

# ZERÓDEGREE CULTURE, THE GOLDEN CHICKEN, IMPACT AT THE MOUTH OF THE WELL AND OTHER SCANDALS \*

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## IS THE CHICKEN THAT LAYS GOLDEN EGGS GOLDEN? AND OTHER CHICKEN & EGG STORIES

Since 1987 I have been conducting ethnographic research on the tourist apparatus of Chichén Itzá and the nearby Yucatec Maya town of Pisté (Castañeda, 1991, n.d.b.). For those who are unfamiliar, the modern ruins of the ancient city is a critical attraction within the regional tourist industries and Pisté is the service/support center of this site. Although, at times, my research and the analysis here may seem to resemble a community study or a case study, they should actually be construed as a critique of such studies. In particular, the research

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\* *Acknowledgements:* There are many friends, colleagues and teachers to whom I want to express my deepest gratitude for their impact on my life, thinking, and work: Jorge Klor de Alva, Gary Gossen, Bob Carmack, Richard Leventhal, Antonella Fabri, Carmen Morales V., Maria Elena Peraza, Luis Vazquez Pasos, Alfredo Barrera Rubio, Sergio Quezada, Salvador R. Losa, Mario Ruz, Carol Smith, David Freidel, Juan Luis Bonor, Miguel Bojorquez and Dulce Ramos of CECIJEMA, Oswaldo Yam Puc, the deceased Eraclio Olalde, Jaime Puc, Hilario Yam, the Briceños (Ruben, Hilario, Concho), Edy Garrido, Dr. Eduardo Coeto, Lic. Miguel Angel Vergara, Yolanda and Pepe Pat, Rey Mis, Gina Puc, Eva Tus, all of the INAH employees at Chichén and their families, and the members of the Comité de Lucha. In particular, I want to give a special heartfelt thanks to Carmen Varela for her professional guidance and friendship, without which this contribution would not be. Research was funded in 1985 by a Chris DeCormier Fellowship (I.M.S.), between 1987-1988 by a Fulbright Hays Training Grant (022AH70016), between 1988-89 by a National Science Foundation Dissertation Grant (BNS 8716015) between 1988-1989, and in 1990 by a grant from CECIJEMA. Institutional affiliation with the Centro de Investigaciones Regionales of the U.A.d.Y was graciously arranged by Luis Vazquez.

topic I have just mentioned provokes –and no doubt has provoked in the reader’s mind– the question of tourist impact: *What is the impact of tourism on this town, Pisté?* This is a question that is conceived within the concept of community; that is, it is formulated on the presupposition that a community is an objectively discreet entity composed of an inside and an outside. Thus, tourism comes from the outside, and penetrating the human, material, and spatial boundaries of the community, it transforms the interior of this imaginary object. I show the error of this scenario, by providing a genealogy of this question as it has been posed with regard to Pisté. And, as is well known, this history involves archeology, U.S. philanthropy, Mexican nation-building and Yucatec Socialism.

Recall that as early as 1930, the same year that Barbachano opened the Hotel Mayaland, A. V. Kidder justified the restoration of Chichén Itzá by arguing that the Carnegie Projects would create a «Mecca of Travel» (Kidder, 1930: 99; cf. Sullivan, 1989: 76-89), that is, a **monument of the modern science of archeology** that would be a **monument for tourism** in the guise of a *Museum of Maya Culture*<sup>1</sup>. Years later a first class scholar would warn us that, «Hay que evitar que conviertan las ruinas en un “Disney World”» (Kurjack, 1989) and that we must protect these ruins or the «chicken that lays the golden eggs» of tourist dollars. Certainly, Chichén is that chicken –or Chicken Pizza, as tourists sometimes say– however, it must be remembered that this Golden Chicken is a *modern artifact* of archeology, an invention of a modern science.

These are issues that must be thought thoroughly through, especially as many of my archeological colleagues are conducting research in direct or indirect relation to the *Mundo Maya Project* (see Castañeda, 1992a, 1992b). Thus, my analysis is offered as a kind of case-study of one situation that can be used as jumping off point for a discussion, both general and localized, about the complicitious roles of anthropology, nation-building, tourism and Indigenous communities.

