In the Museum of Maya Culture

Touring Chichén Itzá

Quetzil E. Castañeda
"This extraordinary book offers a new way to do and to write anthropology, and indeed a new way to read it. Castañeda employs the best of recent postmodern theory and writing conventions to put the text in multiple contexts that he explores by intensive ethnographic fieldwork in Yucatán and in other fields of power and meaning in which anthropology and anthropologists are relativized along with Mayans and tourists, and the author himself. The results are a pathbreaking account of how anthropology constructs and quite literally reconstructs its subjects and itself."

Michael Kearney, University of California-Berkeley

"In the Museum of Maya Culture interrogates the science and the art of ethnography. At Chichén Itzá, Castañeda raises the ethnographic mirror to field work as a privileged way of knowing and calls on anthropologists to confront the transnationalism inherent in their portrayals of Mayan culture. His analysis offers a fresh look at the 'invention' of culture and the politics of science and development."

Kay Warren, Princeton University

In this innovative study, Castañeda argues that notions of "impact," whether of tourism or of anthropology, are inadequate to comprehend the ways in which Maya culture is known, represented, and experienced in the everyday worlds of tourism, anthropology, and Maya society. Instead of "impact," Castañeda contends that the invention of the Maya as a culture derives from the historical complicities between Maya peoples, anthropological practices, tourist businesses, regional politics, nation building, New Age spiritualists, and international relations between Mexico and the United States.

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In the Museum of Maya Culture
Touring Chichén Itzá

Quetzil E. Castañeda

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Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

_In the Museum of Maya Culture: Touring Chichen Itza_ by Quetzil Castaneda
Lynn Stephen


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In the Museum of Maya Culture: Touring Chichén Itzá is a cleverly written, deeply probing "archaeology" of the physical, rhetorical, textual, symbolic, and cultural creation of one of Mexico's premier archaeological and tourist sites. The book also highlights the role of Chichén Itzá in the creation and maintenance of "Maya" civilization in anthropology, tourism, nationalism, and the transglobal imagination of "the primitive." At a deeper level, author Quetzil Castañeda's concern is with how cultures are "imported, exported, deported, transported, reported across cultural topographies." He implicates anthropology and anthropologists as part of cultural espionage that involves networks of power incorporating research foundations, governments, museums, science, capitalism, and regional power struggles.

The "rediscovery" of the "lost city" of Chichén Itzá by John J. Stephens (the U.S. diplomat to Yucatán and Central America) in the mid-nineteenth century, followed by the signing of a contract between the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the State government of Yucatán, and the federal government of Mexico in 1921, marks the beginning of not only a monolithic archaeological and ethnographic research project, but also the construction of a life-sized scale-model replica of Chichén Itzá as itself—"hyperreal" in the words of Castañeda. This physical reconstruction and reinvention of Chichén Itzá, Castañeda argues, is the foundation upon which Mayan studies, regional tourism, and ultimately a plenitude of identities both local, national, and even international (in the form of Anglo-American Mayan wannabees who sojourn at the site) have all constructed their own realities of "pure" Mayan culture as a contrast to whatever it is they are contesting. On the other side are the inhabitants of Pisté—locals from a Mayan settlement that has become the antesala, or waiting room, for visitors to Chichén Itzá. The community abuts the site of the "lost city" of Chichén.

In a delightful rhetorical move, Castañeda contrasts the artisans, vendors, sometime farmers, and sellers of tamales and Coca-Cola of Pisté with the urban-folk continuum communities made famous by Robert Redfield and Alfonso Villa Rojas, such as Chan Chom, "the village that chose progress." In his historical and current description of the inhabitants of Pisté, Castañeda describes them as having "zero-degree" culture, according to Redfield's scale. Although a succession of foundations, archaeologists, and other outsiders have intervened in the community throughout the century by employing them more or less as the "hired help" who create and maintain the site of Chichén Itzá, only recently has it occurred to anthropologists and others to worry about the "impact" of tourism on the community. Castañeda deftly dispenses with the utility or even the validity of the concept of "impact" by showing the ways in which the creation and re-creation of the archaeological site have been part and parcel of the development of the community. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the "zero-culture" community of Pisté comes together for a short time to fight for independent political status as the 107th "free county" or municipio libre, in the state of Yucatán. The advantages of "free county" status are access to more resources and increased political capital. Reluctant to participate in a regional, independent, pan-Mayan movement focused on identity, the practical citizens of Pisté went for a political strategy. They temporarily aligned themselves with an adviser who has connections to the ruling party in Mexico City to try to get the president to personally take on their cause. This strategy ultimately failed, and the intricacies of local politics take over as the movement falls apart.

