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'The Progress that Chose a Village'

Measuring zero-degree culture and the 'impact' of anthropology

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> *Gillin*: The question of values is very fundamental. As long as the old values appear more rewarding they'll stick with them. We used to think that all you have to do is to expose people to education and they'll change their ways . . .
> *Tax*: Dr. Redfield has a new book in press concerning a revisit to Chan Kom. I would like to ask Villa how different is Chan Kom from other villages that didn't chose progress?
> *Villa*: That point has been taken into consideration by Redfield. Chan Kom is very similar to other villages of the region, but the historical process – the appearance of new leaders, the proximity to Chichén Itzá where the Americans were working – all those accidental factors gave them an opportunity to change their point of view. (Tax, 1952: 275)

> The cumulative effect of these contacts was to catalyze the development of an awareness on the part of the Kayapo of the potential political value of their 'culture' in their relations with the alien society by which they found themselves surrounded . . . to publish or otherwise communicate publicly about Kayapo culture was to become, willy-nilly, a part of both the political and cultural dimension about which one was attempting to speak as an anthropologist. . . . One not only becomes part of the process one is trying to record, but directly affects it in numerous ways, some intended and some not. . . . In the process, we had become coparticipants in a project of resisting, representing and rethinking, and both their 'culture' and my 'theory' had become, in some measure, our joint product. (Turner, 1991: 301–12)

Anthropologists have always been concerned about their intervention in their object of study. However, the way this intervention has been conceived, valued and studied has changed with theoretical fashions and political climates. Before dialogical anthropology and 'researcher positioning' (Rosaldo, 1989) problematized ethnographic production of

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knowledge through fieldwork, there were various methodological formulae to magically reduce the ethnographer's presence to 'zero' so as to attain scientific objectivity and neutrality. Before we became concerned with anthropology as a *translocal* and *transnational* apparatus that has worked in uneasy complicity with colonialism, nation-building and even post-colonial projects, we simply grounded our research on the assumption that the discipline was an instrumental and necessary agent of the civilizing mission, regardless of whether this civilizing was held to be good or bad. In this paper I revisit the work of two anthropologists, one very famous and the other decidedly obscure, who asked themselves about the discipline's intervention in the communities that they studied.

To be sure, they were not so much concerned (as I am) with the effects of their own practices of fieldwork and ethnographic representation, but with the presence of the discipline, specifically in the form of a massive, long-term archaeological research project. They both explicitly asked whether this caused positive, negative or no 'changes'. In one case, Redfield's study of Chan Kom, Americanist archeology at Chichén Itzá was seen, understood and written up as having resulted in only 'positive' effects. In the other case, Morris Steggerda's (1941) study of Pisté, this very same factor – the project – was said to have had, not negative 'impact' per se, but 'no permanent effects' on this community located 3 kilometers from the archeological research site. My analytical task, then, is to deconstruct the arguments by which these two assessments were made. I make a close reading of select texts to disclose the logic and rhetoric of their arguments, which then allows me to point out the common ideological and political economic contexts that motivated their different claims. My ultimate aim is to reveal a series of scandals that pervades and undergirds the conceptualization of the problem of anthropological intervention manifest in these and other works. My claim is that although there have been very significant shifts in understanding, problematizing and politicizing this issue, with regard to one aspect there has not been much of what can be called, with irony, 'progress'.

These two studies were conducted and written in the pre-history of modernization theory and development projects, that is, written in the days when anthropological bricolage dreamed it could become 'social engineering' and could supervise the *directed change* of non-Western societies and cultures. Acculturation, assimilation, *indigenismo*, melting pots, syncretism, progress and similar unilinear models of change all belong to this horizon of social science and have been duly critiqued. My excuse for beating again this unfortunately not so dead horse is to suggest

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that although anthropology was not successful in engineering the 'civilizing' of natives, our discipline and its practitioners *were* more or less effective in 'culturizing' the peoples of the world. To phrase it as a fable: *Culture* was once an imaginary object that existed not so much 'out there' in communities localized in socio-physical space but in the textual productions and discursive space of anthropological practices. The 'original', but now no longer the only, Culture-bearers were anthropologists and their ancestors who carried this concept, category, construct of 'culture' around the globe and *planted* it so that all the nations, tribes, races and other solidarities of the world have begun or could begin (however unevenly and differently) to envision reality and imagine the identities as well as differences of their own or other communities *in terms of this filter*, the always-already contested concept and communities of Culture. The imaginary Culture of the early anthropologist became imagined cultures of people (almost) everywhere (see Rosaldo, 1989). Cultures, in other words, became simultaneously real and imaginary, that is, imagined in the mind and in material conditions.

My aim, then, is to detail the criss-crossings of borders and duplicitous trafficking of representations by which these two communities (Chan Kom and Pisté) have entered into ethnographic text as very specific kinds of 'cultures', and to demonstrate how the understanding and experience of these communities continues to be shaped through their culture-texts. In assessing the answers given by two anthropologists to their question of what was the effect of anthropology on the communities they studied, I am here asking: 'What was and is the "impact" of the anthropological intervention in the world?' My answer, then, is borrowed from Roy Wagner (1981), who long ago argued that culture is invented in the political economy of the textual inscription of collective human difference (see also Boon, 1982, 1989; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Mudimbe, 1988; Said, 1979). Transfiguring a notion from de Certeau (1984), I refer to this culturizing process or event of continuous reinvention as a kind of scriptural economy, which is best explained through example.

The ethnographic landscape: background to the problem

As the reader may recall, Redfield was hired part-time from the University of Chicago by the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) to direct a comparative study of Yucatec society. At the time, the CIW was already conducting archeological, historical, epigraphic, medical, botanical, anthropometric, genetic and climatological studies of Yucatán under the

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supervision of Sylvanus G. Morley and Alfred V. Kidder. Since the central focus of these endeavors was the excavation and restoration of the pre-columbian city of Chichén Itzá, they were known collectively as the Chichén Project (1924–41) and the field headquarters was the nearby restored cattle Hacienda. Redfield's study, which became a long-term collaborative project with four researchers,[1] was actually parallel to the Chichén Project, as was the research of Morris Steggerda (1941), a physical anthropologist of the CIW's Genetics Department. The latter scholar made Pisté, the town 3 kilometers to the west of Chichén, his homebase and focal point of diverse studies.[2] Thus, the ethnographic mapping of cultures that the CIW sponsored included five communities (Mérida, Dzitas, Chan Kom, Tusik and Pisté) and was based in a sixth, the archeological city of Chichén, yet the Redfieldian topography excludes (in significant ways to be demonstrated) the last two places in order to base itself on only the first four, which were said to form a single continuum of Yucatec Maya Culture-civilization (Redfield, 1941: 338).

Postmodern scandal: Pisté as anti-progress

> Many villages in Yucatán have some industry like hammock or hat making, the manufacture of pottery, baskets, candles, or chocolate mixers, *but Pisté has none of these* . . . (Steggerda, 1941: 21)

While generations of scholars of many stripes can easily picture Chan Kom in their minds, few indeed have any knowledge or image of a town some 20 kilometers to the north and 2–3 kilometers to the west of the modern ruins of an ancient Maya city. Pisté, unlike its neighbor, has not entered into anthropological memory and its imagination of culture. Why is Pisté absent from the anthropological museum of cultures? My argument is that 'it' represents zero-degree culture and, thus, a scandal.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century travel writing about Yucatán has tended to mechanically reproduce an image of the archeological Maya in which the author–traveler spots the stones of the Castillo or Pyramid of Kukulcan towering above the scrub forest. Nineteenth-century descriptions of this idealized 'first encounter' always include a preliminary comment on Pisté. For example, Le Plongeon, Charnay, Maudslay and Maler all note briefly the desolation and destruction that the Caste War inscribed on this town before physically and textually getting to the ruins

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of Chichén. Morris Steggerda contributes to this discourse of deprecation and depreciation:

> 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* [herbalists], 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: 24–5)

This is a description, not of a *community*, but of a *town*, a geographic and geometric 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. Depicted here is an indifference that defines the community as deviant for it constitutes a collective *anomie* and *anarchy*. This listless apathy is a threat to the orderly imposition of control, norms, regulation. The town, to apply MacCannell's phrase (1992) towards an opposing objective, is an 'empty meeting ground',[3] a space filled with a non-social order and an order of non-socialness. 'This town' – that is, its *ethnographic depiction* – is in deep contrast to that 'village that chose Progress'. Here, an 'apparent lack of interest' is so pervasive and imposing it constitutes an 'indifference' not only to European religions, but to the 'remnants of its own Indian beliefs'. As Steggerda tells us, even those technicians of the sacred and natural world, that is, the herbalists and other ritual spiritualists, were run out of town – run out, we are led to suspect, by indifference. In Steggerda's view, it seems that not only has the Folk Tradition disintegrated but so has the sticky spirit, or in Spanish, the *anima*, of the social bond.

