which tends td

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[23] *The Vantage Point; Perspectives on the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1971).

[24] *Los Angeles Tunes,* May 23, 1971, p. A21.

[25] See, for example, André Malraux, *Anti-Memoirs,* translated by T. Kilmartin (New York. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

[26] L. Trotsky, *My Life: The Rise and Fall* of *a Dictator* (London: Butterworth**,** 1930).

[27] India's Mohandas K. Gandhi was concerned in his autobiographical writing (1927-1929) with self-introspection, but he emphasized his religious "experiments with truth" at the expense of political aspects of his life; see Gandhi's *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth,* translated by M. Desai (Boston: Beacon Press, *195 7).*

[28] *Khrushchev Remembers,* translated by S. Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970).

deglorify the leader, making him more human, as we see a relatively free association of ideas in contrast to carefully-prepared autobiographical writings or speeches.[29]

Although one might question the effect of time on the memory of a leader such as Khrushchev, in introducing *Khrushchev Remembers* Edward Crankshaw has written that the book is all the more revealing precisely because it was prepared by a man, older, tired, and diminished by sickness. In Crankshaw's words:

> With all [of the Khrushchev book's] limitations, its evasions, deceptions, omissions (some deliberate, some due clearly to the forgetfulness of the old), it is the first thing of its kind to come from any Soviet political leader of the Stalin and post-Stalin eras. It takes us straight into what has been hitherto a forbidden land of the mind. And for me the supreme interest and value of this narrative lies in the unconscious revelation of the underlying attitude: the assumptions, the ignorances, the distorted views, which must be shared to a greater or lesser degree by all those Soviet leaders who came to maturity under Stalin and were favored by him for their macabre combination of perfect ruthlessness and almost perfect obedience . ..
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> For the specialist reader, on the other hand, there are no major surprises. He knows the whole story and he does not need me, or anybody else, to signpost the narrative and comment on it point by point. But he will find valuable confirmation of many facts already suspected or established by deduction, innumerable new details and vivid pictures from the life which will fill out and illuminate his existing picture, and above all, the re-creation of the mood and atmosphere of Stalin's court.[30]

With regard to the age of the leader, it is important to make two observations: First, one of the basic assumptions of historians is the idea that a certain amount of time must pass before the true meaning of events is understood.[31] While one may agree with this view, it is necessary to suggest that in interviewing leaders it would be helpful to record a leader's impressions at the moment of his action and then follow up these interviews once time has passed to give perspective. The ideal, of course, would be to identify the same leader before he grows to maturity and/or takes power in order that scholars might work with a growing body of elitelore. If such a plan were possible to implement, it would certainly point up a new role for the historian.

Second, among the leaders whom my wife and I have interviewed (including the chief assistants to top eschelon figures), we believe that one of their common characteristics is a special ability to recall the detail of complicated events long-since passed. In short, perhaps

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[29] About the Khrushchev volume, however, Harrison E. Salisbury has written on the origin of the work (a discussion not included in Edward Crankshaw's introduction to the volume itself): "We are dealing here with a corpus which began as an inchoate jumble of rambling family-taped conversations. These raw notes (often confused and inaccurate) have been censored, patched, excised, potted, twisted, distorted, and strained through a variety of 'editings' which probably began with Khrushchev himself and his immediate entourage . . . ." Nevertheless, in his review, Salisbury concludes that "this is Nikita S. Khruslichev speaking ... (and) the work is not a fake." See *New York Times Book Review*, January 3, 1971, pp. I ff.

[30] From Edward Crankshaw's introduction to *Khrushchev Remembers, pp. vii-ix.*

[31] Cf. Allan Nevins, *The Gateway to History* (2nd ed.; Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963), p. 166. Nevins (sometimes called the "father" of oral history) has written that "contrast between the fresh record of young manhood and the dim record of age is illuminating."

one characteristic of elites is a truly remarkable memory which sets them apart from others. One could argue that these leaders have fabricated detail or embellished "facts" in order to develop their own elitelore, and while this may be true to some extent, we are still convinced, through the use of corroborative materials, that leaders have a memory which generally is extraordinary, if selective.

In tapping such memories one of the main advantages of oral history lies in the fact that leaders are freed from their ghost writers, (and do not have time to reflect upon their answers), especially if the oral history is tape recorded in scholarly interview form. In this regard it is regrettable that Edgar Snow could not have tape recorded open-ended interviews with Mao Tse-tung in 1936, instead of laboriously making notes which were necessarily constrained by translation problems;[32] unfortunately, Mao's own writings are particularly suited to building the heroic myth. In Latin America, the interviews of such journalists as Lee Lockwood and Régis Debray with Fidel Castro and Salvador Allende,

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[32] Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (2nd ed.; New York: Grove Press, 1968), pp. 106-181. It is interesting to note the circumstances of Snow's interview (pp. 106 and 130):

> I wrote down in full in English Mao Tse-tung's answers to my questions, and these were then translated into Chinese and corrected by Mao, who is noted for his insistence upon accuracy of detail. With the assistance of Mr. Wu [the translator] , the interviews were retranslated into English, and because of such precautions I believe these pages to contain few errors of reporting. They were, of course, the strictly partisan views of the leader of the Chinese Communists - views being made known to the Western world for the first time.
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> * * * * *
>
> One night when all other questions had been satisfied, Mao turned to the list I had headed "Personal History." He smiled at a question, "How many times have you been married?" - and the rumor later spread that I had asked Mao how many wives he had. He was skeptical, anyway, about the necessity of supplying an autobiography. But I argued that in a way that was more important than information on other matters. "People want to know what sort of man you are," I said, "when they read what you say. Then you ought also to correct some of the false rumors circulated."
>
> I reminded him of various reports of his death, how some people believed he spoke fluent French, while others said he was an ignorant peasant, how one report described him as a half-dead tubercular, while others maintained that he was a mad fanatic. He seemed mildly surprised that people should spend their time speculating about him. He agreed that such reports ought to be corrected. Then he looked over the items again, as I had written them down.
>
> "Suppose," he said at last, "that I just disregard your questions., and instead give you a general sketch of my life? I think it will be more understandable, and in the end all of your questions will be answered just the same."
>
> During the nightly interviews that followed - we were like conspirators indeed, huddled in that cave over the read-covered table, with sputtering candles between us - I wrote until I was ready to fall asleep. Wu Liang-p'ing sat next to me and interpreted Mao's soft southern dialect . . . .

respectively, each offer at once examples of failure and success in undertaking the oral interview. On the one hand, since the works are ahistorical (and tend to reinforce the historical personage's propaganda image), they may be faulted for failing to bring out the leader's image with perspectives on the past. On the other hand, systematically they have captured topical oral interviews which record a great deal of information; thus their apparently superficial interviews will be of much use to future historians who seek to understand two important political leaders at a specific moment, especially by eliminating the problem of the ghost writer's influence.[33]

[33] Lee Lockwood, *Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Castro* (New York: Random House, 1969); and Régis Debray, *Conversación con Allende (México,* D.F.: Siglo XXI, 1971), translated by Peter Beglan *et al.* under the title *The Chilean Revolution: Conversations with Allende* (New York: Random House, 1971). Because of Castro's famous speeches which ramble for hours, the problem of the ghost writer is not comparable to the case of Allende.

Part III

Elitelore in Mexico

If the problem of distinguishing the thoughts of leaders from the thoughts of ghost writers is serious, as is suggested above, then the oral history interview offers a method which is useful to understand leaders who have written autobiographical accounts.[34] In Mexico this is especially true with regard to such famous figures as Emilio Portes Gil and Martín Luis Guzmán, who have written autobiographies which can be termed unusual, to say the least.

Former President Portes Gil has written an *Autobiografía de la Revolución Mexicana* (1964)[35] which mixes his interpretation of the Revolution with extensive quotes from other participants in order to tell the political history of twentieth-century Mexico. In this manner, Portes believes that his own interpretation and selection of quotations permits the Revolution to tell its own story through the words of its leaders speaking from the vantage point of their own era.

Is such a work the product of Protes Gil or of his long-trusted advisors? In oral history interviews with Portes, he constantly referred to his volume and restates many of his published views to dispel any idea that his writings are not his own.[36] The difference between his published writings and oral history interview might be summarized as follows: Whereas the former is detailed and often unselective the latter offers a concise view of his thinking and aspects of his own autobiography; furthermore, the latter does not presume to offer an "autobiography of the Revolution" but to give only one leader's viewpoint.