Castañeda's book is a refreshing mix of cultural studies and political economy. Though the first half of the book is over-
theorized in spots, the second half has several chapters where Castañeda's wit and intellectual creativity abound. In chapters on New Age spiritualists (both Mexican and American) visiting Chichén Itzá during the equinox, a discussion of the struggle over the relocation of vendors and the establishment of a new tianguis or market, and his final chapters on the movement for municipal independence, he writes himself into the narrative, bringing together cultural, political, and economic dimensions of the stories he tells and his position in them.

My favorite passage is his description of urban mestizo Mexicans from the capital city who have formed an Azteca spiritualist group. As one of them descends the steps of a pyramid during an official equinox ritual (consisting of state-sponsored musical presentations, followed by "the phenomena" in which the steps of the pyramid form the shadow image of a servant as the sun sets), he is confronted by the head custodian of the site, and several police officers and boy scout leaders. Two other, competing spiritualist groups are also holding "illegal" rituals. The attempts to curb their activities rile tourists, who complain that they can't see. The "Azteca" spiritualists then lead the crowd in a chant of "Mexico," alternating between Spanish and Aztec pronunciations. This unifies the entire group, tourists included, and the tension subsides. Castañeda analyzes this scene as the "transculturation of cultural forms in which Mayan notions, visions, and styles of time become hybridized with Western modes of historical representation of the Maya."

In another, equally compelling passage, where he discusses how locals in the market have labeled him a government spy because he is always writing things down, Castañeda writes one of the most honest and searching descriptions of the power relations inherent in carrying out ethnography, stating that "espionage is constitutive of our disciplines."

In the Museum of Maya Culture is a rich, multifaceted book that will appeal to a wide range of readers: It is a gem in cultural studies, offers much in the intellectual history of Mayan anthropology, and can be read as a study of the archaeology of knowledge. Not least, it is a pleasure to read.


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Writing a clear and concise book on twentieth-century hermeneutics is no easy hermeneutic task. The subject matter is rich, but complex and abstract; its European inflection is foreign in more ways than one to an Anglophone audience. Exegesis of this material is bound to pose interpretive challenges of the highest order. How have Charles Pressler and Fabio Dasilva handled a project that even in its conceptualization required an act of intellectual courage?

Sociology and Interpretation is a tour through the main European contributions to hermeneutics in this century. Proceeding from the plausible axiom that "interpretation is a central aspect of human life," the authors examine a range of approaches to its analysis, notably those of Max Weber, Alfred Schutz, Karl Mannheim, and Max Scheler, and those typical of "contemporary trends," namely the "positivist interpretation" of Emilio Betti, the "humanist" interpretation of Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the "critical" interpretation of Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas. A final chapter sensibly rejects the Procrustean attempt to integrate the various perspectives into a "metatheory of knowledge," and opts instead for a modest description of the "nodal points" at which all interpretative theories appear to converge. These include a focus on consciousness, on dialogical context, on conflicting systems of signification, and on language. Particularly welcome in a book of this kind is the inclusion of writers like Betti and Scheler, who are poorly represented in comparable texts.

On the positive side, then, we have a book with an important topic, a defensible structure (though why Betti is more "contemporary" than Schutz is puzzling), and a credible choice of theorists to consider. Potentially, it could have stood as a worthy "rival" to Zygmunt
Review: [Untitled]

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"strategies" that reflect local cultural, economic and religious factors. She points out that these strategies neither simply reproduced dominant culture or reproduced a static local culture, but rather could be seen as "adaptation in the face of changing [economic and social] circumstances" (p. 153).