## POSTMODERN SCANDAL: PISTÉ AS ANTIPROGRESS

While generations of Maya scholars can easily picture Chan Kom in their mind, I think very few indeed have any knowledge or image of a town some 20 kilometers to the north, called, not Chichén Itzá, but Pisté, which is 2 kms to the west of those modern ruins of an ancient city. Pisté, unlike its neighbor, has not entered into anthropological memory and its imagination of culture<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, it

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the State and Federal Governments of México and Yucatán permitted the Carnegie, under the directorship of S. G. Morley, to excavate Chichén because they imagined the restoration to attain other objectives, specifically the formation of a class ideology among the Yucatec Maya and the consolidation of a nationalist community. This definitely enters into the story here, but must be kept in the background due to considerations of space (See Vazquez, Pasos, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> The absence of reference to the town in the title of this paper indicates its insignificance to

has been erased from the ethnographic *mappimundi* through which anthropology plots its classification of socio-cultural forma to proper space-time localities via contesting theoretical operations. Pisté represents zero-degree culture.

Those who have an interest in 19th century travel writing may recall brief passages that describe Pisté just before the author-traveler spots the towering stones of the Castillo. For example, Le Plongeon, Charnay, Maudslay, Maler all briefly note the desolation and destruction that the Caste War inscribed on and in this town. Morris Steggerda, a Carnegie anthropologist, who studied quantitative issues in Pisté<sup>3</sup>, contributes to this discourse of depreciation with his own statement:

During my observations in the village, I have never seen any evidence of hobbies among the men. No one carves stone or wood; no one is interested in learning to play a musical instrument well; no one has made a collection of archeological material... No one seems to feel the need of such diversion. It is true that the women care for flowers under all the adverse conditions of Yucatán, and they do embroider tablecloths and dresses purely for enjoyment. But there is an apparent lack of interest, as far as the men are concerned, in most forms of recreation. There is no tendency among them to form clubs or organizations. Pisté has no band, although it might well have one considering its size. There are no outstanding leaders, priests, ministers, or doctors. In 1933 there were two yerbateros, but accusations of witchcraft forced them to leave the town. The town is not particularly religious, being indifferent to Catholic and Protestant and, apparently, to the remnants of its own Indian beliefs. (Steggerda, 1941: 24-25).

This is a description, not of a *community*, but of a *town*, a geographic space in which the social life of the inhabitants is so apathetic and minimal that there is hardly a trace of that magical attraction and cohesion that makes human groups a society and that distinguishes such hordes from the world of nature. Here, to invert the sense of MacCannell's phrase (1992), is an «empty meeting ground»<sup>4</sup>. This town –*as depicted in the ethnographic record*– is in such contrast to that «village that chose Progress» that it seems even to lack that totemic or animistic attraction that constitutes an elementary social form. Yet, this town, is an economically thriving «community», not simply, of subsistence Maya farmers, but of Maya proletariats, semiproletariats, petty entrepreneurs, Chinese-Korean migrants, Lebanese merchants, ex-hacienda Maya, Mexican chauffers, Yucatec mestizos;

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both theoretical elaboration and the ethnographic record. My title, then, is evidence for my argument as I enact that which is being analyzed here, which is how the community of Pisté is imagined as zero-degree Maya culture.

<sup>3</sup> Among the topics researched by Steggerda were milpa production, animal husbandry, anthropology, and assorted demographic-genetic issues.

<sup>4</sup> MacCannell uses this term to conceptualize the transformations of social encounter which goes by the name of postmodernity. He offers postmodern, modern, exprimitive as the new continuum of socio-cultural types. I suggest that Pisté is outside, beyond and against this typology as it is anomalous and contradictory to Redfield's Continuum; thus, if forced to make a cube fit a circular slot, Pisté would be *anti-* or *post-exprimitive*. The discussion below elaborates this comment.

besides the beginning of religious pluralism, there was economic diversity represented by medium sized landholders with cattle, a match factory, road building and construction work, a chicle trade, corn mills, professional transporters of tourists and merchandise, two hotels, and a factory of knowledge at Chichén. One might think this is an urban center, yet this Town of **400 (!)** Indifferent and Apathetic inhabitants lacks those well known diagnostic traits of Urban Modernity (alienation, anomie, fragmentation, individualism, conflict, enlightenment) as much as it lacks the Culture of Maya Folk. Nonetheless, Steggerda, in his notes and ethnography, describes local dances, sports, bull-fights, and other ritual of sacred and social life which characterizes village as distinct from urban life: Here, then, is a non-folk folk characterized by non-alienated alienation and non-anarchic anarchy in a context of non-urban urbanism. Can we not call this town, if only tentatively and with irony, *postmodern*?