In a different kind of oral history case, the reader may be interested in oral interviews with Martín Luis Guzmán, "the defender of Pancho Villa." Martín Luis Guzmán claims to tell the *Memorias de Pancho Villa (1938-1940).*[37] Because Villa never wrote his own autobiography, Guzman decided to write

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[34] The problem of ghost writing is missed by Eugenia Meyer and Alicia Olivera de Bonfil in their article on oral history in Mexico: "La Historia Oral: Origen, Metodología, Desarrollo y Perspectivas," *Historia Mexicana 21 (1971), pp. 372-387.*

[35] S Emilio Portes *Gil, Autobiografía de la Revolucibn; Un Tratado de Interpretación Histórica (México,* D.F.: Instituto Mexicano de Cultura, *1964).*

[36] James W. Wilkie and Edna Monzón de Wilkie, *México Visto en el Siglo XX; Entrevistas de Historia Oral* (México, D.F.: Distributed by Cuadernos Americanos for the Instituto Mexicarro de Investigaciones Econdmicas, *1969),* Chapter *6.* For an abridged English translation of Chapter *6* with annotation and discussion which places the Portes Gil administration into historical context, see Barbara D. Morrison., "Provisional President Emilio Portes *Gil* Discusses Mexican Revolutionary Politics, *1928-1930:* An Oral History Study," (Waco, Texas: M.A. thesis in political science, Baylor University, *1971.)*

it for him, especially as his condemnation of Villa's cruelty and violence faded with time after he first wrote of Villa in El *Aguila y la Serpiente (1928).*[38] In oral history interviews with Guzmán in *1964,* he defended himself by downplaying his *1928* account of how he fled from his position on Villa's staff during *1914--1915* with the fear that Villa would shoot him when he asked permission to leave for the United States. Guzmán told my wife and me that he did not flee in disillusion with the ever-expanding civil war between the victorious rebel generals, but in order to gain his own armistice *(una tregua que yo mismo me dí en la perspectiva de la historia mexicana).*[39] And he noted that with his departure he could then write a sketch of how the Revolution appeared to a civilian from Mexico City. Guzmán was quick to point out, however, that "I believe that I was not yet intellectually prepared nor well enough informed to write; and for that reason, one. does not know whether *El Aguila y la Serpiente is* autobiographical, a biography of certain isolated personages, a novel, or a series of essays."[40] Concerning the *Memorias,* this man who was once Villa's personal secretary told us that his detailed account of Villa's thoughts, conversations, and feelings are neither biographical nor novelistic in nature:

> The *Memorias de Pancho Villa* are true history even though they have a peculiar form. It is the history of the Revolution as it would have been told by one of its great figures. But it is not a novel: everything that is told in the *Memorias de Pancho Villa is* true historically and all is documented. When I did not use his papers, I used his public messages, firsthand accounts, and testimony from witnesses to the events.
>
> In effect, since I [founded the magazine *Tiempo* in 19421 1 have put aside my literary activities because it has not been possible to spend the time required to . . . complete the *Memorias de Pancho Villa.* The *Memorias* lack four volumes or 800 pages to complete the work; even though I have all of the documentation, I lack time to write.[41]

What conclusion can be drawn about Guzmán's elitelore which makes biography into "autobiography"? Martín Luis Guzmán's views point up several intellectual factors in elitelore. First, the historical personage himself may not know the historical meaning of events at the moment they occur. Second, one may not know the full meaning of past events even thirteen years later, as in Guzmán's case when he wrote El *Aguila y la Serpiente.* Third, as new historical events impinge on new present times, a person's view may change as in the case of Guzmán when he wrote his defense of Villa in the *Memorias* more than twenty years after the events in which he participated. Fourth, these changing views may have more to do with the leader's conception of his own autobiography than with events which actually occurred. Thus as Villa's reputation was gradually whitewashed, Guzmán found his own star related to that of defending and explaining Villa.

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[37] Translated by V. H. Taylor in an abridged version under the title *Memoirs of Pancho Villa* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965). The original edition was published in Mexico City by Ediciones Botas.
[38] Translated by Harriet de Onís under the title *The Eagle and the Serpent* (New York: Doubleday, 1965). The original work was published in Madrid by J. Pueyo, 1928.
[39] 0ral History Interview with Martín Luis Guzmán, Mexico City, September 30, 1964.
[40] Ibid.
[41] lbid., January 9, 1965.

Does this latter point mean that Guzmán's own oral history is invalid because his views have changed? On the contrary, as Guzmán himself notes, much of his life (including his present position as Senator of the Republic) has been caught up since 1914-1915 with trying to understand his association with Villa in the momentous events of those years. Unfortunately, our interviews with Guzmán did not allow us to discuss these matters. The interviews were foreshortened and difficult because apparently Guzmán never understood our goal in developing an oral history of his life and times. Or perhaps we failed to make our goals clear, because we have been informed since that the Mexican Oral History Program of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia recently has been very successful in conducting interviews with Guzmán. Our view in 1964 (which may still be valid) was that perhaps prolific writers feel limited by the spoken idea which cannot be erased, revised, and polished.

In one of our uncompleted oral history studies conducted in 1964,[42] the novelist and political activist Carlos Fuentes perhaps realized that spontaneous discussion could hurt his image. In a rare discussion of his childhood,[43] he not only related his exact place and date of birth (Panama City, Panama, November 11, 1928) but told of the influences of his childhood as the son of a Mexican diplomat assigned for many years to Washington, D.C., influences directly involved with Fuente's mastery of the English Language. Fuentes spent his formative years between the ages of five and thirteen in Washington, D.C.; and he has remarked that it is almost miraculous that he speaks Spanish at all.[44] For this reason, he mentioned that when writing often he thinks in English and translates into Spanish the words he puts on paper because he feels English to be more dynamically suited to the contemporary era than the more archaic, though rich, Spanish language.[45] Upon reflection about the nature of such an interview, a leader might well think twice about continuing conversations which are so image-shattering.

[42] Fuentes travels frequently, and thus we were not able to schedule a second interview.
[43] See note 44 below. Richard M. Reeve, "An Annotated Bibliography on Carlos Fuentes: 1949-1969," *Hispania* 53 (1970), pp. 595-652.
[44] Oral History Interview with Carlos Fuentes, Mexico City, August 15, 1964.
[45] Interview with Carlos Fuentes, Mexico City, August 15, 1964.

Part IV

Understanding Images in Latin America

For whom are images shattered: the leader or the follower'? It is the experience of the Oral History Project for Latin America that most elites, like non-elites, are not too interested in questioning their own belief structure - self-examination can be quite destructive of self-image if carried very far. Whereas leaders are more interested in constructs which they have built to justify their lives, historians look for influences, periodization, and turning points which leaders may not be willing to examine very deeply.

In all of my own taped and non-taped interviews, I have only once met a man who in discussion systematically tore down his intellectual framework. To his credit, the Mexican political leader Aurelio Manrique (1891-1967) told how he always fought on the wrong side in the Mexican Revolution. He noted that fortunately his side always had lost. It was his view in 1964 that Mexico's stability and socio-economic development were self-evident; thus lie felt it best that his attempts failed to overthrow what was already the nascent "Institutionalized Revolution," especially because his motives all too often were based upon personalistic loyalty and not upon any great principle.[46]

In contrast to Manrique, most leaders are content with self-deception. In positive terms, it may be said that generally the elite prefer never "to make mistakes" but rather "to learn from their experiences." In this view, men do not necessarily lie to others - they deceive themselves.[47]

[46] Interview with Aurelio Manrique, Mexico City, June 25, 1964.
[47] In her criticism of an earlier draft of this study, Professor Williams found this view to be a "cynical" way of looking at history; it is her view that leaders often may understand objectively their role and that perhaps I should not overemphasize the idea of self-deception.

Octavio Paz has put the matter succinctly in writing about masks in Mexican society:

> We tell lies for the mere pleasure of it, like all imaginative peoples, but we also tell lies to hide ourselves and to protect ourselves from intruders. Lying plays a decisive role in our daily lives, our politics, our love-affairs and our friendships, and since we attempt to deceive ourselves as well as others, our lies are

brilliant and fertile, not like the gross inventions of other peoples. Lying is a tragic game in which we risk a part of our very selves. Hence it is pointless to denounce it.