Chapters 8 (The Politics of Schooling) and 9 (Everyday Life at School) describe the relationships between parents and teachers and between children and school personnel that Reed-Danahay observed at the Lavialle school during parent-teacher meetings, in the classroom, on the playground, and in the lunchroom. Three cases of overt confrontation in parent-teacher disputes documented by Reed-Danahay shed light on the parental ideologies that drive "everyday forms of resistance." For example, Laviallois parents are shown successfully opposing the teachers' requirement that children help to clean up in the lunchroom. Since the rationale (that helping to clean up encouraged cooperation and responsibility) was hardly inconsistent with local values, we can read this event as an open "flexing the collective muscles of the commune" (p. 182) that emphasized that the teachers and staff were public servants. In the chapter on Everyday Life, Reed-Danahay shows that children both actively and passively resist the "hidden ideological curriculum" of the school. They do so by drawing on some of the comportments taught and valued in local life. For example, despite classroom practices that emphasize competition and the child as an individual learner, children adopted strategies of cooperative behavior among peers. They helped each other out, made sure their work conformed to that of others, turned to other students for help, used a generic "on" (one) instead of the first person pronoun "je," and whispered despite their teachers' disapproval.

Because of their ethnographic depth, the evidence for "resistance" in these last two chapters is very persuasive, rather more so than in the more historical chapters. The notion of covert, or "everyday forms of resistance" (James Scott 1990, Domination and the arts of resistance) has been very provocative. It has been a useful shorthand for anthropologists who wish to emphasize that domination is never complete; humans never completely lose their ability to construct alternative meanings even within the most totalitarian systems. However, the use of "resistance" has also come under fire (Susan Gal 1995, "Language and the arts of resistance"), mainly because of the difficulties involved in deciding exactly what to count as resistance. There are many acts, after all, that are not in themselves either resistant or compliant but can be intended and understood by social actors as either one or the other. While these intentions are teased out persuasively in Chapters 8 and 9, there are times when they are not transparent, as in the description (p. 108) of first communion as part of a "defensive strategy of resistance to the state's efforts to control socialization." Maintaining local religious rituals certainly is a strong alternative set of practices and values to those promoted by official state school ideology, but given the high percentage of Catholics in France, it may or may not be seen by families as a deliberate act of local "defense." Even if "resistance" is occasionally too strong a term for what is going on, Reed-Danahay convincingly demonstrates the way that national institutions and ideologies are shaped by local cultures just as much as the other way around.


Reviewed by JAMES E. TODD
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This historical ethnography provides a refreshing perspective on the strategic relationships among anthropology, tourism, and Maya culture(s). In a profound effort to investigate the "invention" of Maya culture in Yucatán, Castañeda's "Guidebook to the Archaeology of Chichén Itzá" is a palimpsest: each chapter sets out to reveal a layer of a complex stratigraphy of discourses, texts, practices, histories, and events which (re)constitute and (re)invent the space and place of the archaeological site of Chichén Itzá. The result is an outstanding intellectual work that broadly uses postmodern and literary theory in order to give the reader tours of the many cultural inscriptions which comprise the "museum" of Maya culture at Chichén.

Castañeda argues that Maya culture, anthropol-
ogy, and tourism are not homogenous entities. Instead, they share an interdependent history of collusion and complicity, which has allowed them to perpetuate. This guidebook, then, serves as an ethnographic map to present the numerous possible analytical approaches — or “departures” (p. 2) — to these intersections of discourses and practices, through history, theory, and autobiography.

By examining the history of the production of anthropological knowledge surrounding Yucatán, Castañeda illustrates how the “rediscovery” (p. 5) of the “Maya” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to the area becoming the “target of massive scientific intervention” supported by both the U.S. and Mexico. After extensive investments by the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the Mexican government, the “scientific laboratory” (p. 6) of Yucatán and Chichén Itzá paved the way for the institutionalization of Maya studies in conjunction with the establishment of tourism activity. Castañeda argues that because the relations among anthropology, tourism, Maya societies, and governments have shared the common ground of complicity and collaboration, it is ridiculous to ask whether tourism has had an “impact” (p. 9) on the people of nearby Pisté and other villages. Instead, Castañeda challenges us to understand historically how anthropological practices and discourses have invented Maya culture and civilization according to our epistemological predispositions. This invention has contributed to the production and maintenance of the tourism industry in Yucatán. However, the Maya themselves are active agents and subjects in this invention process, whether as informants, workers, or “culture-bearers” (p. 8), and their participation in this invention process has also been critical. The task for Castañeda, then, is to provide an analysis that helps to show how anthropological and tourism practices and discourses are related to the politics of identity, not only at the local level of Pisté and Chichén, but at regional, national, and international ones as well.