Yet, Steggerda himself contradicts his *assessment* of indifference, which is stated with the authority of a fact as if validated by science. In contrast, his published monograph and unpublished field notes document a bustling economy comprised of a surprising ethnic heterogeneity, religious pluralism and complex class relations in a situation of economic boom which at the time was unmatched in this micro-region and many rural areas of Yucatán. This was a community composed not simply of subsistence

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farmers, but of proletarians, seasonal semi-proletarians, small-scale ranchers, petty entrepreneurs and merchants, recently freed hacienda debt-peons, chauffers, hotel workers, lower level 'managers'. The local economy was based on small, mixed cattle and maize production for export, transportation service of goods and tourists, several cantinas, cooperatives and general stores, a match factory, two hotels, road construction, gasoline sales, corn grinding mills and *chicle* trade. The center of this booming economy was the factory of knowledge at Chichén Itzá that was run by the Mexican Government and the Carnegie Institution of Washington. It was this factory that made Pisté a significant site of migration as Chinese-Korean, Lebanese, ex-hacienda Maya, central Mexicans and Yucatec *mestizos* migrated to (and sometimes through) Pisté in search of employment or commerce. The establishment of the first Evangelical Protestant sects in a sister hamlet 6 kilometers to the north of Pisté was also not a fortuitous occurrence. Although Steggerda noticed and said very little about local politics, it is possible to *guess* that this economic diversity and ethnic-religious pluralism correlated with a local situation that was in contrast to much of the Yucatec countryside. Here, the ethnographic record indicates an absence of the power-mongering or boss-hood known as *caciquismo*, which is best exemplified by the leadership of the famous Don Eustaquio Ceme, a leadership Redfield dressed up as 'progressive'. To phrase it differently, the diverse bases of economic power made it difficult or impossible for a single political faction or family to become hegemonic at the local level. Is it not reasonable to suspect, then, that the general prosperity of the community provoked a relative disinterest in politics or political action per se: thus, it was this *dis*interest that blinded Steggerda and which he translated into an anarchic and apathetic *in*difference of the collectivity?

Besides the putative political disinterest of Pisté, this description is peculiar: the listed traits presuppose that it is categorically not a village type of culture-community – whether idealized as Redfieldian Folk or as a peasantry struggling against proletarianization – but an urbanized-modern type of collectivity. Indeed, hindsight shows that Pisté was as economically and ideologically significant as the nearby Dzitas (Redfield's ideal-type 'town' community). How surprising then to discover that Pisté was only a village of between 300 and 450 inhabitants.[4] However, in spite of its shape, value and functioning as a modern center of a micro-region, it is not a city nor even a town, what with their being no clubs, no bands, no hobbies, no leaders, no recreation, no artisanry and no collecting of Maya artifacts for domestic cabinets of ancient curiosities. Unlike the people of Chan Kom, whose interest in artifacts of their ancient ancestors is documented by

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Redfield (1932), those of Pisté are not yet modern Folk, that is, they had not yet 'gone primitive' (Torgovnick, 1990) in the modernist collecting of the artifacts of their civilizational past. Other diagnostic traits of urban modernity are also missing (alienation, anomie, fragmentation, individualism, conflict, enlightenment), which disqualifies it as a city or town type of culture-community. In contrast, Steggerda notes the presence of dances, sports, bull-fights and other collective rituals of sacred and social life which characterize a rural community as distinct from urban life. Nonetheless, if Pisté is not an Urban-Modern Culture, it is also not a community of Folk Culture. The sign of Indifference again marks the Pistéleños as anomalous: is not this indifference an individual and collective 'alienation', 'apathy' or 'anomie' from Indian vestiges *and* Christian church disciplines? Even so, we are led to believe by Steggerda's description that this is neither an urban situation nor a modern condition of culture. Thus, this Indifference may have the status or value of apathy, anomie, anarchy, alienation, but it is not those modern forms of culture. Pisté, then, is anomalous and deviant: here is a non-Folk folk that is also non-Modern modern; neither vestigial nor new and 'not hybrid', Pisté is a non-culture community, non-community culture.

Can we not call this town *postmodern*? In a categorical sense it is *post*-modern since it – like all communities we have discovered – wreaks havoc on the ever-pervasive *modern* discourse of culture that was so brilliantly formulated by Redfield. Might a different modern theory accommodate the commonly uncommon difference of Pisté? Perhaps, but then Pisté is not a Tepoztlan, that is, it was never a privileged topos of culture or of the anthropological discourse that maps 'cultures' into their proper space–time dioramas. Pisté, like hundreds of other villages, including Chan Kom itself, could have been used as a privileged example of how and why Redfield's Folk-Urban Continuum was too simple, misleading, historically naive, etc. Instead, Pisté is erased from anthropological memory. Why? Because, it was and is still today a scandal of many dimensions. I shall denote these scandals that I suggest Pisté embodies, and, thus, also refer to Pisté, by the term 'postmodern'. Here then is the first scandal of the many to be mapped: in my critique of how anthropological discourse 'imposed' a classification on the ('community?' 'culture?' 'town?') of Pisté, there is no alternative but to impose on this entity another metaphor for a mode of life that is also necessarily embedded in a value-laden theory and discursive formation. Since my task is to point out the ironies and complicities by which 'Pisté' is imagined as a social form, I am here stuck with ironically reproducing in form what I critique in substance. Thus, Pisté is postmodern in that it scandalously escapes

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modernist discourse of culture in a very specific way. It presents a difference (social, collective, cultural, theoretical) that must be understood in relation to the possible ways of assimilating its distinction to theoretical forms.

Pisté is not a Tepoztlan: why did not Steggerda use Pisté as the foil to Redfield's theoretical edifice? Is the difference of Pisté (which is being isolated in this text) a difference that was located in Pisté or was it a facet of Steggerda's *way of seeing*, that is, of his social-scientific perception? It seems clear by reading Steggerda's ethnography and field notes, that the socialness of Pisté is unrecognizable and imperceptible to 'its' ethnographer: Steggerda cannot seem to fathom the social bond or agency of Maya individuals. But is this just an inadequacy on his part? Is it *he* who cannot perceive the moral integrity and political wholeness of the town, that *we*, his readers now, are always-already predisposed to posit as existing? In other words, is Steggerda, unlike the anthropology-bearers of his day and today, so *scientific* (or sociocentric) that he does not believe in what Herbert (1991: 1–28) identifies as the *superstition of culture* and therefore cannot 'see' the ghostly coherence that animates and integrates the collectivity of *inhabitants*? Certainly, the title of his ethnography, *Maya Indians of Yucatán* (1941), exposes the fact that the phenomenon constructed as his object of study – which with irony might be read as a postmodern list of arbitrarily selected topics that were all quantitatively investigated – was not imagined as a 'culture', a 'community', a 'case study', a 'society', an 'ethnic group', but rather as a class or category of humans known as a race.[5] When Steggerda did imagine the Maya *sociologically*, his view was so marked by a kind of Christian-diffusionism that he speculated that the Maya were a docile and dull-witted race incapable of historical agency generally and of the achievements of civilization that are attributed to them; he theorized that superior outsiders arrived to rule over the Maya and instructed them how to have civilization. However much Steggerda's *individual* opinion was blinded, the difference of Pisté, whether 'indifference' or booming economy, was also blinding to those, such as Redfield (as we shall see), who did have the proper *modernist* 'superstitions' of culture. Pisté embodies the negative spaces between *modernity* and the exclusions of Redfield's discursive construction of culture in the form of a Folk community embodied by Chan Kom.