Considering *just one sense* of that vehemently debated term (that of *anti-* or beyond modern) and the emotional fervor it provokes (danger), the epithet fits. Pisté is (and names) a social reality that the anthropological imagination cannot locate nor categorize. Rather, it does so, but between Nature and Culture and betwixt the ideal types of Culture as theorized in modernist typologies of social forms: This is an *anti-community*, *community* of zero-degree culture <sup>5</sup>. As such, Pisté, as understood and represented by Carnegie anthropology, embodies anomaly, danger, pollution and even scandal. In another place <sup>6</sup>, I elaborate on the danger it poses not only to the categories of Redfield's model but his theorization of Culture. Instead, I focus here on the scandal that Pisté represents for the Carnegie Institution. Pisté was a danger and Steggerda the vehicle of that threatened the image of «Carnegie» —referring not only to the Institution in Washington with that name but the philanthropic goals and enterprise of Andrew Carnegie: The C.I.W. imagined itself as the standard bearer of Progress, the harbinger of *good* Modernity. Redfield's publications on Chan Kom were no doubt well received by the Carnegie since they legitimized its duplicitous scientific-politico/economic interventions <sup>7</sup> in Yucatán by disguising them in the image of the Benevolent Modernizer, whose presence at Chichén naturally motivated the Folk Community to build a Road to the Light which was the Carnegie Project at those modern ruins. While Andrew Carnegie built libraries for U.S. cities, his Institution of Washington not only constructed a museum of Maya Culture (as if it were an ancient city), but

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<sup>5</sup> Of course, this assessment is itself a theorization of Pisté within and according to the framework that I use. Although my statement implies the contrary, I do not consider this post-structuralist framework to be *postmodern* or postmodernist theory. I concur with Huyssen (1990) on thinking of the relationship of poststructuralism and postmodernism.

<sup>6</sup> See chapter four in a forthcoming book (Castañeda n.d.a.).

<sup>7</sup> See the very useful work by Patterson (e.g., 1986) that begins to chart the political and economic underpinnings, agenda and contexts that situate U.S. archeology; in this vein he provides the historical contexts of the Carnegie Corporation and other major U.S. foundations, such as the Smithsonian. The contributions in Helm (1984) offer a general departure on this theme as well, if

wrote the test (inscribed in both stone and volumes of books) that are stored there in that *theatre of memory* (Yates, 1966). In the darkness of the Yucatec jungle, the Carnegie brought enlightenment and Chan Kom cultivated this Progress<sup>8</sup>. In contrast, Pisté registered no improvement, no progress, no impact: Only zero-degree culture can be measured in Pisté.

## A MEASURED «POSTMODERNITY»: THE SCANDAL OF ZERO-DEGREE IMPACT

April 3, 1939.  
Mr. W. M. Gilbert [Administrative Secretary]  
Carnegie Institution of Washington.  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

Relative to our conversation of a few days ago, dealing with the money spent in Pisté, may I quote a paragraph from [the draft of] my [forthcoming] manuscript:

«In 1924 Carnegie Institution rented the *Hacienda* at Chichén Itzá as headquarters for its investigators. *Naturally, this had its effect on the Pisté population...* the Institution paid to Maya laborers an average annual sum of [blank space], most of which was paid to the Pisté inhabitants...»

I quote this paragraph in order that you may know the effect that I think the Institution has had upon the inhabitants of Pisté. If you can supply me with a figure for the space I left blank, I would be glad to have it... If you think this is not expedient, I, of course, will change the text relative to this point<sup>9</sup>.

[Signed Morris Steggerda; italics added.]

On April 6th, in response, the Bursar provided Mrs. Harrison, the Carnegie Editor, with the requested: The total sum paid *in local wages* by Sylvanus G. Morley, Director of the C.I.W. sponsored Chichén Project, during this eight year period between 1927-1934 was \$80,703.93 or a *yearly average of \$10,087.93*.

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from a wider purview. Hinsley (1981) traces the history of the Smithsonian in relation to the politics of incorporating North American Indigenous groups; in a later essay (1984), he offers only a brief comparison to the Mesoamerican situation. Lagemann (1988) has made a study of the political economy of the Carnegie Corporation which has aided my thinking on the issues discussed here.

<sup>8</sup> Throughout *CHAN KON REVISITED*, Redfield mentions the «Road to Light» in reference to the road built by Chan Kom (via the enforced community labor tribute) to facilitate communication with the Carnegie Americans at Chichén and the «light» of a Cultivating Modernity. Thus, chapter VII is the «The Road to the Light» (Redfield, 1950: 139-154) which is Progress itself rooted in a metaphor of travel. The libraries that Andrew Carnegie commissioned were required to have the adage, «Let there be Light» engraved over the entrance; this Biblical saying was also the title of the first chapter to Mathew Arnold's 1869 book, *CULTURE AND ANARCHY* (Lagemann, 1989: 18).