Castañeda’s theoretical approach primarily owes a debt to de Certeau, and secondly to Foucault and Derrida, as emphasis is placed on doing an archaeology, genealogy, and deconstruction of Maya culture at the museum of Chichén and the town of Pisté. Operating within the dual assertion that “culture is text” and “text is culture,” and that cultures are both invented and continually reinvented, Castañeda is able to contextualize anthropology’s role in Maya cultural imagination. He uses de Certeau’s notion of a scriptural economy to discuss, or rather imagine, how Maya culture is (re)inscribed, (re)lived, (re)embodied, (re)imagined, and (re)invented in the contexts of various economic, social, political, and historical vehicles at Chichén Itzá. Castañeda goes on to note:

What seems to me to be at stake is the problem of culture, not only as a practical issue but as a theoretical/critical question in relation to modernity: What is the invention of culture (in the register of truth) and the culture of invention (as an economy and technology of the real)? The analytical problem, then concerns the circuits by which culture travels. How are cultures transported, imported, exported, deported, reported across topoi (i.e., the textual spaces of discourse and ethnographic localities)? As it — culture, that is — traverses landscapes of imagination, how does culture constitute topographies, by which I mean the multiply contexted differentiation and mapping of space into socio-geographic units of identity, belongings, and power? Also, how do topographies shape and constitute culture(s) as these imaginary communities traverse space (p. 18; emphasis in original)?

Consequently, this critical ethnography focuses on three strata: the history of the economic and political processes that have constructed the landscape of Chichén and Pisté (that is, the historical mapping of the topography); the question of how the Maya are invented as culture in the daily operations of the museum, and how this strategy is related to the inscription and production of knowledge at Chichén; and how the tourist apparatus and everyday touristic activities (re)constitute the site of Chichén as one of cultural contestation and (re)invention. The reader finds that the Museum of Maya Culture is not just displaying, deciphering, and textualizing, but is indeed continually (re)inventing and (re)producing knowledge and culture (that is, “culture-as-lived” and “culture of” (pp. 16-17) the Maya).

This guidebook — just as the museum — is therefore one part of the scriptural economy that Castañeda is trying to describe. It is necessarily self-reflexive and autobiographical in terms of placing both anthropology and Castañeda as subject/object entities (and non-entities) of investigation, for they are both part of the larger power scheme which produces, interprets, constructs, and (re)invents Maya culture as a subject/object of knowledge. Consequently, we find Castañeda calling for a critical-analytical-reflexive approach toward (historical) ethnography — one that would relatively situate our position(s) as ethnographers and research subjects. This becomes very apparent in Chapter 8, “Panopticon as Tianguis,” where he discusses his role through the
engagement of fieldwork. Here he is making another sophisticated ethnographic move: instead of seeing the production and emergence of cultures as a mere dialogical process, Castañeda suggests that the idea of dialogue should be discarded for *complicity* and *collusion*, since the inscription of cultures always already occurs within an interconnected social field criss-crossed by multiple series of economic, social, political, historical and even cultural vectors (pp. 16-17; emphasis in original).

Throughout our tour, we visit the historical emergence of Písté and Chan Kom in anthropological discourse and intervention and the historical positioning of the tourism apparatus as Písté and Chichén. We also visit, envision, and imagine Chichén Itzá through the discourses and practices of tour guides, artisans, vendors, Mayas, New Age spiritualists, Aztec revivalists, tourists, archaeologists, anthropologists, maps, and exhibits in the space and time of the Museum.

The complexity of this book cannot be expressed in the space of this review. Though many Yucatec Maya scholars may express difficulty with the theoretical and methodological implications of this work, I believe that Castañeda is helping to lead the way toward new and exciting opportunities for Maya studies. Castañeda’s efforts, informed by post-positive intellectual movements, underscore a need for Maya studies to acknowledge its role in the production of knowledge. The discourses and practices of anthropology and other social sciences are inherently implicated in the transnational history of tourism and the invention of culture in Yucatán. In the *Museum of Maya Culture* is truly a brilliant endeavor, and one that should spark debate for years to come.