The dissembler pretends to be someone he is not. His role requires constant improvisation a steady forward progress across shifting sands. Every moment he must remake, re-create, modify the personage he is playing, until at last the moment arrives when reality and appearance, the lie and the truth, are one. At first the pretense is only a fabric of inventions intended to baffle our neighbors, but eventually it becomes a superior - because more artistic - form of reality. Our lies reflect both what we lack and what we desire, both what we are not and what we would like to be. [48]

In short, elitelore is involved with self-deception, deception which often allows leaders to believe that their political struggle is not useless or merely for self-gain. Here, I believe (as Paz himself might now explicitly agree) that masks which enable Mexicans to survive in a "labyrinth of solitude" are universally common (to a greater or lesser degree) rather than limited to any country or even to Latin America.

Thus Paz's 1959 definition of self-deception becomes an important aspect of elitelore.

Dissimulation is an activity very much like that of actors in the theater, but the true actor surrenders himself to the role he is playing and embodies it fully, even though he sloughs it off again, like a snake its skin, when the final curtain comes down. The dissembler never surrenders or forgets himself, because it would no longer be dissembling if he became one with his image. But this fiction becomes an inseparable - and spurious - part of his nature. He is condemned to play his role throughout life, since the pact between himself and his impersonation cannot be broken except by death or sacrifice. The lie takes command of him and becomes the very foundation of his personality. [49]

If self-image is based upon an elaborate scheme of selfdeception which leaders often do not wish to examine too closely, then the oral historian may be able to do no more than tape record for posterity the views which help us to understand why men act. Since all leaders must make decisions and act upon them (the failure to make a decision is in itself an historical action), it is important to see the information upon which they have acted.

It should be noted that since no leader possesses truth but perceives reality through the lens of his own biases and experiences, his decisions and actions generally make sense *given the limited amount of information with which he has worked* Granted extremist orientations of Latin American biography, which tend either to make leaders into something akin to gods or devils, often it is difficult to approach elites with any real understanding of them. My wife and I have found this to be true especially in our recordings of out-of-power political leaders, who frequently do not have adequate access to favorable media presentation in the Latin American political system where the "ins" crush the "outs" (necessitating violent action to bring the "outs" to power and initiating a new vicious cycle). After hearing opposition leaders tell their life history (often in relation to topics), we have concluded that given their information and view of life, their actions have been rational or at least not as irrational as official opinion might lead one to believe. In this manner we have come to appreciate how leaders can have very different perceptions of events and of each other.

Interviews have analytical value in that the scholar can see which leaders have worked with more information than others. And most leaders prove themselves to be likable and to have a value to society in their own right. Only two exceptions to this generalization have occurred during our ten years of interviewing leaders, and both cases came in Mexico. In the first, Melchor Ortega (a long-time favorite of Plutarco Elias Calles, strongman of Mexico from 1924 to 1934) implied that he gained his initial capital during the Mexican Revolution by realizing that if food were shipped via railway to war-torn areas, he could make a fortune by selling at inflated prices. Thus, there is little in our interview to redeem Ortega;" and it is interesting to note that he was gunned-down at the age of 75, apparently

while attempting to fleece communal landholders' out of their timber rights on lands located north of Acapulco.[51] The second case (not tape recorded) involves Fidel Velazquez, who has kept Mexican labor under his thumb since the 1940". When we asked him in 1964 about the labor troubles which shook Mexico in 1958 and 1959, he denied even that there was any strife, strife which not only challenged his own authority but seriously threatened the newly-inaugurated government of President Adolfo Lopez Mateos.[52]

In another sense, the value of the oral history document is analytical in nature because questions are raised which leaders might otherwise never discuss, particularly since they take their point of view for granted. As a case in point, it might be noted that in an oral history interview concerning the elitelore of the Bolivian leader Carlos Serrate, a militant in the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario of Victor Paz Estenssoro, it became apparent that he believed that all U.S. aid to Bolivia since 1954 has been in the form of loans. Misunderstanding of this case, which contributed to serious sentiment against foreign aid, was based on lack of knowledge; in fact U.S. aid until 1961 was basically in the form of outright grants.[53] Once Serrate examined the data, he noted his problematic interpretation during a recent oral history interview, and in this sense the interview itself may influence history as one political misconception has been clarified.[54]

Critics of the directed interview might raise the point that the interviewer should not confront the leader, or even ask many questions, for fear of distorting a leader's views. Since the elite open-ended oral history interviews discussed here are undertaken with men who attempt to manipulate others as a matter of daily life, however, it is noteworthy that interviewing elites is quite different from polling non-elite' about their attitudes. As other interviewers of elites have noted: Respondents (1) actively resent the restrictions placed upon them by interview schedules; (2) demand a more active interplay with the interviewer than the conventional schedule permits; and (3) are intelligent, quickthinking, and at home in the realm of ideas, policy, and generalizations 5 Hence the problem for the oral historian is to strike a balance between using and being used by the historical personage.

48 Octavo Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude, p. 40 (El Laberinto de la Soledad, p. 36).*
49 Ibud., p. 42; and pp. *37-38,* respectively.
[50] Oral History Interview with Melchor Ortega, Mexico City, May 18, 1964.
continuation of interviews begun in Bolivia during 1966-1967.
[51] Hispanoamericano (Tiempo), March 15, 1971, p. 43f.
[52] Interview with Fidel Velazquez, Mexico City, September 29, 1964.
[53] James W. Wilkie, *The Bolivian Revolution and U.S. Aid Since* 1952 (Los Angeles: Latin American Center, University of California, 1969).
[54] Oral History Interview with Carlos Serrate Reich, Los Angeles, California, January 14, 1971. This is a

At times, however, the scholar may find that he can profit from "being used." In Costa Rica, for example, oral history interviews (conducted by Albert L. Michaels, my wife, and myself) yielded a fascinating store of information on the sex life of Luis Alberto

Monge. Monge, who has presidential aspirations and has been active as Secretary General of Jose Figures' Partido Liberacion Nacional, consciously decided to recount his private life in 1969. Thus in the likely event that his "scandalous" sex life (the subject of public gossip) were to become an issue in his future political life, he could point out that he had explained his amorous affairs some years earlier to avoid the appearance of defensively answering charges only after they had been raised by his enemies. Although he had a motive for telling his story, the occasion offered the opportunity to find out about the sacrosanct sex life of a Latin American leader, a part of the private life which is almost impossible to obtain. Furthermore, the interview allowed the opportunity to ask questions, many of which centered upon aspects of his sex life which he himself would not have developed without questionings.[56]

A Brazilian case yielded a different kind of analytical value in oral history interview. Discussions (Mexico City, 1967) with the Brazilian exile Francisco Juliao, were most informative in probing the mind of this famous leader of the peasantry. Juliao, a charismatic figure, could not express any realistic ideas regarding government; and he had no real conception of how he supposedly represented the will of the masses other than to imply that by walking among the poor peasants somehow he came to embody their needs, as if by osmosis.

In yet another example, a Mexican political analyst has pointed out in reviewing *Mexico Visto en el Siglo XX* that one interesting observation emerges concerning the rise to power of President Lazaro Cardenas in 1934. Alfonso Trueba has noted that, although the views of Vicente Lombardo Toledano, Emilio Portes Gil, and Jesus Silva Herzog appear to be contradictory as to how Cardenas was nominated, they are all in essential agreement that the issue was a reaction against the excesses of Calles. [57]

This latter example of elitelore also suggests that if several persons feel that they were personally responsible for Cardenas' candidacy (in this case the agrarian politician Portes and the labor leader Lombardo), then Cardenas was not simply designated by Calles as most observers have thought previously. Instead, Cardenas had a broad mandate of support to develop new policies for a Mexico caught in the world depression during the early 1930's. Such a conclusion points up the relationship of elitelore to climate of opinion.

[55] Stephen A. Stephen A. Richardson *et al., Interviewing: Its Forms and Functions* (New York: Basic Books, 1965), p. 304.
[56] Oral History Interview with Luis Alberto Monge, San Josh, Costa Rica, 1969.
[57] Alfonso Trueba, "Historia Oral: La Eleccion de Cardenas," *Excelsior*, September 29, 1969.