<sup>9</sup> This letter and the other correspondence cited below are located in the archives of the C.I.W., which I was graciously allowed to research in summer of 1986.

The least amount spent in any of these years was just over \$4,000 for 1934; the greatest amount was over \$15,000 in 1927 and again in 1932 <sup>10</sup>.

Four days after the initial request for information, the administrative secretary, Mr. Gilbert answered Steggerda:

The data now in hand concerning cost of labor at Chichen between 1927 and 1934 indicates *great variation* in amounts and in number of men employed in various years. It seems to me that a better way of stating your case might be the following, or something like it:

«The Institution employed the services of a large number of *natives* [sic] as laborers, sometimes as many as fifty or more being engaged for season, and most of these men were Piste inhabitants. In addition the Mexican Government employed many of Piste's men in work of restoration at Chichen Itzá. The large amount of money paid in wages for such service, most of which was probably spent in Piste, did not *materially change the mores of the community*».

If we were to try to arrive at an average for annual expenditure it would probably be between seven and eight thousand dollars. In some years, however, it did not amount to more than two or three thousand. Of course, this is entirely your party. I have taken the liberty of expressing a possible form of statement only in order to put my thoughts on the subject concisely. Sincerely yours. [Signed by W.M. Gilbert on April 7, 1939: italics added.]

Is this not a curious, if scandalous, dissimulation and passing-of-the-buck? First, no figures were requested, tabulated, presented or relayed concerning the number of workers under Morley. The Proposed Budget for 1925 proposes a wage labor expense of \$10,000+ for a troop of a hundred, divided into about 80 excavators («tram-men, day laborer, etc.») at 75¢ a day and 20 masons at \$1.00 a day;

<sup>10</sup> The figures are as follows:

Year:	wages spent:	Estimated of Workers:
1927	\$ 15,902.50	159
1928	7,357.79	74
1929	9,745.56	97
1930	11,496.78	115
1931	6,388.98	64
1932	15,319.47	153
1933	10,251.25	103
1934	4,241.60	42

The estimated number of workers was **not supplied** in this letter, but is my own calculation based on the 1925 and 1927 Estimated Budgets for the Chichén Project. See discussion below.

The letter (see Edwards, 1939) is addressed from Mrs. Walter M. Edwards, although Larry W. Edwards is the signer above the former name. This person/s was, apparently, the Bursar. For a reason unknown to me, it is addressed to Mrs. William H. Harrison, who is identified simply as «Editor» of the Division of Historical Research.

It is also worth noting the explanatory or qualifying text that *follows* the data: «The figures are

this does not include the 10-15 persons who for 18 years composed the house staff of the Hacienda (among whom were Chinese-Koreans, Maya and both Mexican and Yucated mestizos) <sup>11</sup>. Thus, budgets of \$4,000 and \$15,000 correlate to approximately 40 and 150 laborers, respectively, calculated on an average \$100 per worker (skilled and unskilled) for four months of work: Considering that Pisté had a population ranging from 300-400 inhabitants, this represents between 10% and 25% of the total population, or virtually all of the men of town for most years. Yet, Gilbert suggests that Steggerda mention on more than 50 as the usual number of workers, that is, from half to a third the actual figure. Second, the Secretary of the C.I.W. deploys and suggests Steggerda use a tactic of distraction that sloughs off some of the responsibility: The Mexicans were also there! They also hired Maya and are, therefore, at fault —«don't forget!» Third, Mr. Gilbert sidesteps the question with obfuscation. He tells Steggerda that in essence the accounts are so confusing(!) that it is just not possible to really know how much money was spent. Certainly, Steggerda assumed (and so should we) that the Carnegie kept (and keeps) precise financial records of their monies —how could they not? How then could the message not be other than that this is a delicate and dangerous issue. Imprecision is the recommended path: «Do not mention any numbers, not even the deflated and misleading figures we give to you to assuage your concerns.»

Why did the Carnegie directorship feel it necessary to dissimulate —not only to the world, but to its own researcher— this situation of *zero-degree impact*? There is powerful assumption and moral framework operating here: Pisté **should have progressed**. The town **should** have *cultivated* the American presence; **should** have *improved* is standard of living with a «wise» investment of wages earned; **should** have *reformed* its indifference into a naturally forward looking, cohesive, and holistic community. But, «Pisté did not». Or so asserts one Carnegie scientist. Here is the scandalous, if revised, paragraph, published in 1941 by the Carnegie, that attests to the anti-progressive indifference of the town:

In 1922 a new road between Dzitas and Chichen Itza was begun under the administration of Felipe Carrillo Puerto... the new highway gave Pisté, for the first time,

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based on Chinese as well as Indian labor, in accordance with your request.» Here is one of those tell-tale traces (or «post-modernity») that indicate just how weird the sociological situation of Pisté was perceived to be: What are *Chinese* doing in a *Maya* village?! Similar exclamations —which correlate to the surprise that the Native owns a T.V., a radio, reads the newspaper, etc. (see Hervik 1992 for an example— are scattered among the other Carnegie documents pertaining to budget (proposed and actual) and other extraordinary encumbrances.