Reviewed by DOROTHY L. HODGSON
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In our relentless search for theoretical guidance in understanding “culture,” the central conceptual cornerstone of our discipline, cultural anthropologists have long looked to other analytic realms and disciplines for insight. By counterpoising “culture” to ecology, personality, history, or now, “power” and “place,” we have tried to not only define the nebulous contours of what culture is by exploring what it is not, but sought, more importantly, to understand how culture is produced, reproduced, and transformed. As part of this pursuit, contemporary anthropologists have turned first to history (think, for example, of the important volume *Culture/power/history* edited by Nicholas Dirks, Sherry Ortner, and Geoff Eley), and more recently to geography for assistance. The widespread appeal of geography’s conceptual apparatus is revealed in the plethora of spatial metaphors — landscapes, spaces, places, maps, displacement, global, local, to name just a few — in recent titles in anthropology.

*Culture/power/place* is a landmark contribution to this current theoretical trajectory in cultural anthropology. The anthology reprints, in revised versions, the ground-breaking theoretical essays (by Lisa Malkki, John Borneman, James Ferguson, Lisa Rofel, Akhil Gupta, and Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson) which first appeared in a 1992 special issue of the journal *Cultural Anthropology* dedicated to the theme of space and place in anthropology. Since their initial publication these essays, especially those by Malkki, Gupta, and Gupta and Ferguson, have become pivotal to current rethinkings of the relationship between culture and nation, territoriality, identity, difference, transnational processes, and power. The additional seven essays in the volume (some of which, like Kristin Koptiuch’s, are also reprinted versions of published articles) complement, enhance, and complicate the themes raised in these earlier essays (all of the pieces were originally presented at three panels for the American Anthropological Association annual meetings). The volume therefore has a theoretical coherence and depth rarely found in edited collections, for which the editors, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, should be commended.

Two themes organize the format and contributions of the volume: issues of culture and space, and the relationship of culture and power. As Gupta and Ferguson argue in their introduction and in their article, ideas of place have always been implicit in cultural theory. The terms may be the territorially cir-
In the Museum of Maya Culture: Touring Chichen Itza.

Review Author[s]:
Andrew Sackett


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"The problem is to understand and explain the articulation between three different series of sociocultural entities," Quetzil Castañeda writes, "Maya culture(s), anthropology, and tourism" (p. 4). The intersection of these figures—Maya, anthropologist, and tourist—in the contemporary Yucatec Maya town of Písté and the ruins/tourist complex of Chichén Itzá is the focal point of Castañeda's "Guidebook to the Archaeology of Chichén Itzá" as he theorizes a set of three questions: What is the history of the political and economic processes that have constructed the landscape of Písté/Chichén? How is "the Maya" invented as a culture in the daily operation of the tourist sight/site? What is the apparatus that orchestrates everyday touristic activities and constitutes the place of Písté/Chichén as a site of struggle?

In attempting to answer these questions, Castañeda has written a historical ethnography that approaches them circuitously, as data, analysis, history, and ethnography intersect and mix in his study. He breaks down the artificial division between the present-day village of Písté and the ruins of Chichén Itzá, seeing them as connected parts of a complex whole, and analyzes them as such, through discourse and text in part 1, and through practice in part 2. The first part examines the history of anthropological intervention in Yucatec Maya communities, dissects the results of tourism in Písté, looks at the Carnegie Institution's Chichén project and scrutinizes academic (and other) Mayanist discourse. The second part is an ethnography of power in Písté/Chichén as spaces of tourism. Castañeda maps touristic practices, both spatially and through time. He then analyzes the sale of handicrafts, guiding, and his own fieldwork and the role of late-twentieth-century anthropologists in local power relations. Doing so, he clarifies the relationship between local politics, investigative ethics, and the appropriation of "Maya" culture.

By approaching the site of Chichén Itzá in conjunction with the community of Písté and explicitly recognizing the short- and long-term complicity and responsibility of anthropology in constructing both the immediate environment for the consumption of "Maya culture" and the larger touristic discourse around that image of Maya culture, Castañeda moves far beyond the typical anthropological/archaeological literature. Rather than contemplating hieroglyphics or the Cenote of Sacrifice, Castañeda's post-structuralist concentration on the "(re)invention of an Other, specifically, the 'Maya,' through the production of knowledge about this entity in (a range of) everyday practices within the tourist complex of Chichén Itzá and the dissemination of such knowledge" (p. 10) refocuses the academic gaze on the idea of "the Maya," and the economic, social, and political implications of this idea on the people of Písté.