Part V
Elitelore and Groups

Although discussion of elitelore has been largely confined to individual life histories, as has been suggested above, the term has group manifestations. Khrushchev's elitelore, for example, was both drawn from and in turn influenced his cohorts. Further, it may be said that ideological debates and terminology of any historical period give varying types of information to leaders who discuss matters on a day-to-day basis.

If leaders who share an affinity for each other's thinking (for reasons of ideology or reasons of personal history) gravitate toward each other, then as I have suggested in testing non verbalized ideology in Mexican budgetary expenditure,[58] traditional means of investigation of elite groups are inadequate to show that leaders cannot be all things to all men as it might appear in superficial investigation by either Mexicans or non-Mexicans. To cite one case, whereas Raymond Vernon sees the presidents of Mexico as being all of the same mold (and thus caught in a political strait jacket), I have attempted to show how presidents differ (and how they are free from a strait jacket) by indicating quantitative differences in the way they spend the nation's controllable federal expenditure.[59]

Elitelore may also be investigated in verbal forms which find their way into the literature of leaders. To suggest how this may work in practice, let us consider the fact that many Mexican intellectual views of foreign investment are based upon ideas and/or investigations now some twenty years out of date. And those views of twenty years ago were in themselves based largely upon a criticism of the U.S. role in Mexico during the period prior to 1930. A comparison of the present-day impact of U.S. investment on the Mexican economy when compared to the combined impact of Mexican public and private capital since 1940 reveals a very different picture than the elitelore concept which had continued in vogue. The ratio of American direct investment to Mexican public and private investment reveals the following decline: in 1940, 2.5:1; in 1946, .5:1; in 1967, .3 :1 .[60]

[58] James W. Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change Since 1910* (2nd ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).
[59] Compare Raymond Vernon, *The Dilemma of Mexico's Development; The Roles of the Public and Private Sectors* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), and James W. Wilkie, "Recentralization: The Budgetary Dilemma in the Economic Development of Mexico, Bolivia and Costa Rica," in David T. Geithman (ed.) *Fiscal Policy for Industrialization in Latin America* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, forthcoming).
[60] Lyle C. Brown and James W. Wilkie, "Recent United States-Mexican Relations: Problems Old and New," in Robert H. Bremner *et al.* (eds.) *Twentieth-Century American Foreign Policy, pp. 378-419* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, *1971).*
[61] Maria D. Herrera, "The Bracero Experience in Life and Fiction," (Los Angeles: M.A. thesis in Latin American Studies, University of California, *1971).*

In a similar vein, a thesis recently completed by Maria D. Herrera sheds light on the problem of written elitelore. In investigating "The Bracero Experience in Life and Fiction," she found that Mexican novelists have developed a near-monolithic view that the experience of Mexican migratory labor has had a negative result both for Mexico and the individual bracero. (Such intellectual views often see harm to Mexican agriculture and erosion of Mexico's rural values through exposure to the all pervasive North American urban materialism which corrupts while it exploits man.) In contrast to this view, her interviews with the Mexican braceros of Huecorio, Michoacan, show that their opinions were almost diametrically opposed to those of the urban intellectuals.[61] To the intellectual elite ensconced in comfortable city quarters, often it seems that traditional values of rural life should not be disrupted because those values seem to offer a better life than that found in the city, with its problems of crowding, crime, and poverty.

Perhaps urban elites may be seduced by idyllic fascination with non-urban life because they ignore the fact that in mass migrations to the cities many persons have chosen a new life by "voting with their feet." Even in the U.S., where a high level of urbanization was achieved much ahead of Mexico, Arnold M. Rose was writing as late as 1967 of the ideal concept of folk society as opposed to mass society." 2 Rose has based his view upon Robert Redfield's now discredited 1926 view of Tepoztlan, Mexico, as a harmonious community with a strong sense of group loyalty. Unfortunately, Rose was unaware of Oscar Lewis' restudy of the same community (published in 1951) which revealed that Redfield had failed to see great disharmony and interpersonal distrust.[63] Although Rose's concept of the conversion of idyllic isolated folk societies into a "mass society" (wherein individuals are isolated from their fellow man and manipulated by mass media) is attractive, it must be attributed to his own elitelore.

With regard to transmission of ideas through an emerging intellectual climate of opinion, it is interesting to cite the case of Luis Chavez Orozco, historian and political functionary. Chavez Orozco remarked in 1964 that his ideology thirty years earlier had been influenced not by having read Marx but by having lived in an anti-capitalistic climate of opinion which was to bring Lazaro Cardenas to the presidency of Mexico. Prepared by his historical investigations into the "failures" of nineteenth-century liberalism, he told us that he wrote his two-volume Historia *de Mexico* in 1933 with an economic interpretation which began to give Mexican historiography an orientation that was very close to Marx's views.[64] Only after his work was published and when critics began to say that it was a fine Marxist interpretation of Mexican history did he read Marx to find out what Marxist philosophy was about. From that day onward, he noted, he began to consider himself a Marxist, if not quite orthodox in his views.[65]

In short, it may be said that elitelore often involves a climate of opinion which is transmitted verbally through self-selected groups which share the same attitudes toward values or life styles. In this manner, elite group attitudes may be reflected in the writings of elite individuals which in turn will further strengthen group self-identity.

[62] Arnold M. Rose, *The Power Structure; Political Process in American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 186.
[63] See Appendix B.
[64] Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Patria, 1934).
[65] Oral History Interview with Luis Chavez Orozco, Cuernavaca, June 14, 1964.

Part VI

Methodology for Obtaining Elitelore

In combining elements of both biography and autobiography, if properly developed, the oral history interview offers a unique new type of personal document.[66] Whereas the Latin American aversion to autobiography may be rooted in the idea that if a leader takes the initiative in telling his own story he is revealing egotism and thus losing his dignity, the interview process relieves him of any loss of face. (While it is not the purpose here to discuss whether or not elites in Latin America generally attempt to appear humble, even if hypocritically so, it may be said that the oral history interview often permits leaders to act humble even as they take credit for decisions or events from which they were far removed.)

In Section IV above, the directed nature of the oral history interview was discussed and here it is necessary to note only that, while it is important, the idea of "confrontation" should not be overstressed. Actually, a discussion about rumours and charges concerning the leader can be developed in a friendly atmosphere, the confrontation often occurring only at a subliminal level.

If an interview does not appear to be developing at all, however, sometimes it is necessary to pique a leader's interest with challenges concerning the nature of his historical actions. Admittedly, this approach is taking a gamble that the personage may be alienated; but if he is not going to cooperate or will simply recite a few platitudes, the oral history interview is doomed to failure anyway. In the experience of my wife and myself the most drastic challenge we have had to make came in our first interview with Vicente Lombardo Toledano, who we then felt might ask us to leave his home;" the gamble was successful, however, and as Lombardo began to tell his story, he was soon caught in what became his own insistence on having to continue to tell us the development of his political autobiography. (If sufficiently drawn into the biographically-oriented oral history process, few leaders can leave their story half-told for it would be equivalent to near intellectual suicide - life stories must be carried out as must lives).

[66] For readings on the use of personal documents in history, see John Dollard, *Criteria for the Life History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935); Herbert Blumer, *An Appraisal of Thomas and Znaniecke's 'The Polish Peasant in Europe and America'* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1939); Gordon W. Allport, *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942); Louis Gottshalk, Clyde Kluckhohn, and Robert Angell, *The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology and Sociology* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1945); Margaret Mead, "Anthropologist and Historian: Their Common Problems," *The American Quarterly* 3 (1951), pp 3-13; Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition, A Study in Historical Methodology*, translated by H. Wright (Chicago: Aldine, 1965); William C. Sturtevant, "Anthropology, History and Ethnohistory," *Ethnohistory* 13 (1966), pp. 1-51. Allport defines the "personal document" as "any self-revealing record that intentionally or unintentionally yields information regarding the structure dynamics, and functioning of the author's mental life" (p. xii).