<sup>11</sup> There was a Chinese cook, a Mexican chauffeur, a Yucatec mestizo as Head Foreman, while all the houseboys, gardeners, wash-women, and miscellaneous laborers were Maya. This information comes primarily from the 1924, 1925, 1925 reports for which this breakdown is documented. Later years eliminated the detailing of this and all other expenses; a flat, uncalculated sum was merely reported.

free access to the railway. Two years later Carnegie Institution rented the hacienda at Chichen Itza as headquarters for its archeological and other investigations. During the eight-year period between 1927 and 1934, when excavation and repair work were at their height, the Institution employed per season as many as 50 Indian and Yucatecan laborers, mostly from Pisté. The Mexican government also engaged many Pisté men in its restoration at Chichen Itza. *The large amounts of money paid in wages, most of which was probably spent in Pisté, did not materially change the mores of the community.* People continued to cultivate their cornfields and to eat the same kind of food as they had before. A few effects, however, were noticeable. The number of horses probably increased in that period, or rather, they conspicuously decreased after the Institution activity ceased. It is possible also that more Maya women wore gold chains, although no actual count was made. No automobiles or house luxuries were purchased, nor was extra food for the table observed, and I believe that *by 1938 the temporary effects of the money influx were completely obliterated,* (Steggerda, 1941: 11; italics added.)

Pisté, in a secret opposition to Chan Kom, is truly, then, the topos and trope of *antiprogres*. Even the construction of a road—which is the Euro-Yucatec symbol par excellence of the intrusion of Modernity and the diffusion of its Light into the Primitive Darkness of Other Folk—does not here cultivate Enlightenment in Pisté. There *should have been* «enlightened change», which in the discourse of the Carnegie, Redfield and Arnold, means/*equals/is* Culture: There should have been Culture here. Instead, there is only zero-degree impact and (or «on» a) zero-degree culture.

But, can we buy this assessment as easily as did the Carnegie Directorship? No. First, it must be made very clear that Steggerda never conducted any systematic research on the topic of impact, whether in material or ideational terms. There is no before and after study here on the impact of the Carnegie whether in qualitative or quantitative terms—which, by the way, is also the case with Redfield's study of «change» in Chan Kom. In other words, there is ample grounds on which to protest the validity of Steggerda's opinion and to rethink the Carnegie impact, which I do in my conclusion. In fact, Steggerda's research only corroborates the lack of community and the lack of impact because **he did not study Pisté as a community** but as a town «containing», as it were, subjects to be measured, weighed, and dated according to their birth, menstruation, birth-giving, and death; whose productive activities could be quantified so as to be rated for efficiency; or whose personality traits could be measured by standardized test of U.S. psychology. The title of the book, *MAYA INDIANS OF YUCATAN*, keys us in on the fact that this is not a study of the socio-cultural bond and bonding of a group, but of disparate dimensions of a category of individuals.

Second, Steggerda's opinion is based on a very widely shared assumption about the causal relations that constitute society. It is an assumption that undergirds not only the paradigm of acculturation as stated by Gillan at the beginning of



this paper, but the spirit of capitalism, the ethic of Protestantism, the ideology of missionary work, the legitimation of imperialism, the logic of philanthropy: Contact with Money (or: Civilization, Knowledge, True God, Television, Road, etc.) triggers an automatic and contagious change in Value (or: Mentality, Culture, Tradition, Community, Ritual, Belief). Ironically, while decades of Marxists or materialists have not been able to prove this equation, it remains a popular truism held by non-Marxists when debating acculturation or culture change in the relationship between Western Society and its Third and Fourth World Others. In other words, the debate about whether such change is «good» or «bad» only presupposes the validity of the premise. Thus, Pisté takes the form of a danger (given my analysis) because it does not enter into the debate either way; it does not substantiate the terms of the debate.