The indifference of Pisté is its *deviance*, a difference that resists assimilation, comprehension and categorization by the anthropological imagination. Pisté embodies a deviance (non-Folk folk, non-Modern modern) that can only be localized *betwixt* Nature and Culture and *between* the ideal types of Culture as theorized in modernist typologies of social

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forms. This is an *anti-community community* that stands scandalously outside, beyond and against modern discourses of culture. In this sense Pisté is *post*modern, that is, a topos of *postmodernity*, because its difference is still undomesticable. It is neither a culture 'with culture' nor a culture 'without culture' (Rosaldo, 1989); in other words, according to *my* theoretical machinery – a zero-degree culture. Ironically, my use of the term 'postmodern' is obviously a truncated and even *erroneous* version of all the polemics that this term has come to signal; and, therefore, it is also scandalous. Postmodernity, as I am arguing about culture, is like beauty, narrated landscapes and the Emperor's New Clothes, that is, they are such in the eye/I of the beholders (Pratt, 1992).

The *spatialization* of zero-degree culture (in Pisté and elsewhere) is the underbelly and undergirding of an apparatus of knowledge through which culture is territorialized in Yucatán, that is, through which the topography of Yucatán is inscribed, practiced and imagined as a system of cultural sites (and citations). Just as Chaos enables Order and Nature supplements Culture, zero-degree culture is for us here the figure of a rhetorical operation that constitutes the notion and modern discourse of 'culture'.[6] Consider the strategic role of anarchy within the theory of culture composed by Mathew Arnold (see Herbert, 1991; Williams, 1983): The function of *desire unbound*, that is, of *unbridled desire* and *freedom* that results in anarchy, anomie and deviance, is overwritten and occupied, in the modernist theorization of Mesoamerica, by the rhetorical operations of 'acculturation', 'ladinoization' and 'culture-change' as loss (e.g. Tax, 1952: Chs 2, 3, 9–14). Anarchy is the *moment* of *loss* itself, i.e. the *temporality* of shifting/shifted identity and disciplinary control, that creates a space or gap in the grid of theory through which the object of study falls, beyond and outside the web of knowledge. Neither Indian nor Ladino, neither authentic nor acculturated, having neither culture of Civilization nor Culture of Folk, the Indian-not-Indian embodies a zero-degree culture that originates and propitiates the discourse of culture in a scandal that is endlessly erased and concealed.

'Progress' revisited: a mysterious cultivation

Robert Redfield, as if with the ghostly hand of a scribe, continues to cast a deep shadow on Yucatán. The impact of his work is ever present yet so pervasive as to be unmeasurable and indelible. This is evident when an internationally renowned scholar chooses – in the fifth edition of a famous introductory book on the Maya written for both lay and academic readers (Coe, 1993) – to represent the Yucatec Maya with a discussion of Chan

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Kom as depicted in 1934 by Redfield and Villa Rojas. As if the passage of sixty years had not altered either Maya societies or anthropological understanding of them, *the ethnographic representation of Chan Kom* stands in the place of Yucatán as the quintessential Yucatec Maya Culture.

The following, then, is a deconstructive reading of key passages that details the way this exemplary ideal and its authority were rhetorically and textually constructed. The book opens with a description of the ecological zones of Yucatán under the label of 'Gradients of Civilization' and takes the reader directly to Chan Kom which lies in the geographic middle of this not yet *continuum-gradient* and is:

> . . . neither large nor small; but in respect to the effects of the recent outside stimulus and in the disposition deliberately to welcome these changes and to modernize the community, Chan Kom is the extreme deviate. Other villages in the area assist their schoolteacher and evince an interest in reform and in new public works, but none so much as has Chan Kom in the three or four years preceding and during the period of these observations. During this period it has been distinguished among its neighbors for industry, sobriety and internal harmony. (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1934: 4)

Passing over the putative industry, sobriety and harmony for which this village is distinguished, we need to explain at length the trick by which this supposedly 'deviate' community becomes, not simply typical, but exemplary of Yucatec Maya Culture. The answer must be found in the way the depiction of Chan Kom is construed to fit an ideal model of a Folk Society whose deviation from the normal and typical village is its relation to reform and modernity. Is it that Chan Kom becomes more like other Yucatec villages (i.e. stops 'modernizing'), or is it that other communities, which came to be studied in terms of this issue, therefore became like Chan Kom? Are they now also reforming and modernizing, which makes them all atypically typical and Chan Kom the most typically atypical? It should be noticed that sixteen years before Redfield conducts his 're-study' of Chan Kom, in which he discovers that this 'village chose progress' (Redfield, 1950), the community was already being framed as progressive and modernizing. In other words, the 'deviance' of Chan Kom is found not simply to 'fit' the ideal model of the Folk Society and its Progress, but is the matter out of which that ideal form is theorized in the first place. What then are the scriptural (textual and rhetorical) procedures by which Chan Kom invents the ideal of Folk Culture and which, in turn, invents Chan Kom as Maya Culture?

Redfield and Villa Rojas tell us on page 6 of the famous ethnography (1934) that an 'explanation of the fact that Chan Kom has, *more than any other Maya village in the region* defined "progress" for itself lies in a

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complex of circumstances that can be only *imperfectly* understood'. Why imperfectly? What is this blind spot, this anthropological scotoma that conceals the critical operations by which culture is invented, and what causes it?

Unnamed as a culture-community and not discussed in the text – except in the brief historical section that situates the places of this Native landscape – Pisté secretly organizes a *contrast* unlike the explicit Culture *comparisons* with Mérida (the City), Dzitas (the Town), Tusik (the Tribal Village), Chan Kom (the Peasant Village with a Folk Culture) (see Redfield, 1941). It is out of place, but Pisté is still in the text: how does this thriving *anti*-community become inscribed within the Redfieldian topography of Mayan Culture, but erased from the Continuum? That Chan Kom 'defined progress *for itself*', tells us that other *unnamed* communities, such as Pisté, did not. Thus, the text traces simultaneously the specter of an *anti*-progress as it recontextualizes how Chan Kom was constructed as a village that 'chose progress'. Pisté thus becomes located not as a simple opposite or negative of Maya Culture, but its zero point from which to measure along a continuum of pure types.

Three 'circumstances' are given as to why Chan Kom among all the possible villages was chosen for study, and thus constitute the 'imperfect' explanation:

> One of these circumstances is certainly the unusual sympathy and guidance the people have had from certain of their schoolteachers, especially from the junior author of this monograph [i.e. Alfonso Villa Rojas]. (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1934: 6)

The identification of the *junior* author is a recognition of the *authors*, not simply schoolteachers, as a 'circumstance'. By association, the senior author is simultaneously implied and recognized, but then immediately erased and forgotten as a factor. Reading further, we find that in the ethnographic text Redfield hides his presence in Chan Kom as author, as sociological authority and *as circumstance of progress*. Thus, the textual production of the Folk, of Progress and of Maya Culture is simultaneously hinted at yet erased in a tactic that established the authorial legitimacy and objective distance necessary to conduct *scientific* description. But this separation of the two authors, one a named presence in the site of fieldwork and the other an unnamed absence from the field, is a logical necessity for other reasons:

> Another [second circumstance] is the particular attention given the village by Americans at Chichén Itzá, where the Carnegie Institution maintains its center for archeological work. [Given Redfield's status as a sociologist, he

