> is a humorist who commits *chingaderas*, that is, unforeseen acts that produce confusion, horror, and destruction. He opens the world; in doing so, he rips and tears it, and this violence provokes a great sinister laugh . . . the humor of the *macho* is an act of revenge (1961:81).

"Whatever may be the origins of these attitudes," Paz tells us, "the fact is that the essential attribute of the *macho*-power almost always reveals itself as a capacity for wounding, humiliating, annihilating" (1961:82).

It is almost six o'clock in this evening outside of McBurg at what our host Chema likes to call his *rancho*, which amounts to less than one-quarter acre of dry, wholly undeveloped land with only a few mesquites to provide some shade from the hot south Texas sun. Chema bought the land, called "ranchettes" by local real estate agents, when he came into a little money from a worker's compensation settlement. He fell from a truck while doing farm labor for extra money. Massaging his lower back for the still lingering pain, he says "*El pínche abogado se quedó con la mitad*" (The fucking lawyer [Mexican-American] kept half). Chema's only real notion for improving the property is to build an inevitable brick barbecue pit, but until he can afford it, he will have to haul the portable rusty one on the back of his pickup out to the *rancho*.

A few more men have come with more meat and beer and a few have left, playfully taunted by the others "*Tiene que ir a reportar a la vieja*" (He has to go report to his old lady), knowing that eventually they'll have to go report to their "old ladies." The eating, drinking, and the talk are still thick, and *conjunto* polka music is playing from a portable radio, although later this will be replaced by guitar playing and singing of, on the one hand, *corridos* or Mexican ballads with accompanying *gritos* (cries) and, on the other, American tunes from the 'fifties such as "In the Still of the Night" by the Five Satins to which everyone will sing a cacophony of appropriate *sho do be do be doos.*

One of the men keeps insisting that he has to go; with equal insistence he is told to have another beer and to make a taco out of the very last of the cherished delicacy, *mollejitas* (glandular organs), but he is particularly insistent because his kids need to be picked up at the movies where, we discover, they have been watching Steven Spielberg's *E.T.—The Extra Terrestrial.* Octavio is almost ready to leave when Chema, our host and ranch owner asks him: "*Aye, 'Tavo. Sabes como se dice 'E.T.' en espanol?*" (Hey 'Tavo, do you know how to say E.T. in Spanish?) Before Octavio can even try to reply, a grinning Chema answers his own question correctly by saying, "*Eh Te*" but he is also holding his hand over his genitals and gesturing twice with it as he pronounces the two syllables. *Eh Te* does of course mean E.T. in Spanish, but it is also the way a toddler might pronounce *este* (this one), dropping a consonant "s" but meaning *this or this one* as in *este papel* (this paper). In saying *Eh Te* and with his double gesture, Chema is calling attention, particularly Octavio's attention, to his penis—this one. But things get better . . . or worse, as the case may be. Chema continues his interrogation of Octavio: "*Y, como se llaman los dos hermanitos de E.T.*?" (and, what are the names of E.T.'s two little brothers?).

Chema demonstrates the answer with another genital double gesture, this time answering his own question with the Spanish *Eh Tos*, again exploiting the baby play language pronunciation of *estos* meaning *these*, referring, of course, to *these two* meaning his own testicles. Everyone, including Octavio, is laughing and all of us cannot help but look as Chema does his gestures and baby talk, and he isn't through yet. "And what," he asks, "is the name of E.T.'s mother?" This time, however, Octavio who has obviously been conducting his own ethnography of this speech act, beats Chema to the answer with his hand at his crotch, loudly and triumphantly proclaims the answer, "*¡Mama Eh Te!*"; this time, Octavio has exploited the original *este* (this one) and he has also exploited the charged ambiguity of *mama* in Spanish, which, depending on accent and syntax can mean "mother" or "suck." Laughing with the others, Octavio finally makes his way to the movie *E.T. or Eh Te* to pick up the kids; Chema is shaking his head and laughing and complaining about all of the meat juice he has managed to rub all over his crotch.

By seven or eight, more people start dispersing, a few latecomers arrive, a fire has been started, and one of the guitarists sings the "Corrido of Jacinto Trevino" about a brave south Texas Mexican who shot it out with the Texas Rangers in 1906 in the town of Brownsville just down the river from McBurg (Paredes 1976). Finally, thinks your ethnographer, I get some real folklore of resistance and not all of these *chingaderas.*

For at that moment, some years ago, I am troubled, at least intellectually, by what I have reexperienced, having gone through such events several times in my life in south Texas but also in a few cantinas in Monterey, in Los Angeles, in Mexico City. Are Ramos and Paz right when they speak of sexual anxiety, of wounding, and humiliation? Are the *chingaderas* "unforeseen acts that produce confusion, horror and destruction" amid a "great sinister laugh?" And, at that time it did not help to have reread a recent anthropological study of such south Texas male humor specifically in this area near McBurg in which Joseph Spielberg, also a native south Texan, concludes that this humor "can be characterized as verbal aggression aimed at another when he is most vulnerable" by his "own lack of discretion in bodily functions, social circumstances or by revealing his sentiments." In the tradition of Ramos and Paz, Spielberg also believes that "the principal theme of this humor" is "humiliation" (1974:46).

These discourses troubled me then for they did not speak well of these, my people, and perhaps, they do not speak well of me, for, frankly, although with some ambivalent distance, I had a good time that Saturday afternoon and have had a good time since.

I had indeed gone to racially and structurally dominated southern Texas in 1981 looking for a folklore of resistance, carrying in my head the examples furnished by Genovese, by Gutman, by E. P. Thompson and George Rudé and ultimately by Gramsci. I found instead a powerful sexual and scatological discourse—part of a greater Mexican working-class folk tradition, but a tradition I saw as delegitimatized by the powerful authoritative intellectual discourses of Ramos and Paz and in