But, is not this thesis also the dominant idea that most people in the world have of tourism? Tourism as a subject of conversation immediately provokes the question: What is the *impact of tourism* on the Culture-Community? The scandal Steggerda reveals, the scandal of Pisté for the Carnegie, is the ineffectualness of the Carnegie reason for being, if not the error of the premise of matter determining mind. For us, here, it should reveal the inadequacy of explanations based on this assumption of causality. And, it leaves us, in the final section of this paper, with the problem of how to think impact and how to formulate the question: After all the dramatic tourist impact on Pisté is so readily available to the **casual** view of tourist, anthropologist, and government agent. But, is this presupposed «impact» *caused* by tourist and tourism? Is there really an «impact» in the first place?

But, before addressing these issues, I add another comment on zero-degree impact. The real scandal here is not at all the white lie told to Steggerda by the directors of the Carnegie, but the dissimulation of an ethic of knowledge that is necessarily a politics of science. It is that same ethic of scientific intervention that Paul Sullivan (1989) has already brought to light in his account of the conversations between Cruzob Maya and S. G. Morley. The scandal here is the dissimulation of a highly charged moral and political agenda that passes **and is disguised** as the *objective, neutral, and value-free* collection of «facts» and «truths». The scandal, I argue, is not that what we hold to be objective and neutral is actually not: There is a politics to all knowledge. And, here, we should recall the wider contexts and objectives of the Mexican and Yucatec State Governments in their contribution to the building of the modern ruins and the maintenance of that Golden «Chicken Pizza». There is a complex and complicitous politics to all knowledge. The scandal, as I see it, is that we continue to *conceal* the intricacies of this politic. This scandal is also **an error**, for that politics is not extraneous to either the object of study or social scientific method, but it is part of the object, it is that which constitutes the phenomena as an object and thus must be a part of the method that makes the study of that object science.

Allow me to translate these rather bold statements into an operational

agenda for research. All of us who are now working in the world of the Maya must recognize and bring to light the various ways in which our own research articulates the politics of knowledge that goes by the name *MUNDO MAYA*. We are inventors of Maya Cultures, traditions, Civilization: not, of course, by ourselves, but in conjunction and collusion with a multitude of other agents, from Maya such as the famous don Eustaquio Ceme or workman who dig our test pist, from governmental agencies to N.G.O. Instead of ignoring, forgetting, concealing, avoiding the myriad ways in which these agents intervene or that we solicit their intervention, *we need to document* the social and political web of practices through which the Maya are invented as communities, Cultures, anti-cultures, oppressed classes, true spiritualists that can heal the world, kinky, kings, rourist sights, archeological objects, ethnographic manikins, folkloric displays, and so on <sup>12</sup>. We need to reveal our own complicity in the production of the mystery of the Maya, especially now in the context of the *Mundo Maya*. I do not suggest that an archeologist, instead of getting on with the excavation, analyze the politics of their archeological research. But, it is important to document it as much as possible in field notes and other records. In this way, our individual blindnesses can be illucidated by those others who are devoted to such analyses.

## MEASURING IMPACT

What, then, is the «impact» of the Carnegie and Mexican archeological research on Pisté? How can it be measured, if it exists? And, finally, what might be the impact of tourism that is not already the result of archeology or always an «aboriginal» trait? While this is not the place to decipher the heterogenous ramifications of tourism or archeology on Yucatán, much less on the *anti-community* of Pisté, a few comments can nonetheless be offered in that direction, but only if the reader keeps in mind that I, like Steggerda before me, did **not** conduct research on the question of «impact».

In stark contradiction to the judgement that got the Carnegie goat, is Steggerda's own description of a bustling economy in Pisté. In his generalized description of material life, he mentions economic transactions, such as the increased purchase of horses, iron implements for household use (p. 16) and gold jewelry, which suggest very wise investments in Maya, but not middle class anglo-american, terms: It may be hard to imagine, but no automobiles, household luxuries, or *extra* food were purchased! He mentions that several cantinas,

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<sup>12</sup> See Castañeda (n.d.b.) for an analysis of the invention of Maya Cultures at the Equinox Event of Chichén Itzá. The cover article of *Time Magazine*, 1993, concerns changing perceptions of the Maya. The new archeological and epigraphic interpretations of Maya kingship and war are a top news story because it teaches a lesson about the «troubles» in Bosnia. This is not a fortuitous politics of knowledge, but exemplary of the invention of the Maya according to a field of contesting agents and interests.

general stores, cooperatives, corn grinding mills, two hotels, an incipient tourist «taxi» service, a general transport or «trucking», a match factory, and a gasoline «stand» were all part of Pisté life during the 1920s and 1930s. Given this array of economic diversity and experimentation, Pistéleños, quite unlike the «progressive» folk of Chan Kom, enjoyed extensive *economic freedom* and the *entrepreneurial mentality* to explore a variety of commercial activity. Remember that the «great schism» in Chan Kom was both a religious and an economic conflict, one that resulted in expulsion of Protestant entrepreneurial families who migrated to Pisté<sup>13</sup>.