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> again elides his presence in this factory of knowledge.] Contacts with *the* Americans at Chichén began to be significant through the distribution of medicines and medical advice from the clinic [which is so deeply associated with modernity and modernism] extended to the visits of scientific investigators in the village [who are cited in a footnote which again excludes the senior author]. A third circumstance is, probably, the chance occurrence in the village of Maya [here referring to the truly extraordinary, Don Eustaquio Ceme, a man] with unusual gifts of leadership and temperamental disposition to *enterprise*. The presence of Villa, the teacher, drew the Americans at Chichén to Chan Kom; on the other hand, Villa's contacts with these Americans increased and partly shaped his interest in the village where he worked. Villa's advice and help supported the leadership native in the village. (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1934: 6, emphases added)

Three circumstances are identified: the junior author, the Americans but primarily the American medical staff at Chichén (i.e. the now folkloric Nurse Miss MacKay) and the native leadership. What are the dynamics of these factors? The *maestro* Villa-Rojas, again, not Redfield, becomes identified as the key: the explanation positions Villa Rojas as the primary mechanism – call him the 'culture broker' – in this event of cultural transmission construed as a 'diffusion of progress'. Contact between the three circumstances channels 'progress' through a synaptic network that constitutes its diffusion, but is itself constituted through a kind of natural or magical attraction: 'The presence of Villa, the teacher, drew the Americans at Chichén to Chan Kom.'[7] Thus, the 'external' intervention of two circumstances is dissimulated and naturalized: the presence of Americans at Chichén is presupposed as an unsurprising 'natural' sort of phenomenon. Given their deep association with modernity, 'Americans' typically travel and sojourn in places other than their USA home for a variety of economic and scientific purposes; by the same token, the teacher, sent from the Mexican metropolis by the new revolutionary government to educate the rural masses, is at 'home' in the rural village-as-classroom. In contrast, the Maya are localized to the space of the 'community', which Redfield is at pains to isolate and demarcate through a series of scriptural procedures of which this is one.[8] It might be said that the villagers of Chan Kom are 'chained' to the ethnographic scene of investigation through scientific description. Notice that it is not the Maya of Chan Kom themselves who drew the attention of the Americans to Chan Kom, but the *teacher*: here, the magical attraction and vehicle of diffusion is the identity relation (like to like) embodied in education which, in turn, roots these agents to the locality of contact as if they were natural or organic extensions of the Yucatec landscape.

This rooting and naturalization is important because it implicitly

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construes and shapes the Progress not as an 'impact' on the Folk community *caused* by external forces, but as a local, *internal* event of change construed as a conscious, rational and natural development chosen by the villagers themselves. 'The reforms have not been imposed upon the community from outside; they have arisen out of the conviction of the village leaders and have been put into effect by the efforts of the people themselves' (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1934: 4). That neither 'the Maya of Chan Kom attract the Americans', nor 'the Americans were attracted to the Maya of Chan Kom' is already inscribed in the nineteenth-century division of labor between ethnologist (Redfield) and ethnographer (Villa Rojas): the schoolteacher is cast as the key culture-broker, who is already planted in the field site, that attracts the attention of the Americans through the contagion of education. Consequently, Villa advised and supported the 'leadership native' to the community, which is also a tactical phrase that suggests an organic, natural and consensual or communitarian versus imposed leader. 'No considerable opposition to this leadership has appeared; the inhabitants have, on the whole, supported the reform policy' (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1934: 4). Thus all the circumstances turn out to be aboriginal and, in *this* sense, organic; but, as the Redfieldian interpretation argues later in this book and in Villa Rojas's ethnography, this is not an organic leadership since there are no internal religious, ethnic, class or caste differentiations. Here is a mechanical solidarity: thus, the rhetorical nuances are what constitute the Folk as halfway between Primitive and Modern, based on a perceived hybridity that is named, not as such, but as a pure, ideal form of collectivity called a Culture.

The third factor of progress, the native leadership, is rhetorically positioned in the same structure of contagion in which agencies are reduced to 'circumstances' and contact points so as to assert an organic and natural quality to this *folk progress* over and against the artificial progress of modernity. This elaborate circuitry by which Chan Kom's progress becomes equated with the *cultivation of education* forms an ethnographic fable in a complement to the more legendary allegory narrated later by Lévi-Strauss in 'The Writing Lesson'.[9] There Lévi-Strauss philosophizes on the invention of writing when a tribal 'chief' imitates the ethnographer's note-taking as a way to (presumably) augment his power. The chief is later sacked by his band of Nambikwara for his presumptious use of the 'totalitarian' and 'Western' means of alphabetic violence that mark civilization. In other words, the Primitives reject, resist and block the diffusion of the cultivated traits of Culture. On the one hand, the Chan Kom story has a certain parallel: already among the leaders of Chan Kom is a literate man who in a way conducts himself as the Nambikwara chief;

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however, as the primary informant of the researchers he does not merely imitate ethnographic writing, but writes his autobiography for inclusion within the original, unabridged ethnography. This life document then becomes the evidence for Redfield and Villa Rojas to narrate a different story, a fable of how Chan Kom embraces the seeds of Culture, that is, Education itself, and how the villagers cultivate them*selves* as a Folk, that is, 'define progress for themselves'.

It needs be stressed that underlying this fable is a relation of identity between Culture and Education that is mediated by progress: Progress *is* the cultivation of education-culture. Here, then, is a trace of logic which is associated with Mathew Arnold and others: Culture is cultivation/education (see Williams, 1983: 110–29) and thus already embodies the notion of progress. In other words, the folk of Chan Kom are found to have had a community, but, more significantly, this is also already 'Culture-Progress' in which progress (cultivation) implied culture (education) and vice versa. That these Folk were 'found to have' Culture-Progress is what distinguished this ideal type of social form from both the Primitive and the Civilized-modern because it combined elements from both; also, it distinguished this specific community from the neighboring villages – among which is Pisté. Or, it might be said that this contrast is what puts into high relief the progress of Chan Kom, which is precisely its qualification as a culture in the modernist sense of the term. It is also ultimately what constitutes the attraction between 'the Americans' – meaning Redfield – and the village: education (teaching the folk community) and science (learning from the folk through research on them) are the two poles of this magnetism. Redfield's genius for synthesis allows him, on the one hand, to then *spatialize* the ideal types into the theory of Folk-Urban Continuum and, on the other hand, to narrate the ethnographic particulars as a fable of progress in both the 1934 and 1950 texts: the Chan Kom 'leaders have determined upon a program of improvement and progress and have manifested a strong disposition to take advantage of the missionary educational efforts of the government and of the advice and assistance of the occasional American or Yucatecan visitor' (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1934: 4).

What are these reforms exactly? 'The principal of these reforms involves matters of public hygiene [sic] and construction of new and more modern public and private buildings, and support of the school' (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1934: 6). How were these reforms put into practice?

> Villa's advice and help supported the leadership native in the village. And the traditional Maya institution of *fagina* [that is, that exploitive system of tribute used by colonial Maya elite to maintain the stratification and integrity

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> of Indigenous communities against the colonial regime], whereby membership in the community is conditioned upon faithful performance of labor tasks for purposes decided by the local leaders, has gradually *eliminated* those families who were least disposed to cooperate in the *program of reform and improvement*, and attracted to the village new families to whom the reforms were congenial. (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1934: 6, emphases added)

How is it that a centuries-old mechanism for the extraction of *obligatory tribute* that is re-adapted to effect centralizing (if not totalitarian from the perspective of those Maya who left!) control of a community to be associated with *reform* or with *improvement*? This is the question asked, for example, by Goldkind (1965, 1966), who shows how these 'reforms' were part of a 'traditional' gambit for local power. It is also addressed by Joseph (1982), who shows how the socialist movement in Yucatán relied extensively on *caciques*, such as the leadership native to Chan Kom to build a grassroots power base. Further, this political strategy was connected to an ideological struggle to aggrandize and promote the Ancient Maya Civilization, that is, the educational strategy of Felipe Carillo Puerto, the socialist Governor, to create an ethnic class consciousness via the restoration of archeological monuments such as Chichén Itzá (see Castañeda, forthcoming; Sullivan, 1989; Várguez Pasos, 1989). Thus, this 'reform' of a tributary mechanism was (narrativized as) an 'improvement' because it was *complicit* with two aspects of modernism: the socialist program of nation-building and (anthropological) science. In other words, Redfield's construct of Progress entails a contradictory relation to power whereby one form of domination is replaced by another: on the one hand, the Chan Kom is founded by settlers as a frontier hamlet outside the political sphere of the 'unjust' *fagina* demands of the mother town of Ebtun; thus, the first step in Progress is the escape from 'domination'. On the other hand, the village leaders struggle for the village to become legalized as a township and politically wired into the new Revolutionary Mexico; thus, the second step of Progress is the reinsertion under domination of the modern apparatus of the nation-state. Redfield's notion of Progress is the substitution of Tradition with Modern forms of control facilitated by education and medicine.