In a notable failure, however, Antonio Diaz Soto y Gama refused to tape record interviews on the grounds that he could not allow typical "gringos" to "mechanically" intrude into the spirit of man. Thus, he would not even listen to the argument that tape recordings preserve for posterity the historical personage's own words with his own intonation and emphasis; rather, he noted that he would only allow the historian to take notes and did not mind the filtering of his ideas to succeeding generations through the mind and rough notes of the traditional interview. In this instance, the oral history interview came to nought.[68]

[67] With regard to the interviews by my wife and myself with Lombardo Toledano, it is interesting to note that although he consented to tape record his political memoirs, apparently he thought we might be CIA agents. During the first few interview sessions he not only had his own stenographer present to take verbatim notes of our conversations, but also he had his assistants tape record the interviews. Because he worked on an extremely tight schedule (even up to his death in 1968), however, affairs turned out that since only he and we were on time to commence each interview, as our conversations progressed he soon gave up the idea of having his own record made (in duplicate no less!). He was not only continually frustrated by his stenographer and assistants who failed to arrive on time, but also because his assistants - one of whom was a member of the national Chamber of Deputies - could not seem to get their tape recorder to work properly. In any case, as he soon understood that we were indeed interested in his past life (and were not secret agents), his need to make any copies of the interviews became unnecessary.

Given these problems, how does one select leaders for in-depth interviews? Clearly the historian has a difficult task in necessarily choosing to record few among many leaders, let alone following a tightly-knit novelistic approach presented in Ryunosuke Akutagawa's *Rashomon (1952).*

Selection of leaders may be conveniently related to the broad integrative theme of national history, such as the Mexican Revolution of *1910.* Thus leaders are chosen (and hopefully will cooperate) to give divergent representative viewpoints which relate life history to national development. As for making the case that the persons are completely representative of a political movement or group, this is difficult, especially given the historian's interest in explaining what appear to be unique lives and events. Nevertheless, as seen in Mexico *Visto en el Siglo XX*, the seven persons presented in the volume represent a spectrum of political opinion from left to right; even if they do not necessarily represent in all particulars the group with which they identify, let alone their occupational or class background.

It is significant that the oral historian is dependent upon and limited to available persons who can be persuaded to engage in an oral history interview. This is part of the age-old historical problem of working with whatever data happens to exist accidentally; nevertheless, the historian has the opportunity (if not the obligation) to *attempt* to convince relevant persons that they should engage in the oral history interview. In this manner, the historian is not simply dependent upon information which is left to posterity in a "trickle-down" fashion, but can participate in recording documents which hitherto have been lost to history. There is no need to develop this point here because it is treated elsewhere;[69] nor is there need to discuss how one goes about making the interview in

technical terms, a matter discussed also in relation to legal rights and transcription problems in another study.[70]

Because conversation develops spontaneously according to the interests and role of the leader, no interview is the same and different scholars would probably undertake dissimilar investigations. It should be remembered also that the interview is not necessarily controlled by the scholar; often no matter how hard one tries, the leader will direct the interview to matters which concern him. Ideally, however, the interview should be the product of both leader and scholar.[71]

In light of the above presentation, would it be possible to classify themes in elitelore in the same manner as scholars have developed systems to provide analysis of various genre of folklore? Perhaps such a method is foreign to the historian's approach, which generally considers responses to be unique. But with the recording of many lives, the possibility of such a classificatory system should be kept in mind. In short, oral history not only answers traditional historical problems with new methodology, but as data (and particularly the directed interview) yield enough information it may well be possible to classify these new materials, for example, according to types of response, ways of thinking, patterns of self-justification, and methods of self-deception.[72]

It is probably not necessary to remind the reader that the interview technique is not new, but it is important to note that the use of the tape recorder has facilitated longer and more complex interviews. The historian is no longer dependent upon taking notes, but can devote his energies to developing analytical questions as responses may suggest, often in flashback and flash-forward sequence. Although originally I felt that many interviews with one person spaced over a long period would build-in a check for accuracy, in recent years I have concluded that successive day-long interviews allow development of a more coherent interview without sacrificing authenticity.
Either approach is possible: the first being of particular use when the scholar is doubtful that he is receiving the full story. The advantage of the latter approach is that the leader becomes so accustomed to talking in long, intensive sessions, that he: speaks almost compulsively without time to reflect on how to avoid embarrassing questions.

Oral history has attracted a number of practitioners in recent years because the interview with a tape recorder appears to many researchers to be a simple process. Actually, the results of oral history depend on the knowledge of the interviewer who can elicit responses through his detailed study of the leader and his times. To the interviewer who knows little or nothing, any response sounds sophisticated, and this is certainly an unfortunate situation. This point of view, however, is not meant to say that: scholars cannot learn from oral history as they conduct interviews - in opening new aspects of elitelore, the questioning of one person can lead to new questions for a person previously interviewed.

In the original paper presented to the Conference on Folklore and Social Science in 1967, a model questionnaire was included. Unfortunately the model has been misunderstood by some scholars who have attempted to implement it verbatim, thus preventing spontaneous discussion. Rather than consider a "typical" questionnaire, the reader might take note that questions should cover personal life (for example: What are

your first memories? What do you see as the turning points in your life? Has your moment in history passed?); personal views (What role does the power of will play in history? What do you think of Milovan Djilas study of *The New* Class [1957]? Where is your country coming from and going to in a historical trajectory?); and political questions (What has been your role in history and participation in historical events?). In order to capture a more complete idea of how these types of questions can emerge in conversation, the reader may consult *Mexico Visto en el Siglo XX.*

In sum, methodology is at an early stage in the development of oral history. And there are problems to solve in finding ways to get at elitelore in any given country, let alone in cross-national terms.

[68] Interview with Antonio Diaz Soto y Gama, Mexico City, September 30, 1964. Don Antonio was a major advisor to Zapata.

[69] Wilkie, "Postulates of the Oral History Center for Latin America."

[70] Wilkie, "Alternative Views in History."

[71] For a full discussion see Wilkie and Wilkie, Mexico *Visto en el Siglo XX, pp. 3-18.*

[72] For one interesting attempt by a non-historian, see Walter 0. Weyrauch, *The Personality of Lawyers: A Comparative Study* of *Subjective Factors in Law, Based on Interviews with German Lawyers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, *1964).*

For methods of analyzing folklore, see Richard M. Dorson, "Current Folklore Theories," *Current Anthropology 4 (1963) pp. 93-112.*

Conclusion

In the definition of elitelore, five concepts are fundamental to an understanding of the term. First, the idea of lore has been chosen because it gives connotations of accumulated wisdom, legend, and tradition. It is the thesis of this study that self-perceptions of past, present, and future are integrated into a frame of life reference which is crucial to the understanding of how and why particular leaders have participated in unique historical events. As elites construct from their experiences a method of viewing the world, they tend to take for granted many of their own assumptions and ideas; seldom, even if they write autobiography, do they put on paper their life-history lore. The oral history approach offers methodology which is emerging to capture this elitelore.

Second, leaders operate with information systems which are incomplete. Because of the role played in any given situation, a particular leader will have more or fewer facts upon which to make decisions. Whether or not the leader understands what is happening in any instance, however, decision or actions must be made. The oral history interview is useful in finding out which leaders had facts which were closest to an understanding of events. With regard to "facts," although it is important to note that they may be considered only messages filtered through a changeable value system,[73] it is also significant that messages themselves interact with events to influence history and value systems. Also it should be pointed out that through selective use of information, one can "prove" anything one wishes, if in more or less sophisticated ways. In this manner, leaders not only use facts (generally by claiming to have more facts or information than do their followers or potential opponents for leadership) but also they may believe the facts with which they identify.

Third, in the world of ideas, wherein elites justify their position, they do not necessarily tell lies or act in bad faith to rally followers; instead, they may deceive themselves. Ego protection through self-deception is important to leaders who must play their roles with self-confidence. This is not a pessimistic view of man's ability to be objective; instead, it suggests that the leader's role is influenced by selective perception of events. The political actor may be seen as an individual

> living partly in a world of reality and partly in a world of make-believe, beset by conflicts and inner contradictions,: yet capable of rational thought and action, moved by forces of which he has little knowledge and by aspirations which are beyond his reach, by turn confused and clearheaded, frustrated and satisfied, hopeful and despairing, selfish and altruistic; in short a complex human being. [74]

Fourth, to understand elite culture (which is involved with the history of ideas), it may be argued that one must understand a major element of that culture, an element which may be termed elitelore. Political leaders often realize that if their ideas are to live beyond their own short lives, *the construction of myth about themselves may be necessary.* This is not to say that leaders act necessarily with a calculated desire for immortality; but just as they act from day-to-day to implant their ideas in the minds of other leaders as well as followers, they will have to build in propagandistic terms a case which will outlast them.