Why was this entrepreneurial activity perceived as anarchic, zero-degree indifference of an anti-community and not the cultivating culture of Progress? A complete or at least satisfying answer must necessarily critically compare the ethnographic situations and reports of these two towns; but for the moment I focus attention to one part of the answer which has to do with the relative «freedom» of Pisté over Chan Kom. There was no one, not a single «outstanding» individual or natural leader, in Pisté who was commandeering the ideological self-imaging of the community *nor* its economic resources. No scarcity of resources, no cacique or socialist politics and no ideological camouflaging of unequal distribution of surplus value. I suppose that the economic boom made individuals and the collectivity content and not very concerned with either the politics of the day or the perceptions of American scientists: This economic wellbeing and contentedness with their situation was perceived as indifference and apathy, which in turn was identified with the category of anarchy and thus the absence of culture. No culture and no impact.

But, what then could be the impact of tourism starting in the 1970s? It is altogether too easy to assert that tourism transforms peasants into proletariats and transforms a peasant world view into a capitalist spirit and ethic. Certainly, the multiply authored invention of a tourist industry in Pisté and Chicén *did not transform peasants into petty entrepreneurs*. Many of these Maya Pistéleños by the 1960s were already predisposed in their individual and group world view to wage labor and commerce as my re-reading of Steggerda suggests. We might even speculate that this predilection can be traced to a historical difference generated in the 19th century when Pisté was a booming town linked to a cattle hacienda: Can this predilection be associated with the way these Maya linked their fate to the *Yucated mestizo* world, which was why this town got targeted again and again by the military campaigns of the Cruzob Maya? Perhaps not, but what we see once again is that Pisté was an anomalous community of zero-degree culture even for the 19th century, but whose alterity is ahistorically attributed, in the present day, to tourism.

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<sup>13</sup> Redfield (1950) gives a slanted account of this conflict. But Goldkind (1965, 1966) offers an excellent reinterpretation of his data. Also see Strickon (1965) for a historical critique of Redfield and Josep (1980a, 1980b) on Yucatec *caciquismo*.

In what other way might there have been causal chain reaction between money and mores? Did the economic boom of archeology (and then of tourism fifty years later) trigger a change in religious belief and practices? And, could this triggering be called «impact»? No. Whatever changes in this arena must first consider the historical conflict of Protestant and Catholic Churches, the economic bases of agricultural rituals, and the dynamics of the evangelical Protestant sects, such as the Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal, Mormon, and Presbyterian Churches, all of which are up and running in Pisté. On the other hand, one might suppose that the presence of the rational scientists diagnosing Maya Civilization might lead to a secularization of Maya self-conceptualization, at least in the town of Pisté. Certainly, an additional way of Maya self-imaging has been created through anthropology, but this is not a measurable event or entity. And, it is not «impact» but a question of the appropriation and manipulation of discourses as tactics and strategies of self-definition.

What might be possible to assert, as Steggerda himself suggests, is that there was an «impact», no in ideational, but in material terms; and, furthermore, it was only a negative of inverse impact. He observes that «the number of horses decreased» when Morley and the archeologist —which was *after* the completion of his own research in 1939! Given the robust economy of Pisté, it seems that the «real» impact was the *economic depression* that was no doubt began in 1940 by the permanent departure of the americans and Mexicans, which meant the closing down of the factory of knowledge at Chichén Itzá: The chicken stopped laying its *silver* eggs. But, even this assessment is off the mark, since the condition of the local economy in the 1940s and 1950s has as much to do with other factors of regional, national and global dimensions as with this. In any case, in the time between the archeological invention of the modern ruins (1940) and the development of a local infrastructure capable of handling mass tourism (1970s), Pisté prospered in and of its own agency in terms of a «traditional» Maya town devoted to the usual economic pursuits of a rural community of maiz-cattle producing zone.