The most effective section of Castañeda's project is that which is based on the author's ethnographic fieldwork in Písté/Chichén, roughly chapters 5 to 9, particularly the analysis of guiding and the sale of handicrafts. The historical component of his
study—particularly his discussion of the anthropologists Robert Redfield and Morris Steggaruda and their work in the 1930s to 1950s—is a much-needed revisiting of anthropology’s past. Parts, though, are not as well developed as they should be. For example, the actual process of reconstructing the physical site of Chichén Itzá, the naming, building, and actual construction of the ruins—the environment where the studied activity is taking place—is far too brief.

This type of writing on tourism in Mexico is still fairly new. Castañeda’s study is far longer, more complex, and more sophisticated than, for example, Pierre Van den Berghe’s 1994 The Quest for the Other: Ethnic Tourism in San Cristóbal, Mexico. Van den Berghe’s work, though, attempts to get at the consumption of tourist site/sight through ethnography among the tourists—an element that is strangely absent from In The Museum of Maya Culture. In such an intricate analysis as Castañeda’s, the one-dimensionality of the tourist population is surprising.

The prose is often convoluted, even difficult to understand, but In the Museum of Maya Culture raises provocative questions about the process of ethnography, the creation of tourist sites, and the complicity of national and international anthropologists (and other academics) in local power relations. Castañeda’s thoughtful work is a “guidebook” that should be consulted by those who are interested in the politics of culture, anthropology, and tourism.

ANDREW SACKETT, Yale University

Mexico’s Hidden Revolution: The Catholic Church in Law and Politics since 1929.

According to Peter Lester Reich, historians assume that Church-State tensions pervaded all of Mexico during the 1930s and that President Lázaro Cárdenas deserves the credit for finally easing these tensions. Reich counters that eye-catching conflicts were insignificant compared to the sub-rosa creation of a Church-State “modus vivendi.” He demonstrates that cool-headed statesmen were not the sole architects of accommodation, but that clerics deserve at least as much credit. Together, government and Church created a system in which anticlerical legislation was ignored or evaded, “extremists” were suppressed, and both institutions benefited from mutual ideological support.

Reich’s argument is convincing and prodigiously documented, often utilizing heretofore unexplored sources. Reich begins by tracing the history of Church-State collaboration in Mexico. He then develops a three-stage chronology involving the 1929 “arreglo” ending the Cristero War, the subsequent resurgence of tensions around such issues as numerical restrictions on clergy and “socialist education,” and the creation of a full-blown modus vivendi between 1935 and 1942. He then examines the process in particular subregions, arguing that the same processes of compromise were at work everywhere. Finally, he briefly considers the role of the lay organization Acción Católica.
Creating Culture Through Choosing Heritage

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Castaneda’s In the Museum of Maya Culture, Hodder’s The Archaeological Process, and Tilley’s Metaphor and Material Culture are attempts to redesign archaeology completely. The theme that drew me to these books is the fluidity of the relationships between people and their culture. People in many circumstances are now seen as choosing their cultures. This has of course been going on at an unconscious level, in the name of historic preservation and culture resource management, in the United States for years, but we thought that it was guided by accuracy and science. Now we know that it is guided by class, power, and ideology. We are also coming to know that elsewhere in the world many archaeologists and ethnographers have described the arbitrariness and the politically situated nature of our common and long-standing practices—our discoveries. Hodder, Tilley, and Castaneda make it clear that culture is no longer justifiedly seen as inherited, discovered, and described by anthropologists—that its history shows it to be a metaphor hiding as much as or more than it illuminates.

Hodder’s The Archaeological Process is a sustained, clear, accessible text that reveals his originality and his secure grasp of what archaeology is and how little we understand it, particularly as it is enthusiastically embraced worldwide. He attempts here to provide a constitution for archaeology. His book only looks like an introductory text; it is in fact a serious reintroduction to archaeology for practicing professionals. It is written not for freshmen but for men and women who are interested in freshening their old training in science with the meaning of their experiences on any dig anywhere.

It has some naïve moments and some rather too relativist moments, but then there is a moment of striking maturity (pp. 160–61):

It is naïve, wrong and dangerous to believe that an epistemology can guard us against misuse of the past. “Truth” will not protect us from “politics.” Neither objectivism nor relativism nor any other philosophicalism can stand for social and moral evaluation of political uses and abuses in archaeology. Misuse of the past can only be evaluated socially and ethically. As members of society we make ethical evaluations of the use to which epistemologies are put in the service of politics.