Although private self-criticism and self-analysis can be helpful, some leaders cannot engage in either without suffering disillusionment on loss of faith in their goals. Moreover, open self-analysis may shake the faith of followers; therefore it is unfortunately

clear why political leaders (or even some scholars) cannot always follow the scholarly scientific method of criticizing their own theories.

Fifth, it may be hypothesized on the basis of many interviews throughout Latin America that leaders do not act merely out of motive for self-profit and/or malice (as most political opponents might have us believe about each other) but that generally they identify the success of their cause (which reflects their eLitelore) with their own political success. If a man does not gain the power which will give him the life style necessary to accomplish a great deal in a short time, he will fail to accomplish his goals, however vague. With reason, especially a victorious revolutionary leader can justify the need for a score of servants, bodyguards, hide away retreats, automobiles with phones, helicopters, and jets. With the appropriate delegation of responsibility to advisors, secretaries, and aides, the leader can increase his "unique" efficiency, efficiency necessary to overcome the obstacles which impede implementation of his programs. In short, there is too much to be done by the leader, and too little time to do it all. Monetary power and sexual power become secondary (they are always available) in contrast to political power which is always a scarce commodity, especially for the leader who rises to higher and higher positions only to find that bureaucracies do not carry out or implement orders.

In Latin America it has been argued that personal politics generally play more of an important role than idea-oriented politics with specific ideological goals. I have suggested that in the case of Mexico such a conclusion is not really justified. A leader's aim may only appear to be vague to the outsider, yet within that society groups form, break up, and are reforged in the light of changing economic and social conditions - with support gained through informal ways which are often taken for granted by participants. (In the U.S., one also could argue that the goals of leaders are fuzzy, yet the experiments they develop in office may enhance their reputation - Franklin Delano Roosevelt inspired confidence in the electorate not because he knew what he was going to do but because he knew that he was going to take actions, even if many would be contradictory).
How are we to understand a leader's actions if we are not aware of his particular elitelore. Accepting the idea that gravitational pulls of information (as well as personal interest) bind groups together, it is important to find out how that information is selected in relation to the life histories of leaders whose biases and perceptions form a network for the perception of political activity.

The study of elitelore has certain advantages. Obviously the old debate in history is no longer relevant as to whether or not orally-transmitted views or attitudes taken for granted acre true or false. Because there is no final "truth," the best one can do is to approach reality by finding out which leaders had more knowledge or a better view of certain events. If experience conditions knowledge, knowledge in turn conditions actions, group identity, and generational outlooks. Since leaders are often groping for policies which will lead to the ideal society they would like to achieve, use of the directed oral history interview in the study of elitelore may well encourage leaders to analyze their actions in ways which they had not considered. If this be intrusion into the life of leaders, it is here argued that this does not distort the personality which is presented for posterity. And since leaders conduct experiments on the masses (often at great social cost and suffering), perhaps the scholar has a role to play in raising embarrassing questions.

The view presented here is that development of the term elitelore summarizes findings in biographically-oriented interviews conducted under the auspices of the Oral History Program for Latin America, and this view does not intend to offer a new type of research which is divorced from the use of as many types of sources as possible. It is important to note that the methodology discussed here does not claim to represent *the* answer to understanding history but simply one approach which has untapped possibilities for future investigation.

What is the future for the study of elitelore? In order to open new avenues of investigation, historians (and other scholars) have a duty to record the views of leaders so that years later biographers do not have to resort to the techniques used in such a work as Alan Bullock's *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (revised, 1960).' S Bullock, for example, has to suppose that since Hitler grew up in a certain era "perhaps" he read certain books. In non-political terms, for example, although it may very well be in the nature of the arts that unconscious symbols are as important (or more important) than symbols consciously expressed, "armchair" critics might well record the artist's views in order to examine the nature of creativity.[76]

With regard to the study of non-political elitelore, a field with which I have not dealt here, it would appear that a whole new dimension for research presents itself. To speculate upon such dimensions would go beyond the bounds of this study. Nevertheless, it may be noted that the work of Thomas S. Kuhn has major implications. Kuhn suggests that "scientific" knowledge does not evolve, but becomes part of the lore of intellectuals who have a vested interest in preventing their own knowledge from becoming outdated, thus requiring successive revolutions in the world of ideas."

In sum, if such concepts as elite culture, political biography, and ideology are to be understood, it is helpful to study elitelore through the use of oral history. This approach allows us to see how strategic elites perceive their role and actions as leaders in society. The term elitelore not only sums up the nature of the life-history interviews discussed here, but also suggests that in oral history interviews scholars might well concentrate on examining how views of personal and national history are incorporated into and mesh with outlooks and actions of leaders.

[73] See Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Image* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), pp. 6 and 14.

[74] Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, *Theories of Personality* (New York: Wiley, 1957), p. 72, quoted in Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization* (Chicago: Markman, 1969), p. 147.

[75] (New York: Harper), p. 25.

[76] With regard to important interviews with writers, see (a) Emmanuel Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas de la Literatura del Siglo XX (Mexico, D.F.: E;mpresas Editoriales, 1965); and (b) Luis Harss and Barbara Dohmann, Into the Mainstream; Conversations with Latin American Writers (New York; Harper and Row, 1967).

[77] Thomas S. Kuhn *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd rd., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

Appendix A.
Extended Study of Elitelore

In emphasizing above the value of recording the unique experiences of leaders in order to understand their past with the perspective of time, it is necessary also to note that study of elitelore may be extended to develop generalizations about life histories. Thus in addition to providing a new type of oral document which concerns understanding historical events, elitelore might be used, for example, (1) to formulate typologies of leadership through aggregate analysis of open-ended interviews;* (2) to develop the study of psychohistory through the interview method; and (3) to draw upon interviews for the construction of composite biography.

Whereas the first two involve social science methods, the last example is related to a humanistic approach to life history. Because the thrust of the present paper stresses the task of recording perceptions (which interact with and themselves influence historical events), this Appendix only is intended to be suggestive in nature.

1.

In treating leaders as sources for aggregate data rather than as sources for particular historical information, open-ended interviews might be examined in order to construct typologies concerning the empirical relationships between life history factors, personality characteristics, and leadership styles. Such methodology offers the advantage of developing structural analysis for what appear to be unstructured interviews."**

I. Areas of analysis.
Two judges read and become fully familiar with the transcript of each leader, seeking to understand and describe the leader's early background and trends in his developmental history. A second pair of judges analyze the transcripts in an effort to comprehend the

*With regard to discussion of methodology for analyzing open-ended interviews, I am indebted to Professor Kenneth H. Craik of the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, University of California, Berkeley. Professor Craik participated in the second meeting on Latin American Oral History, held in Berkeley on February 3, 1968, under a grant to the author provided by the Committee on Activities and Projects of the Conference on Latin American History.

**As noted elsewhere (see sources cited in notes 12 ands 13), in conducting open-ended interviews, it is advisable to permit discussion to flow naturally, with a check list kept by the scholar. As the conversation develops, the investigator can eliminate questions which are answered before they are asked, yet a record is available to remind the scholar what issues remain to be raised when the time seems appropriate as the interview progresses.

It should be emphasized that no interview can explore all aspects of any header's life-history views and that other scholars who utilize oral history interviews may lament the fact that key elements in their own specialized line of inquiry have not been developed.

nature and structure of each leader's personality. A third pair of judges review the transcripts in order to formulate the pattern and style of each leader's adult career. Judges work independently in rendering their descriptions.

II. Recording of descriptive judgments.

The judges responsible for describing the early background and development of leaders are provided with a deck of fifty 3 inch by S inch cards. Each card contains a statement describing a life history factor. Illustrative statements include: Personage (a) was interested in sports; (b) spent a lot of time reading; (c) was adventurous, daring; (d) was a sickly child; (e) engaged in solitary pursuits (see Jane B. Brooks, "The Behavioral Significance of Childhood Experiences that are Reported in Life History Interviews," [Berkeley: Ph.D. thesis in psychology, University of California, 1963]).