Three comments can be made. One goal here has been to suggest how Redfield's ethnographic discourse participates in a wider episteme (or discursive formation) organized around the trope of Culture. It shares affinities to Mathew Arnold's idea of culture even though he is not among those Redfield (1941) recognizes as his theoretical inspiration. No doubt there are significant differences between them, but there is also another connection: they in a sense shared the same 'benefactor', Andrew

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Carnegie, who founded the CIW in 1901 and also patronized Mathew Arnold, whom the former appreciated in spite of having a different posture towards the poor (Lagemann, 1989: 12–28). All three shared assumptions about the necessary and *illuminating* role of education in the cultivation of Culture-Progress which in turn provides for the moral holism or holistic moralism that constitutes a culture (see Williams, 1983: 110–29). 'Chan Kom's' Progress is Chan Kom's 'Culture' and both are a form and function of modernism, that is, artifacts of the culture of modernity: Progress is Culture and Culture is Progress when the future (Modernization) is organically rooted and conjoined to the past (Tradition) to form a present moment that is hypostatized as an *oriented movement*.[10] This then is the model of the Folk type of society that Redfield constructed, that is, the Folk is a collectivity midway – 'midway' in the geographic and discursive space of the Continuum – between Primitive and Modern/Urban.

This triangulation between Carnegie, Arnold and Redfield in terms of culture concepts and philanthropy is significant. The specific way Chan Kom and Maya Culture was invented must be read in this context as propaganda in favor of Carnegie's philanthropic endeavors and its relation to the civilizing mission of the USA. The equation between Civilization, the USA and things-Carnegie is particularly evident in his 1950 ethnography where, for example, Redfield discussed the 'Road to the Light' that the villagers built to Chichén while serving their compulsory labor duties:

> 'The road to the light' starts out toward Chicago rather than toward Mexico City. The changes in Chan Kom are in the direction of North American or cosmopolitan urbanized life rather than in the direction of Latin culture. . . . Apparently the spirit of this people is not favorable to the adoption of Latin manners or mores. . . . None of the aesthetic sensibility of Latin culture has found lodgement in the Chan Kom people. . . . The practicality, the exaltation of hard work, and the acquisitive rather than the expressive spirit – these qualities of the villager lead him away from Latin culture toward another, perhaps a predominating stream of world-wide expanding influence. Before progress came to Chan Kom, Chan Kom had a life-view of its own, not at all Latin in nature, and Chan Kom has shaped the progress it has won in conformity with this ethos. (Redfield, 1950: 153–4)

The underlying assumptions about racial and national character types need not detain us here, except to point out how the quote operates as ideology justifying the emergence of Anglo-American domination and its vehicle, projects in economic modernization. Thus, the Redfieldian sociological project in Yucatán, just like the Carnegie's archeological projects, is part of a wider political economy in which scientific knowledge is used to target Mexico as an inferior society, culture and civilization. Together they

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formed one small campaign within the CIW's larger war to control the production of knowledge both nationally and internationally (see Helm, 1984; Hinsley, 1981, 1984; Lagemann, 1989; Patterson, 1986).

Second, Redfield's ethnographic-theoretical discourse on Chan Kom is also dependent upon the scriptural operation through which the anthropologist-author is erased to leave an authenticated-native Maya in their designated text-field topos (which is a reversal of the touristic discourses that eliminate the Maya so as to substitute and interpellate the reader-tourist into the topos of travel). In this case, the Maya-native who stands out from and in the text, the man to whom Redfield is constantly directing (deserved) applause for his skilled *cultivation* of both (modernizing) progress and (traditional) culture, is Don Eustaquio Ceme. The genius of this man cannot be doubted: he was a man who was able to play the language games of Redfield's sociology, Mexican Socialism and Maya politics so well that he easily reflected back to his interlocutors the images that they desired as he manipulated both image and interlocutor according to his own interests (see Jones, 1977).

Third, it must be noted that this collaborative ethnography, as Redfield himself confesses is a truly *dialogical*, *transculturative* and *autoethnographic* text (or culture-text) through which culture is invented and then *re*invented as it is re-read here in this text and the shadow texts produced in the readings formulated by its readers. While the dialogical dimensions of the text are evident,[11] what should be understood is what Pratt has called 'transculturation' (1992: 6), or the multi-directional adaptation and selective borrowing between super- and subordinate groups, whether in the 'same' place or across localities marked as hegemonic center/dominated periphery. Thus *Chan Kom: A Maya Village* must also be understood as an autoethnography (Pratt, 1992: 1–11, passim), that is, a text of self-representation by subordinated subjects that is constituted through the *struggle* between and *engagement* of non-Eurocentric and Western/colonialist forms of discourse. This autoethnography *is* the *contact zone*[12] of the heterogeneous discourses and vectors of power that the text articulates as its referent, product, context, practice and event.

This (autoethnographic) text can be understood, then, in two other ways: the deconstructive analysis re-enacts the mechanisms by which the analyzed text reads and writes Culture, that is, culture-texts designated as 'Maya Culture' and as the modern discourse of Culture; what has been isolated is a machine of reading and writing (other texts, other cultures) that is text itself.[13] This imaginary machine or machinery of recitation and engagement, then, is also, from another angle, the *economy* of those texts (or readings/writings) and of those vectors of power that articulate these

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scriptural productions. Let us call this/these text/s a *scriptural economy* devoted to the invention of Culture and, in this situation, of Maya Culture: here is a scriptural economy put into motion again (reinvented) by and enacted in *Chan Kom*, itself a discursive and socio-geographic topos for a moment and tactic of engagement.

The sociological study of Yucatán that Redfield directed marked a significant moment in the invention of Maya Culture. It is an invention that has been criticized for the theoretical framework that it supports and for the dissonance between the 'data' and the interpretative portrayal of *the* culture. The village outside the text did not quite correspond to the village depicted within the text. The community was not as homogeneous or class- and conflict-free – not as happy, in other words – as the 'culture construct pattern' made the 'real culture pattern' out to be (see Goldkind, 1965, 1966; Redfield, 1950: 88–112, for ethnographic details). Yet, does this not presuppose, first, that ethnographic representations can adequately portray a community as a complex whole and, second, that such patterned, moral wholes exist out there outside their textual representation? Research in various fields has answered that neither proposition is tenable.

It would be better to understand ethnography as the presentation (not representation) of a culture, that is, a simulation in Baudrillard's sense. Here at least – but also in the situation that Borofsky (1987), Turner (1991) and others discuss (cf. Hanson, 1989; Myers, 1988; Warren, 1993) – a privileged culture is invented in discursive and geographic space through an ethnographic complicity. *Chan Kom*, whether explicitly as in Coe (1993) or implicitly (Kintz, 1990), became the paradigm of Yucatec Maya Culture in the guise of a Modernizing Maya Folk. In turn, this paradigmatic understanding of the Maya as Modernizing – which is even the theme of a recent photojournalistic book (Everton, 1991) – is the secondary Western construct and trope in complementary opposition to the dominant view of the Maya as Mystery, i.e. the Mysterious Maya, as the *National Geographic* designates them (cf. Stuart and Stuart, 1977; Castañeda, forthcoming).