It is my opinion that in the present historical moment of global information capitalism and post-colonialism, a dialogue between diverse perspectives on the past is needed in a morally and politically aware archaeology. We live in a plural and multivocal world. This is not the same as saying that we live in a relativist world if by that is meant that we cannot make judgements between the claims of different groups. The difference between plurality and relativism is that the former refers to the rights and dignity of diverse groups. Multivocality is grounded in our diverse needs, morally and materially evaluated.

Hodder uses cameo conversations throughout his book to great rhetorical advantage. This is a fragment of one in which he tells a hypothetical questioner that objectivism is no stronger in defending truth that relativism and that neither can replace moral force. Two points in particular are worth noting here. First, Hodder urges a stand for right and wrong in politics. Second, he says that science, no matter how good it is, is too frail to rely on when dealing with the misuse of the past; such a strand calls for a moral position and a political analysis. I don’t know whether his position is fully correct, but we archaeologists must surely think about it.

According to Hodder, the idea that people actively play a part in forming themselves and thus their culture has implications for archaeology. The search for origins is becoming a search for chosen pasts. This is not readily understood by most American archaeologists, but Hodder is correct ethnographically. In fact, his case was quite convincingly made a decade ago by Jonathan Friedman (1992) when he showed how native Hawaiians and modern Greeks struggled for their own place and humanity by constantly negotiating their pasts, including their archaeological heritage. Hodder’s observations do not displace human origins or plant domestication as objects of archaeological concern. He does, however, say that what is of value in archaeology is changing and that to place ultimate value on archaeological mitigation, to call ar-
chaeology a resource, and to see the salvage of artifacts as primary is to overlook why such definitions occurred in the first place. Things have no value out of context, particularly the context of local significance. But local meaning is just as pointless without an archaeological understanding of how meaning is established.

A third important observation about modern archaeology is that field methods—artifact categories, electronic data management, stratigraphic recording, electronic photography, and ties between laboratory and dig—should not be seen as fixed in advance. Hodder suggests flexibility of methods because the role of archaeology in local political struggles, its entertainment and media uses, its relations with local government, and its contribution to the fields of conservation, museum studies, and American studies are changing. The methods employed in an excavation will follow from the reasons for undertaking it.

In arguing these points Hodder is telling us that we are at serious risk of being unable to play the role assigned to archaeology today because we do not understand how important it is to modern politics. This is a conservative position, not a relativistic one. Hodder makes a plausible case, and in some ways it is essential to revamping American archaeology so that its empirical contributions can continue.

Quetzil Castaneda's position is not so conservative. While Hodder explains to archaeologists that we must be engaged more actively as people choose their pasts, Castaneda begins with the observation, now decades old in anthropology, that a culture is itself an invention of anthropology, usually in the form of a text. Echoing the now common observation that “native” people will read an ethnographic account and, seeing themselves in it, become what they see, Castaneda suggests that this mirroring process creates an anthropological museum—a locus or topography in which people live, are seen and described by an anthropologist or other observer, and are thereby given a culture. This culture may also be the way the people see themselves—a not uncommon phenomenon now that the concept of culture is ubiquitous. This becoming a culture is then subject to discovery or, perhaps, rediscovery both by people who have lost something they once had [a glorious past available, of course, archaeologically] and by others who, in seeking it out, become tourists. The tourists discover the museum—that is, the anthropologically and archaeologically discovered culture, lived by people who become in part what they have been discovered to be, remnants of glorious antecedents. Heritage tourism is focused on these authentic peoples, and what tourists see is, among other things, reconstructed ruins built since the 1880s by German, British, U.S., or other archaeologists with funding from foundations, governments, and wealthy patrons. Castaneda points out that the first generation of archaeologists often built these tourist attractions with the intention of helping to verify emergent national identities, but, with Hodder and Tilley, observes that archaeologists are not engaged in this now.