What then could be the «impact» of archeology —and later of tourism? Certainly the fates and economic vicissitudes of individuals cannot be attributed to the determining «impact» of archeology or of tourism. Where else might we look to find this postulated effect? Afters, the construction of a tourist attraction by the hands of Maya workmen guided by Mexican and american archeologists irrevocably altered Pisté as a social space; in turn, this necessarily transformed the individual and collective lives of its inhabitants. But, the effects seem so profound and generally diffused as to be unmeasurable and not amenable to the imposition of a one-way causality. It cannot even be said that archeology caused the development of tourism at Chichén and Pisté; rather the fact that private capital took advantage of this situation is a contingent event. An easier argument to make is that the «impact» of tourism is the increased investment in archeology or,

at least, archeological sites. Remember that from the 1930s on, tourism was already a part of Pisté and this complicates the economy of the town in way that did occur for Chan Kom or other towns, such as Tinum. This fact pushes us to think that there was a tourist/archeological impact unique to Pisté. Still, if we consider that an uncounted number of persons, continued their association with archeology as they were hired again and again to work, for example, at Palenque and Dzibilchaltun, or came to staff the INAH section of restoration, then the ramifications diffuse throughout the whole region. From this angle there is no inside or outside here that would constitute an entity to be impacted and, thus, there is no «impact» but an interconnected series of contingent ramifications.

This assessment becomes clearer when trying to chart the history of the community in terms of class composition, political leadership, political factions and economic groups. The least questionable assessment that I can make is that the seeds of an emergent rural middle class were planted on a diversified household economy. That is to say, some families, a few well known, invested their earnings and the skills they acquired through archeological work into diversifying the bases of their household economy, either in small businesses or small landholdings for large milpa production and animals; they sought education for their children and, later when the opportunities arose, sought occupations in the service and knowledge sectors of the local economy. since local politics was controlled by factions based in agricultural production, the economic power of this class was not translated into political power until the late 1970s within the context of developing tourism and only through an alliance with other factions whose economic bases are rooted in the service sector of the economy.

At this point some might adamantly identify «impact» here as the diversification of local businesses (including hotels, restaurants, general stores, etc.) so as to serve the tourists visiting Chichén. But, I would suggest that this is confusing the product with both the production and the producer. This is not so much the result of tourism, but that which produces and sustains tourism at the local level. By the same token, the distribution of economic benefits from the influx of tourist dollars does not «impact» the town, that is, *cause a change* in the community, instead, the socio-political and economic organization that became emergent in the 1920s-30s is consolidated and re-entrenched by this distribution. But here we return again to another tale of chicken and eggs: The circuits of causality are much more complicated in actuality than can be conceived by the notion of «impact». What this suggests and what I have been trying to argue is that we must definitely abandoned this notion from our thinking and instead use more flexible ideas that outline the complicity of agents and ramifications.

In a final note, however, I would like to mention a current event that is unquestionably **condition** but **not** the necessary result of the intervention of either tourism or archeology in local life. Beginning in 1989, some five months after Gilberto the Hurricane visited Yucatán, the town of Pisté was able to overcome

ist intensely conflictual factionalism and organize a political struggle to attain the juridical status of a *municipio libre* or, barring that, the Municipal Capital of the County to which it does pertain (see Castañeda 1991, n.d.c.). Seventy years after the Revolutionary Constitution granted communities this right to become independent counties and fifty five years after the village of Chan Kom chose this road to progress, Pisté finally chose to cultivate itself. The Indifference of Pisté finally converted –can I say ironically, under the «impact» of tourism?– to Culture. In other words, the grid of state control had finally inscribed itself within the community and had eliminated that zero-degree bliss of anarchic indifference. The elimination of (relative) economic and political freedoms once enjoyed by Pisteleños finally forced the citizens to seek greater insertion into the apparatus of the nation-state. But, this «impact» is also zero-degree. In actualizing their political struggle, the Pisté leadership had the opportunity to shape their movement as an ethnic or cultural politics, that is, they had the choice to ally themselves with a Maya politics of identity movement lead by Gaspar Xiu Chacon. Instead, they chose to distance themselves from that conflict. They chose instead a strategy of zero-degree culture, In ist struggle, Pisté represented itself not as a Maya community in protest, but as a zero-degree cultural community of «100% PRI-istas».

Meanwhile, the state, under the governorship of Maria Dulce Suari, began to decorate itself with Maya rituals and petitions performed by *h-meen* or technicians of the sacred. It seemed, at least to a small degree, that the Yucatec polis began to re-imagine itself as a Maya Theatre State or to reinvent itself as the legitimate heir of Maya Civilization. Here, we can say with Redfield, is Progress. Might this be the real *impact* of tourism?

To suggest that westerners, especially ranking politicians of a modern nation-state, **and not the natives** of a fourth world, are *impacted by tourism* points out the eurocentrism of the idea of impact. Instead, it makes more sense to understand these putative effects as contingent practices and events that contribute to the creation of tourism.

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