On the other hand, I suggest that the ethnography is adequate as a representation if the referent is inverted or redirected from that imaginary community south of Chichén to the situation of engagement that produced the text. The text *is* an adequate representation *of a transculturated and negotiated image* or imagining of an Indigenous Maya community with which 'everyone' who was concerned (CIW, the sociologist, the socialists, the federal government, the Ceme family, the schoolteacher) was *happy*! Here *was* Progress! And all those who were not happy with it, for example

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those 'malcontents' of Chan Kom, left. Unlike contemporary Chan Komeros, who flaunt the text as a self-representation, those malcontents did not love their community and thus migrated to Pisté,[14] that 'unhappy' town whose uncanniness was way out of place, especially since it was right *in* the way, that is, right in the 'middle' of the road from Mérida to Chichén.

Thus, we must now return to Pisté to further explain why 'Chan Kom, more than any other village in the region, defined progress for itself'. If the above elaborates on how and why the geographic space of Chan Kom was the site in which 'Maya Culture' was localized, we need now to ask why was the Folk Culture of Progress (or is it the Folk Progress of Culture?) not located in other villages, such as Pisté?

A measured 'postmodernity': the scandal of zero-degree impact

> Dear Mr Gilbert [Administrative Secretary of CIW]:
>
> 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 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.[15]
> (Signed Morris Steggerda, 3 April 1939; emphasis added)

On 6 April the Bursar provided Mrs Harrison, the Carnegie Editor, with the requested: the total sum paid *in local wages* by Sylvanus G. Morley during the eight-year period between 1927 and 1934 was $80,703.93 or a *yearly average of $10,087.93*. The least amount spent in any of these years was just over $4000 for 1934; the greatest amount was over $15,000 in 1927 and 1932.[16]

Four days after the initial request for information, the Administrative Secretary answered Steggerda:

> The data now in hand concerning cost of labor at Chichén 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

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> laborers, sometimes as many as fifty or more being engaged for a season, and most of these men were Pisté inhabitants. In addition the Mexican Government employed many of Pisté's men in work of restoration of Chichén Itzá. The large amount of money paid in wages for such service, most of which was probably spent in Pisté, 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 7 April 1939; emphases added)

Here is a curious, if scandalous, dissimulation and passing of the blame. First, no figures were requested, tabulated, presented or relayed concerning the number of workers under Morley. My own research led me to the Proposed Budget for 1925 which entails a wage labor expense of $10,000+ for a hundred workers divided into about 80 excavators ('tram-men, day laborers etc.') at 75¢ a day and 20 masons at $1.00 a day; this does not include the 10–15 persons who for eighteen years composed the house staff of the Hacienda (among whom were Chinese-Koreans, Maya and both Mexican and Yucatec *mestizos*).[17] Thus, budgets of $4000 and $15,000 correlated with approximately 40 and 150 laborers, respectively, calculated on an average $100 per worker (skilled and unskilled) for four months' work: considering that Pisté had a population ranging from 300 to 400 inhabitants, this represents between 10 percent and 25 percent of the total population, or virtually all of the men of town for most years. Yet, Gilbert suggests that Steggerda mention no more than 50 as the usual number of workers, that is, from half to a third the actual figure. Second, the Secretary of the CIW deploys, and suggests Steggerda use, a tactic of distraction that sloughs off some of the responsibility: the Mexican government also hired locals and are, therefore, also responsible for whatever 'impact' may have resulted. 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*

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impact? There is a powerful assumption and moral framework operating here: Pisté *should have progressed*. The town *should* have *cultivated* the American presence; *should* have *improved* its 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 Steggerda's 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 Chichén Itzá was begun under the administration of Felipe Carrillo Puerto . . . the new highway gave Pisté, for the first time, free access to the railway. Two years later Carnegie Institution rented the hacienda at Chichén Itzá 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 of Chichén Itzá. *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; emphases added)

Pisté, in a secret opposition to Chan Kom, is truly, then, the topos and trope of *anti-progress*. This is due not simply to Steggerda's ethnographic representation of it, but to some of the manifest (if not well understood) characteristics of this town. Redfield himself could not (or for some reason did not bother to) imagine Pisté as a Progressive community much less a Folk Culture. 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 a zero-degree culture: a non-impact on a non-culture. In this way the Yucatec landscape is made blank or wiped clean. The obstacles to anthropological science, Socialist reforms in education and government are removed, 'erased' as it were, from the

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topography to provide a *tabula rasa* for a new inscription of culture localized in a new spatial order.

Pisté *should have progressed*: it should have improved itself and reformed its community through a 'wise' investment of the material benefits gained through the benevolent association with the Modern Americans. But it 'did not'. Situated in a space deterritorialized by war, Pisté enjoyed a freedom of a frontier: sacked in the beginning of the Caste War and then again in 1862, a small population only slowly refounded a town in the 1880s which then endured another reign of violence known as the Mexican Revolution. Afterwards, it became a place of refuge for Maya liberated from slave-peonage on *henequen* haciendas and, even later, from the violent struggles of nearby Chan Kom. This frontier allowed a relative political *freedom from*: authority structures that were being planted at the time; *from* attempts at local appropriation of these mechanisms as in Chan Kom; *from* political ideologies and practices imposed from the metropolises or *from* age-old system of tributary labor like the *fagina*. Also, there were '*freedoms to*' in terms of economics, religion and social relations, for example: *to* subsist within traditional economies of household production and *to* explore entrepreneurial endeavors opened by an expanded wage economy; *to* abide by three different religious traditions (Catholicism, Protestantism and Maya traditional ritual); *to* spend the profits from work in a myriad of ways, such as commerce, hoarding and in the consumption of alcohol – that sin which has always triggered decadence and anarchy in the Western-Christian imagination. Whereas the various forms of *un*-freedom, i.e. the *socio-economic control* or *discipline* of Chan Kom were perceived, understood, categorized, analyzed as Progress and as Culture, the 'freedoms *from* and *to*' that were enjoyed in Pisté were excessive, in excess, anarchic, anomalous and ultimately a *danger* to both the Redfieldian theory and the Carnegie image of itself and the world it attempted to know and shape.[18]

This was a freedom that *resisted* insertion into metropolitan typologies of social forms: it was a community that practiced, as it were, an 'indifferent' self-imaging, as Steggerda noted. And why not? After eighty years of war beginning with the Caste War (1847–1901) through to the Mexican Revolution (1917–1921 in Yucatán) the threat of destructive raids or random violence was constant. Here is a collective sensibility – an ethos – that would 'define' Pisté in the minds of its observers as indifferent to metropolitan notions of 'goals', 'ethos',[19] and modernist *schemes of social types*. Thus, it could be, has been and is said that Pisté, 'more than any other town in the region differs from, abstains from, resists *defining itself* to itself and for Others'. It positions itself in tension with or even outside the

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grids and discourses of modernity (the nation, state, anthropology): it is knocked *loose*; it is *loose space*. Community can be neither imagined nor cultivated here – except of course by those secret bonds of integration that re-routed Pisté refugees from a war zone back to their plots of corn and stone hearths that they *once owned*. These are bonds that have remained savage to scientific domestication.

Pisté was not simply the opposite of Culture, whether Urban-Modern or Folk-Traditional, but the unspeakable supplement to Culture that ruptures its categorical forms. Is it surprising then that Chan Kom was the topos marked as and by (Maya, Folk, Traditional, Progressive) Culture because it was a place of *un*freedom? After all, the concept of culture develops as the name of that underlying and pervasive social control (variously defined as 'norms', 'tradition', 'rules', 'civilization') that makes humans social animals over and against 'nature' (cf. Cottom, 1989; Herbert, 1991; Rosaldo, 1989).[20] In contrast, Pisté, as a non-place of non-culture, was erased from anthropological memory leaving only the telltale traces of an immemorial anarchy, anomie and anomaly on the topography of Maya Culture.