Castaneda's book is as much about a touristic environment as it is about the Yucatec Maya, but in an attempt to show how a touristic environment operates it discusses the use and impact of culture [p. 18]:

What is the invention [in the sense of scientific discovery] of culture . . . and the culture of invention [as an economy and technology of [what is thought to be] the real]? The analytical problem . . . concerns the circuits by which culture travels. How are cultures transported, imported, exported, deported, reported across . . . discourses and . . . localities? As . . . culture . . . traverses landscapes of imagination, how does culture constitute topographies . . . sociogeographic units of identity, belonging, and power . . . These are issues in an economy of culture . . .

By “economy of culture” Castaneda means who pays for the “study/discovery,” who benefits from it, how it is used to create impressions of power and subordination, where the tourist location is sited, and how it is brought to life. There is always a locale and a topography. Re-enactments, reconstructions, behind-the-scenes archaeological views, guided tours, guides, guidebooks, souvenir sales, hotels and restaurants help make up topography and economy [p. 173]:

At the heart of [these vehicles that make up a topography] and anthropological strategy of knowledge are the ruins of Chichen Itza: a machine that functions to read and write the Maya . . . . In the . . . practices of tourism, the Museum of Chichen, which is the strategic order of knowledge embodied in the ruins, is continuously reinvented as a sight, as texts, as photographs, as postcards, as tours, as souvenirs, as an encounter with the Maya, as memory of a culture and a civilization.

Chichen Itza can be at once an archaeological site, a world-famous tourist attraction, a place to earn a living, and a New Age magnet because it is what Christopher Tilley calls a “solid metaphor.” In my opinion, the major contribution of Tilley’s book comes from his struggle with the difference between the two activities that make humans unique, language and the making of things. A solid metaphor can contain many inconsistent meanings at once; language cannot. According to Tilley, “To perceive similarities is to engage with metaphor . . . [that is] substitution on the basis of resemblance” [p. 19]. “Solid metaphors contain what might be termed a literal memory . . . residing in the shape, form, colour, etc. that becomes sedimented as a non-verbal mental image of the thing in the mind” [pp. 269–70]:

Solid metaphor [becomes] images for the storage and retrieval of information . . . linked to experience . . . in which those artifacts are used. . . . Both solid and linguistic metaphors . . . have their basis in the ability to recognize similarities among the material attributes of things . . . The production, exchange, and consumption of things and [the] linguistic experience of the naming and associations of things pro-
vide the continuous possibility for the creation of new . . . understandings of the world . . . [or] one thing is conceived in terms of another . . .. Novel metaphors . . . are activated . . . in . . . performative contexts [that] bring about changes in the manner in which people perceive the world, which in turn affects the way they act in the world.

Arguing that “words can never substitute for things,” Tilley points to the deeply personalized relationships people develop with things made and consumed,” which provide them “a physical, synaesthetic, material experience” that sometimes threatens to “overwhelm the senses,” and suggests that “the passage of time in the making, exchange, and consumption of things further distinguishes them from “the fleeting and momentary spoken word.” The second essential characteristic of solid metaphors is that they convey meaning through ambiguity and easily encompass contradictions while appearing to be concrete.

A tourist site works, then, because it sits in a place and must be visited for its images to work. It works less well when described or presented in a book. It works because it carries many more meanings successfully than anything linguistic, although it holds its many meanings in the verbal exchange that happens at the site and afterwards in ritual contexts.

A tourist site cannot be built by a visitor but can be exported in the form of some authentic piece of it. Its size, color, layout, and appeal to the senses are different from anything linguistic, and, in addition, it lasts. A site can mean more than a linguistic metaphor because it embodies a far more comprehensive and often contradictory experience. The visual experience is encoded as images in the mind, as metaphors. When these metaphors become linguistic images [another kind of metaphor] in ritualized contexts, people understand their world better, or differently. Tilley argues that rock art, megalithic monuments, and barrows are to be understood as solid metaphors. They are like the cathedrals of England—once used by people involved in rituals and now visited by tourists, all having a splendid time with the emotional and synaesthetic fullness of these metaphors. The impressions left from such experiences “will, if the object becomes the subject of verbal discourses, elicit a verbal translation by means of which sensory, experimental and image-based analogic reasoning . . . acquire semantic expression as linguistic metaphor” (p. 270). The result of such byplay in the mind will be creative and new.

Hodder, Tilley, and Castaneda are all telling us not to stop digging but to be aware of the production of modern identity, the museum of the modern self, and recognize that the metaphor that takes on the form of reality has an economy surrounding it, an economy in which we operate.

References Cited