The judge expresses his formulation of the life history pattern of a given social leader by sorting the statements into five categories, according to the salience of each factor in the leader's early development and with the following specified distribution:

Category 1: Most characteristic	4 statements
Category 2: Somewhat characteristic	10 statements
Category 3: Neutral	22 statements
Category 4: Somewhat uncharacteristic	10 statements
Category 5: Most uncharacteristic	4 statements

Thus, the judge's task is to order the set of statements concerning life history trends in a configuration which best describes the relative importance of the factors in the early development of the leader.

This descriptive technique is known as the Q-sort method (see W. Stephenson, *The Study of Behavior* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953]) and has been fully described elsewhere (see J. Block, *The Q-Sort Method in Personality Assessment and Psychiatric Research* [Springfield, Illinois: C. C. Thomas, 1961]). The Q-sort method makes full use of the inferential judgment of trained observers, yet results in comparable, quantified descriptions. The method is idiographic, or "person-centered," in that it stresses the relative importance and configuration of elements for a given person, yet it also permits quantitative comparisons among persons or groups of persons.

As in the case of life history items, the pair of judges responsible for formulating a description of the personality of the leader render their descriptions by use of the Q-sort method, as do the pair of judges assigned the task of describing the pattern and style of leadership. Illustrative examples from the personality Q-sort items include: Personage (a) is a critical, skeptical, not easily impressed person; (b) is a genuinely dependable and responsible person; (c) is a talkative individual; (d) has a wide range of interests -superficiality or depth of interest irrelevant here; (e) behaves in a giving way toward others - regardless of the motivation involved (see *ibid.).* Examples from the leadership style Q-sort items include: Personage: (a) reflects upon his nation's historical development; (b) has a well-developed conception of his own role in history; (c) has a firm grasp of economic concepts; (d) believes in urbanization as a solution to national

problems; (e) fosters the values of rural life (developed from Wilkie and Wilkie, *Mexico Visto en el Siglo XX).*

The correlation between independent Q-sort descriptions of the same transcript by two judges provides an index of .inter-judge agreement. Preliminary analysis is required to assure the achievement of satisfactory reliability in the ratings of each transcript. Once reliable descriptions of a transcript have been obtained, two or more Q-sortings can be averaged to provide a consensus description based upon independently rendered, reliable judgments.

The correlation between developmental Q-sort descriptions of two leaders provides an index of the degree of similarity in the configuration of their personal backgrounds. On the same basis, the correlation of each leader's developmental Q-sort with that of every other leader yields a correlation matrix which can be factor analyzed to reveal empirically-based clusters or types of developmental patterns in leaders, established upon the relative similarity of their life histories.

The above possibilities for analysis of open-ended interviews offer several advantages. First, judgments often can be inferred from the interview as a whole if not from any specific question. Second, the creation of 150 Q-sort items covering the areas of life history, personality characteristics, and leadership styles would result in a Latin American Political Career Q-sort Deck. And third, this *full* Deck could be administered to leaders as an adjunct to open-ended interviews. Also, for example, it would be possible through the development of special instructions for the Deck to permit leaders, Latin American scholars, and U.S. investigators to answer the following type of questions, respectively: (a) How does a given leader's description of his own political career correlate with his description of the ideal political career; (b) How do Latin American experts describe the typical or model political career in a given region of Latin America or during a certain historical period? (c) How do the assumptions of U.S. investigators compare
to the views of Latin Americans?

A cautionary note should be taken into account by the reader. Because the design of such study involves, for example, crossnational validation of specific questions for Latin America (in relation to concepts already developed for other countries) as well as training of judges, development of the Q-sort method requires the *full* cooperation of qualified professional psychologists.

2.

If the study of elitelore through the Q-sort method requires expert assistance, the need for special expertise to develop psychohistorical oral interviews would appear to be equally necessary. Whereas some scholars, however, have argued that enough "theory" now exists so scholars do not need to have undertaken clinical training and/or undergone personal psychoanalysis (see Fred Weinstein and Gerald M. Platt, "History and Theory: The Question of Psychoanalysis," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 [1972] , p. 432),

this seems difficult to accept. To use with any authority the large body of theory which has emerged, it would seem that at the very least some special training is necessary. In developing one of the more important recent works in psychohistory which also appears to have relevance for study of elitelore, the historian Peter Loewenberg (UCLA) found it necessary, for example, to undertake; over five years of intensive study and personal analysis with the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute.

Writing on the role of generations in history ("Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort," *American Historical Review* 76 [1971] , pp. 1463-1468), however, Professor Loewenberg has noted that he does not see psychoanalytic explanations as being necessarily unicausal or incompatible with quantitative data. Whereas traditional psychological interpretations of political leadership have stressed origins in childhood emotionall traumata and relations with parents, Professor Loewenberg follows ideas of Karl Mannheim to stress life experiences, which subsequent to
childhood influences are of great importance..

> [Those] of a generation who experienced the same event, such as [World War 1] may respond to it differently. They were all decisively influenced by it but not in the same way. Some became pacifists, others embraced international Leninism, some longed to return to the prewar, conservative, monarchist social order, and [others] sought personal and national solutions in a violenceoriented movement subservient to the will of a total leader. What was politically significant in the early 1930s was the facility with which individuals of this generation moved from one allegiance to the other. Mannheim's point is that although the units of a generation do not respond to a formative crisis in the same way due to a multiplicty of variables, the overriding fact is their response to that particular event. Because of this they are oriented toward each other for the rest of their lives and constitute a generation (Ibid., p. 1465).

This approach would appear to be especially important for study in Latin America where leaders tend to see themselves as part of a particularly labeled generation, such as the "Generation of 1929." If psychohistorians were to develop some key questions which seek to explore unconscious motivations, one might be able to use the oral history interview to go much beyond generalizations currently taken for granted concerning the leader's conscious identification with his "generation". Thus it would be possible to relate a leader to his birth cohort - those born at the same tune who share formative experiences that condition later life.

Analysis of elitelore for psychoanalytic interpretation need not, of course, be limited to specially-designed interviews.*** One such example concerns the interview of a revolutionary Venezuelan student, by Professor Walter H. Slote (see "Case Analysis of a Revolutionary," Chapter 10, in Frank Bonilla and Josh A. Silva Michelena (eds.), A Strategy for *Research on Social Policy* [Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967]). In

***Cf. Paulo de Carvalho-Neto, *Folklore* and Psychoanalysis, translated by J. M. P. Wilson (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1972) for a work which considers traditional folklore materials in a Freudian context.

summarizing Slote's findings, Professor Frank Bonilla has written:

> It should be noted [that in] comparing roughly three generations (those who came to public life in the 1920's, in the early 1930's, and in the early 1940's) - no differences of any account emerged. That is, though one supposes that family patterns may be changing along with other social transformations, no strong evidence that this is the case is to be found in the childhood descriptions
>
> of leaders of varying ages. The clinical study of the young revolutionary, based on twenty to thirty hours of interviewing as against the four to eight hours of the conversations with elites, and who is at least a generation behind the youngest of elite**** respondents, also runs true for form. The mother emerges as a reasonable, loving person concerned with home and children, placating a father who is seen not as evil but as a distant figure with a propensity for violence, an unpredictable inclination to run out of control.
>
> The repressed hostilities generated by the culturally imposed idealization of these relationships break out repeatedly in the fantasy materials collected in clinical tests with that subject . . .. . There is some support here, then, for the idea that the pattern being explored is rather general and persistent in Venezuela, or at least that there may be within the society several pockets of such free-floating, politically charged motivation rooted in childhood or in current interpretations of childhood (see p. 125 of *The Failure of Elites* [Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1970] .

Needless to say, Slote's findings appear quite traditional when compared to the more innovative approach taken by Professor Loewenberg.

****In the context of the present book, the term is equivalent to "strategic elite".

Appendix B.
The Study of Popularlore

As noted in the text, the study of elites through their lore may cause some readers to wonder if the concept of folklore is not a logical counterpart of the term elitelore. The idea to be advanced in this Appendix is that such a comparison might be drawn in relation to a biographical aspect of folklore which has to date only been implicitly developed by a few scholars interested in life history of the common man. In short, this aspect of the lore of the people may be termed popularlore.

1.

In order to develop the study of popularlore, the investigator might consider the following line of thought. Whereas for some scholars the term folklore is defined as involving the collective soul or spirit of a people as seen through traditions invented by the folk as a whole and not by any social group,* for other scholars the term has undergone a change from the rural meaning fostered importantly by Robert Redfield." This changing latter concept may be used to justify the study of the lore of the people.