What then is the scandal of this mysterious impact and zero-degree culture? The operative assumption in the Carnegie correspondence is that the intervention of Anthropology and its Culture-bearers (that is, Anthropologists) must necessarily and automatically lead to progress, which is conceived as a duplicitous event of *directed change* linked to non-change and allochronic stasis (Fabian, 1983). Imagined here is a Modernizing of the Other that maintains Tradition. This is a dream of a difference that remains the same, that is, remains in the *same place* within the anthropological cosmography of cultural forms. Thus, the glory of the Carnegie, which Redfield triumphed, was the 'modernizing' that effected stasis as tradition. The scandal of the Carnegie, however, was that it triggered (putatively) no change, but, nonetheless, planted the future alteration of the community-town. The scandal that is named by Pisté is a community that remained the same in its alterity or difference from the categories and systems of knowledge that would securely situate it as a topos among the ideal types of culture-localities within the ethnographic *mappa mundi*. The alterity of Pisté was not 'conquered' by anthropological knowledge: it was not inscribed within the economy of culture invented through anthropology.

The resistance and resilience of this alterity to anthropological inscription would be later explained by the concept of *impact* and its agent, tourism. Burdened by expanded economic opportunities – increased economic freedom, no? – Pisté becomes fully 'impacted' by tourism: by the

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1980s, Pisté became understood as a quintessential case of the 'cultural destruction' of communities that is perceived to occur through the supposedly 'external' intervention of development, modernity, tourism-capitalism (see Castañeda, forthcoming). Can there be any surprise that some of the more vociferous critics of the cultureless, community-less, and Maya-lessness of Pisté are archeologists, that is, those whose disciplinary ancestors explicitly and consciously created Chichén Itzá as a monument to the science of archeology in the form of a tourist attraction and site (Castañeda, forthcoming; Kidder, 1931; Sullivan, 1989)? The invention of culture is, indeed a complicitous web of practices.

But the scandal is not simply this discursive distortion and textual inadequacy. The issue is not at all the white lie told to Steggerda by the directors of the Carnegie to hide a zero-degree impact; rather, it is the dissimulation of an ethics of knowledge that is necessarily in practice a politics of science. At stake here 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' (see Rosaldo, 1989). The scandal, I argue, is not so much that what we hold to be objective and neutral is actually not: that there is a politics to all knowledge is now a well-known truth. The scandal is rather that we continue to *conceal* the intricacies of this politics. This scandal is also *an error*, for that politics (and its history) is not extraneous to either the object of study or social scientific method, *but it is part of the object*. The politics of knowledge is that which constitutes the phenomenon as an object and thus must be a part of the method that makes the study of that object science (see Ulin, 1984). The 'object' of study is indeed a complex web of contested meanings and of complicitous practices.

The progress that chose a village

> The question then arises as to whether we want to fill in the broad picture of anthropology's growth that is already familiar to us or to illuminate through anthropology aspects of the transformation of which this discipline was a small part. (Asad, 1991: 'Afterword')

In a volume devoted to the relations between anthropology and colonialism, Asad (1991: 315) warns us that the role the discipline has played in consolidating imperial domination was usually trivial. While this seems to be very true at the most immediate levels of political and economic action, I – as a believer, bearer and observant practitioner in the superstition we

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call 'culture' – have a suspicion that this may be too quick an assessment of the 'impact' of anthropology in the world.

Terence Turner, as Asad in fact approvingly notes, suggests that the ramifications of anthropological practices and discourses of culture may be profound, pervasive and a mostly imperceptible reformulation of the way human groups imagine themselves, others and the relations between self and other. The situation that Turner (1991) describes for the Kayapo is, he argues and I agree, cross-culturally generic:

> If the Kayapo are any indication, the processes of cultural and ethnic self-conscientization that have been catalyzed by the new media and their use in worldwide networks of communication are becoming more important as components of 'culture' (or, by the same token, 'ethnicity') and more central to basic social and political processes in many 'primitive' and 'traditional' as well as 'modern' cultures. This comes to the same thing as saying that the nature of 'culture' itself is changing together with the techniques we employ to study and document it. (1991: 310)

What I find curious about Turner's argument is the way he truncates the historical depth of the transculturation that he has so nicely isolated: why does the seemingly most recent and 'advanced' technology of the West cause this change in the 'nature of culture'? If we take Turner's own conclusion seriously – that is, that through their co-participation in a series of films on the Kayapo 'their "culture" and my "theory" had become, in some measure, our joint product' (Turner, 1991: 312) – then are not 'cultures' themselves a joint and ongoing production begun in that fabled moment of contact between 'Europe' and the 'rest of the world'? Asad addresses this point when he suggests that 'the role of Western technologies in transforming colonial subjects' needs to be studied more systematically, if, 'however, [we] extend the concept of technology to include all institutionalized techniques that depend on and extend varieties of social power (Asad, 1991: 323).

Although it is now an old myth, is not the 'first' such technology of power that of textual inscription, which includes the techniques of writing, reading, reproducing, circulating and interpreting texts (texts in the widest sense)? Might we refer to this technology as scriptural, not only because it indicates procedures of writing and reading of texts that are held in high regard, but since what is produced (scripts, texts, scriptures, images) are vehicles for constituting, communicating, asserting, manipulating and altering the truths accepted by communities? Anderson (1983) points out that the significance of this technology, specifically in the form of print-capitalism, is not so much what truths are being produced, but the forms (languages, newspapers, etc.) in which they are being consumed.

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This is also what Asad argues when he directs our attention to the colonial situation through which 'customary law' was invented. In turn, de Certeau (1984) calls the economy of truths that emerged from transformations in the sixteenth century in relation to print-capitalism, a 'scriptural economy'.

This notion seems to be a useful concept by which to think through several problems. First, it is a vehicle by which to conjoin the political economy of social practices with the economy of 'cultural' or ideological practices and effects. Second, it provides angles by which to inspect the intervention of anthropology (or any scientific discipline) within that which is being studied. Third, it provides an image or concept by which to imagine the multiple levels and contexts of cultural-ideological productions, from the microphysical and local through to the most global. In other words, it provides an analytical model to think through questions about so-called 'transnational' cultural communities, institutions and their interrelationships. Fourth, in providing a comprehensive image to think of relations between local and global as well as political and cultural, the idea of scriptual economy allows for the heterogeneity of, and conflict between, practices and interests while nonetheless comprehending their complicity and articulation. Fifth, although this concept as an analytical model of reality tends towards totalizing comprehension, within the notion itself it acknowledges and deconstructs the procedures by which it synthesizes and integrates phenomena into a reified abstraction: like the nations, cultures and communities that it may be used to analyze, the scriptural economy is also an 'imaginary machine', i.e. a fiction we make real by envisioning its utility.

(Unconscious of?) the scriptural economy: blindness in citation

> The question of values is very fundamental. As long as the old values appear more rewarding they'll stick with them. We used to think that all you have to do is to expose people to education and they'll change their ways. (Gillen, cited in Tax, 1952: 275)

Since 'Redfield' the Maya of Yucatán have been understood, studied, and represented as the Modern or Modernizing Maya. As an example of the continuing power of the pervasive trope that Redfield and Villa Rojas and the Chan Komeros initiated, consider the closing paragraph of a recent ethnography dealing with 'tradition and change among the Yucatec Maya':

> It was late afternoon when Nicolas and Maria returned to the village. Nicolas had a load of corn he carried on his back by a tumpline crossing his forehead. Maria carried a load of wood for the hearth. As they entered town, they

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> walked past the cemetery. A new tomb had been placed there for Silvestre May Balam, who represented the past as Nicolas and Maria represented the present. They saw their young son Jose Feliciano and their daughter Reina squatting by the side of their yard. The two children were chewing on small ears of corn, biting into the kernels, and in their other hand, they each held a bottle of Coke. These children represented the future. (Kintz, 1990: 147)

Although the text ends ambiguously indeed on this note, it is accompanied (and the message repeated) by a photo (Kintz, 1990: 146, Figure 7.5) of these barefooted Maya children with their bottle of Coke: Culture and Coke, Tradition and Modernity. As for them, the Future is the Modernizing of Tradition. Coke and Culture: as if to ensure the endless circularity of the reference, the text accompanies the photo and the photo accompanies the text and forges a hermetically sealed cosmology based on statements of symbolic equivalences. The reading movement between photo and text reproduces the movement between Coke and Culture as each supplements the other with its oppositional value. Locked into this circular movement to decipher the meaning or implications of this scriptural economy, one realizes that there is no escape, no outside referent, no Future. Time and history are hypostatized, frozen, into the image of Modernizing of Tradition that never fully becomes Modern nor fully returns to a prior, supposedly 'authentic', Tradition.

In *Chan Kom* and Chan Kom, that atypically typical village that chose progress, a topography of Yucatec Maya Culture was inaugurated. These days, all the villages of rural Yucatán are typically atypical in that they are modernizing Maya communities. There are exceptions, such as Pisté Maya, whose hybridization of traditional and Western culture has been de-legitimated as a site of the cultural corruption of tourism. In truth they are already modernized Maya. In this landscape authenticity is measured along a continuum, not between Folk and Urban loci, but between a zero-degree culture and an always hypostatized Modernizing Maya. But before dismissing this imaginary landscape and these imagined communities' peoples as simply non-real, non-material, textual figments of the imagination, we need remember that the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) and its allied classes have done everything they could imagine to ensure the accuracy, reality, even truthfulness of the textual depictions of this ethnographic tradition and topography. The Maya soldiers of the EZLN with wooden guns were rebelling against the political economy of *Salinastroika* but also against the scriptural economy of ethnographic knowledge.

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NOTES

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1. Villa Rojas (1979) discusses this long-term, collaborative project.
2. Among the topics researched by Steggerda were *milpa* production, animal husbandry, anthropometry, diet and calorie consumption, death and birth rates, and associated demographic-genetic issues.
3. This refers to 'new' social spaces within postmodernity. He offers postmodern, modern and ex-primitive as a new continuum of sociocultural types. I suggest that Pisté, at least, is as outside, beyond and against this typology as it is contradictory to Redfield's Continuum; thus, Pisté would be *anti-*, *non-* or *post-*ex-primitive.
4. For economic and demographic details see Castañeda (1991: Appendices C–D).
5. A.V. Kidder's annual reports of Carnegie projects attest to the dissonance of Steggerda's research topics, e.g. metabolic rates, nutritional content of food samples, growth patterns of adolescents, fecundity of soil types, personality traits, extensive anthropometric measurements, history of domestic construction: see Kidder (1931: 109–11).
6. Cottom (1989) and Herbert (1991), but also Williams (1983), Wagner (1981) and de Certeau (1984, 1988) have inspired my argument.
7. In *The Village that Chose Progress: Chan Kom Revisited* Redfield gives explicit recognition to his self as author and greater attention to 'Sr. D. Eustaquio Ceme, [who] appears often in the pages' (1950: x) as shaping the image of the village.
8. As Boon (1982) has discussed with the 'functionalist book', the initial chapters are part of a scriptural machinery that constitutes the object-culture of study as a demarcated isolate that is to be described and analyzed (Fabian, 1983). Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934) have two initial chapters that accomplish this task: Chapter 1, 'The Village', creates these imaginary boundaries of Chan Kom under section titles such as 'Gradients of Civilization', 'The Position of Chan Kom', 'The Location of Chan Kom', 'The Spatial Limits of the Native World', 'The Temporal Limits of the Native World', 'Population', 'Population Change', 'Literacy', 'Race and Nativity', 'Language'. This listing indicates that the imagining of community boundaries is not as simple as marking spatial and temporal divisions; instead, the boundaries must be made in a variety of overlapping and reinforcing criteria. Thus, Chapter 2, 'History', deals with another *abstract* dimension of temporality

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so as to constitute community boundary. Later, in the chapter on economics, the ethnographers again refer to the boundaries by arguing that trade is a function of the outside world (conducted by itinerant traders) and, thus, foreign to the villagers of Chan Kom. This 'description', of course, contributes as evidence to the 'interpretative' modeling of the Folk Society.

9. This incident of Lévi-Strauss's travels in *Tristes Tropiques* has a substantial literature grafted to it, beginning with Derrida, who deconstructs the logocentric grounds of the event and its retelling (1976: 101–40); but see also van den Abbeele (1992: xxiv–xxv, 136 n 28) and de Certeau (1988: 209–15).
10. See, for example, Chapter 2 of Redfield (1950: 25–45), entitled, 'Instruments of Living, Old and New', or Chapter 6 (pp. 113–38) where it is precisely the combination of past and present that is argued as the basis and embodiment of this progress that the village chose. Here, Progress is not anti-modern or primitive, but a modernity unlike the hegemonic, Western version because it roots itself to tradition.
11. First, there is the collaboration of three authorial interlocutors (junior and senior authors and the authorial voice of the primary informant), each of whom have independently contributed sections (Don Eustaquio's autobiography, Villa Rojas's Diary and Redfield's theoretical overlays); the text as a whole, in content and form, attests to the dialogical intersection of these minds. At another level, there are the constitutive shadow dialogues with the discourses whose intersection constitutes the field of action in which the text is written: the legends, myths and folktales of Yucatec society, the socialist Revolution, science, sociology, the new education system of the Mexican government, Maya healing systems and agricultural rituals, archeology, Maya oral history, etc.
12. Pratt (1992: 6–7; *passim*) links this to transculturation and travel writing.
13. These comments are paraphrases of Derrida: 'Each text is a machine with multiple reading heads of other texts' (1979: 107). Also see Boon (1982, 1989) on text, writing/reading and culture.
14. Not all Chan Kom's religious and political exiles moved to Pisté (see Goldkind, 1966: 326–8, also n 3, 4; Castañeda, forthcoming, for details).
15. This letter and the other correspondence cited below are located in the archives of the CIW, which I was graciously allowed to research in summer of 1986.
16. The figures are as follows (related expenditures are in Castañeda, 1991: Appendix B):

Year	Wages paid (US$)	Estimated no. of workers
1927	15,902.50	159
1928	7357.79	74
1929	9745.56	97
1930	11,496.78	115
1931	6388.98	64
1932	15,319.47	153
1933	10,251.25	103
1934	4241.60	42

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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. It is also worth noting the explanatory or qualifying text that *follows* the data: 'The figures are based on Chinese as well as Indian labor, in accordance with your request.' Here is one of those tell-tale traces (of 'postmodernity') that indicates just how weird the sociological situation of Pisté was perceived to be: what are *Chinese* doing in a *Maya* village?! Similar exclamations are scattered among the other Carnegie documents pertaining to budgets (proposed and actual) and other extraordinary encumbrances.

17. There was a Chinese cook, a Mexican chauffeur, a Yucatec *mestizo* as Head Foreman, while all the houseboys, gardeners, washerwomen and miscellaneous laborers were Maya. This information comes primarily from the 1924, 1925 and 1926 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.
18. It needs to be made clear that my use of 'freedom' is a relative concept and my use poaches on that of Redfield and common understandings. In no way am I arguing for a total freedom or anarchy in Pisté, but that it is implicitly represented in this fashion.
19. These are the topics of Chapters 1 and 7 of Redfield (1950).
20. My choice of these words is in reference to: Douglas's (1966) analysis of the danger and pollution of anomaly; Mathew Arnold's theory of Culture in relation to Anarchy (see Williams, 1983); and, Herbert's (1991) discussion of the founding superstitions of Culture as a discourse and theory. Herbert notes how the concept of Culture is grounded on the principle of control; that even the most primitive and uncivilizational group is a culture because there is some organization and thus socio-moral control of individuals, interactions and group behavior.

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