*See Paulo de Carvalho-Neto, *History of Iberoamerican Folklore; Mestizo Cultures* translated by P. Neutzer (Oosterhout, N.B.: Netherlands: Anthropological Publications, 1969); and *idem., The Concept of Folklore*, translated by J. M. P. Wilson (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970). Cf. the *twenty-one* definitions of folklore given in Maria Leach (ed.) *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* (2 vols.; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1949), 1, pp. 398-403; Alan Dundes (ed.), *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 1-3 ; and the study in Dundes' volume by Francis Lee Utley, "Folk Literature: An Operational Definition,: pp. 7-24.
**See Robert Redfield, *Tepoztlan: A Mexican Village; A Study of Folk Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).
***Definition here of "people" differs from that given by those who delineate the term by drawing an ideological contrast between masses and elites; see Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.), *Masses in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). For Horowitz (p. 25) the masses are seen as expressing universalistic interests for social betterment in contrast to the elites who are defined as representing social privilege and social injustice.

Thus through study of life history, scholars might draw important conclusions based on the urban as well as rural life of common men, whose individual stories have importance in their own right.****

2.

Though Robert Redfield originally associated folklore with his concept of ideal, rural "folk culture," first developed in his study of *Tepoztlan* (pp. 1-10), Oscar Lewis has shown in his restudy of the same village that

> The impression given by Redfield's study… is that of a relatively homogeneous, isolated, smoothly functioning, and well-integrated society made up of a contented and well-adjusted people. His picture of the village has a Rousseauan quality which glosses lightly over evidence

of violence, disruption, cruelty, disease, suffering, and maladjustment. We are told little of poverty, economic problems, or political schisms. Throughout his study we find an emphasis upon the cooperative and unifying factors in Tepoztecan society. Our findings, on the other hand, would emphasize the underlying individualism of Tepoztecan institutions and character, the lack of cooperation, the tensions between villages within the municipio, the schisms within the village, and the pervading quality of fear, envy, and distrust in inter-personal relations (Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951] , pp. 428-429.

****Perhaps as an outgrowth of the 1967 "Conference on Folklore and Social Science," Professor Richard M. Dorson (who did not like the idea of making a distinction between elite and folk) has endorsed the idea of tape recording life stories of the "non-elite, or the folk." Dorson, however, would label this type of personal history "oral folk history" ("The Oral Historian and the Folklorist," p. 46 in Peter D. Olch and Forrest C. Pogue [eds.], *Selections from the Fifth and Sixth National Colloquia on Oral History* [New York: Oral History Association, 1972]). Nevertheless, Professor Henry Glassie (and presumably Professor Dorson) see the role of the oral interview as focused on the person as a carrier of culture rather than upon "idiosyncratic ramble" ("A Folkloristic Thought on the Promise of Oral History," p. 56, in ibid.).
It is important to note that the concept of popularlore is potentially controversial. On the one hand, works which would not tend to support the development of such an idea include, for example, Catvalho-Neto, *The Concept of Folklore* and Utley,, "Folk Literature;" on the other hand, see L. L. Langness, *The Life History in Anthropological Science* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965); and Abraham Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society: The Psychodynamics of Primitive Social Organization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939).

An expanded dimension of these observations is provided in Lewis's oral history of Pedro Martinez's life in Tepoztlan *(Pedro Martinez; A Mexican Peasant and His Family* [New York: Random House, 1964]). In short, Lewis found that Redfield's rural culture was rooted in a value judgment that folk societies are good and urban societies bad. One of Lewis' major contributions to his studies or urban and rural life has been to show that folk society and urban society are not mutually exclusive terms. Howard F.y Cline ("Mexican Community Studies," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 32 [1952] , pp. 212-242) has noted that interpersonal relations are often more constricted in villages than in cities; and Richard N. Adams ("The Community in Latin America: A Changing Myth," *Centennial Review* 6 [1962] , pp. 409-434) has discussed the historical myth of the community in Latin America.

Redfield's concept of folk culture, in my view, stemmed from his incorrect assumption regarding the development of popularlore which he contrasted to folklore. Redfield assumed that in mass, urban society, literacy has resulted in the standardization of ideas for widespread consumption, and that in this popular culture all lore is written down. Therefore, he limited his influential definition of folk society and folklore to rural areas. Obviously, however, the folk also live in cities, and all of their lore has not, been recorded for posterity. *Ironically, also Redfield's so-called` popular culture" may be the culture of the middle classes.* See Oscar Lewis, *"Five Families; Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty,* (New York: Basic Books, 1959) for a description of the life of one middle-class family in Mexico City.

Lewis, then, took a step beyond the theorizing of George M. Foster, who sought to resolve the evolving problem of defining folk culture as Mexico's population became

increasingly urban. (The rural population of Mexico has declined as follows: 1910, 71.3%; 1921, 69.0%; 1930, 66.5%; 1940, 64.9%; 1950, 57.4%; 1960, 49.3%; 1970, 41.5%). Foster noted in 1953 that he was attempting to account for

> the troublesome question of the "folk" qualities found among the masses of preindustrial cities. In Latin America, for example, large segments of urban population are more typically folk than anything else. Oscar Lewis recently has documented the history of Tepoztlan families which have migrated to Mexico City (Oscar Lewis, "Urbanization Without Breakdown: A Case Study," *Scientific Monthly 75 [1952], pp. 31-41).* Far from fording a breakdown of former values, he finds that to a surprising degree Tepoztlan continues in the city. Families remain strong, he writes, and there is little evidence of disintegration, of abandoned mothers and children, and no more separation or divorce than in the village. Nor is there a significant cleavage in values and general outlook on life between the younger city-bred generation and the older country generation. Religious life is at least as vigorous as in Tepoztlan, though the forms are more Catholic and less Indian. The compadrazgo continues to play an important part in social organization, and popular medical practices of the country continue in vogue. It is difficult, of course, to tell to what extent the preservation of country values is a defense mechanism against the problems of the city which will rapidly disappear when a city-oriented outlook on life is achieved, but Lewis finds that families long established in Mexico City maintain the same country ties as those recently arrived (George M. Foster, "What is Folk Culture?" *American Anthropologist 55 [1953], pp. 169-170).*

In sum, Lewis' study of life history offers an innovative approach to analyze folk life, and it brought to culmination an anthropological approach begun by Paul Radin.

3.

Biography of the non-elite originally was developed effectively in socially scientific studies by Paul Radin. In 1926 he published *Crashing Thunder* (New York: Appleton) a full version of the autobiography of a representative, middle-aged Winnebago Indian which he had begun to publish in 1913. Though the Indian was ill prepared to formulate his autobiography, Radin carefully tried to prevent his own personality from impinging on the autobiography, and he attempted to be an inconspicuous observer. Thus, John bollard points out in his *Criteria for the Life History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935, p. 260) the limitation of Radin's *Crashing Thunder:*

> This autobiography should be taken as an inside view of the Winnebago culture rather than as a careful analysis of human life . . . there is very little attempt . . . at systematic formulation of the growth of a life.

Also, Radin faced problems of method in recording the Indian's words, for the taking of notes disrupted the conversation and disc recording was inefficient.

Oscar Lewis was enabled dramatically to overcome Radin's problems because he was able to use modern tape recording equipment to transcribe verbatim conversations with the Sanchez family in the slums of Mexico City *(The Children of Sanchez; Autobiography of a Mexican Family* [New York: Random House, 1961]); and because he

recognized that if he were to complete a really successful autobiography which could show life history, he would have to guide the interviews. In following up his investigation in Mexico with a study of Puerto Ricans in the slums of Puerto Rico and New York *(La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty* [New York: Random House, 1966]), Lewis created, perhaps, the most effective personal documents with which social scientists have yet worked, and he showed not only that the value of autobiography can be greatly increased with guidance, but that the biographical method reveals a lore among city folk which has been identified and often related to a "culture of poverty."

Lewis, a cultural anthropologist, did not set out explicitly to record folklore, but his biography is indeed bound up with the lore of the people. As one follows Lewis' characters, it is possible to learn the ethic by which they live and we see that their ethic provides the limits for their personal development. Here we have neither simply biography or autobiography nor folklore, but a combination which may be denominated popularlore.

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