Vulnerable identities: Maya Yucatec identities in a postmodern world

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Miami, Florida

VULNERABLE IDENTITIES:
MAYA YUCATEC IDENTITIES IN A POSTMODERN WORLD

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
SOCIOLOGY

by
Juan Castillo Cocom

2000
To: Dean Arthur W. Herriott  
College of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation, written by Juan Castillo Cocom, and entitled Vulnerable Identities: Maya Yucatec Identities in a Postmodern World, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Kathleen Martín, Major Professor

Date of Defense: April 03, 2000

The dissertation of Juan Castillo Cocom is approved.

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Dean Arthur W. Herriott  
College of Arts and Sciences

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Dean Richard L. Campbell  
Division of Graduate Studies

Florida International University, 2000
DEDICATION

To Don Sixto, my father, and to Doña Raquel, my mother,

and to Lianita with thanks.
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I am very much indebted to Dr. Kathleen Martín, Dr. Hugh Gladwin, Dr. Robert McKenna Brown, and Carlos Bojórques Urzáiz, members of my committee who encouraged me to look at the world through anthropological eyes.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

VULNERABLE IDENTITIES:

MAYA YUCATEC IDENTITIES IN A POSTMODERN WORLD

by

Juan Castillo Cocom

Florida International University, 2000

Miami, Florida

Professor Kathleen Martín, Major Professor

In numerous anthropological works there have been preoccupations about the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Whatever social researchers have concluded, one thing is consistent: the tendency to interpret ethnographic “data” in terms of binary oppositions. This dissertation reviews the works which have been centered upon binary oppositions, as for instance, in the case of Yucatan, between the Maya and the Dzul—the Yucatec Maya term for white males—and highlights the fact that such works have failed to recognize that within and between each “pole,” or social group there are individuals that have multiple identities, and that do not recognize themselves as belonging to a homogenized “pole.” Instead, these individuals, recognize themselves as belonging to different groups and, therefore, being aware that they have not a single identity but multiple ones.

Analogical anthropology is highly criticized because of its emphasis on binary oppositions, its authoritarianism, and the notion of the “Other.” In contrast, dialogical anthropology places great importance on the relationship between the individuals and the
anthropologist. A relation in which both, the anthropologist and the subject, are immersed in a dialogue, because of the identification between the writer and the story that is being written.

However, anthropologists seem to be more interested in “dialoguing” among themselves rather than with the people that they write about. Indigenous people are relegated, they are voiceless, and, therefore, we keep treating them as “objects,” and not as individuals. This is ironic, precisely because it undermines the aim of the dialogical discourse.

In this context, awareness of self-identity or self-identities and the various ways in which Francisco, a good friend and the main character of this dissertation, assumes them, and the way I assume them, within multicultural contexts, leads us along the road to establish and reestablish communication. The methodology is based on four considerations: positioning, fieldwork conversations, self reflexivity and vulnerability. Hence, this dissertation constitutes an attempt to break with authoritarian models of ethnography, it is a dialogue between Francisco and me, a conversation among ourselves. A dialogue that expresses the desire of hearing our voices being echoed by each other.
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Introduction

“My name is Francisco Cen Kú.... What did you say?” I cannot hear you.... Oh, How old am I? ... I believe that I am 48 years old. I knew it well before, but the hurricane Gilbert (1988) stole me the age, the time and the roof of my home.... Cotz [my nickname in Xocenpich and that means: the tail of the rabbit] why do you ask me those things, if you already know me....”?

The setting where the events described in this dissertation occur is Xocenpich, a small, rural community in the state of Yucatán, México. The protagonists discussed in this dissertation do not perceive space, time or their lives as an “ethnographic field.” But rather they perceive of the town as where one of its members—I, Juan Castillo Cocom—began to ask questions and to look at the things that everybody knows without having to go to study to the USA.

“... After so much study are they going to graduate you as a chismoso [gossiper]?” Francisco asked me with an air of disbelief.

“I thought that you would serve for something better in this town,” he concluded.

Francisco was putting in doubt the usefulness that an anthropologist might have in his community. Under these circumstances the dissertation that I present constitutes an attempt to understand the phenomenon of multiple identities in the context of the so-called post modernity through the dialogues between Francisco and me. Our conversations, are more than verbal uttering, they constitute the sound of our own echoes and the reverberations
of our own voices. The interaction between Francisco and me, during several months of fieldwork broke the relation Anthropologist/Other that is the main characteristic of analogical anthropology as well as its paternalistic conceptions about the so-called “indigenous reality.”

In this context, this dissertation is not guided by the notion of the “Other” but instead, in accordance with Neumann (1996), by how cultural observations continuously retell a story about the dialectics of self and culture. This dissertation is a dialogue between Francisco and me, a conversation between ourselves. It is the replacement of the dialectics of “Anthropologists/Other” by the dialectics of “Self/Culture.”

When I began my fieldwork as anthropologist, I thought that my identity as a Maya of Xocenpich (see Map 1 in page 3) would become an obstacle in the construction of an “objective” account. If I departed from the theoretical approaches purported by the long established school of British Anthropology, I would be unable to carry out my fieldwork because its ideas of seeking “objectivity” and avoiding getting mixed with “its” “objects” of study. Those “objects” of “study” are the people with whom the anthropologist interacts in the “process” of doing her or his research. But, how would I be able to avoid getting “mixed” with the people with whom I grew up and with the community of which I am a part?

In this context, my fieldwork account was grounded in the cultural imagery of Xocenpich and, mainly of Francisco. This is to say a social-historic setting described with the language of its cultural actors, of whom I am one as a Maya anthropologist. The scenery of bottles buried in the wall of an old Church, plaques to heroes, Protestant Pastors, and parabolic antennas, it is in and itself a speech that could seem metaphoric to a Western reader. However any Xocenpicheño bien nacido [well born Xocenpicheño], such as Don Valuch or Francisco, knows that the history of Xocenpich would be incomplete if their names are not included.
Map 1. Location of Xocenpich
My challenge is double. On the one hand, I need to be faithful to the members of the community to which I belong. I have to use their language that is so saturated with expressions that at times it becomes poetry. I am obligated to write their names in a written history; not in the manner I choose or decide, but in the way they want their names to be written. If I fail, I would risk my identity as a Xocenpicheño, an identity heavily questioned by Francisco, who before I finished writing this dissertation told me:

"Hmmm, by the way, don’t you dare write _pendejadas_ [In this context, this term could be translated as trivialities, things with nonsense] when you write about me. Say everything, put all the words that came out of my mouth, including that I “robbed” my mother-in-low because, as you know, I nabbed Enriqueta from her!"

On the other hand, I am entailed to comply with the goals and academic requirements that a doctoral dissertation demands. This implies that I have to systematize the cultural imaginary of Xocenpich in three chapters that integrates the formulation of the main problem: identities in multicultural contexts. The answers to this phenomenon are grounded in two premises: 1. a revision of the different theoretic and methodological approaches of anthropology in dealing with these issues and, 2. the way that multiple identities are being constructed and deconstructed in the cultural imaginary of Xocenpich, as an expression of alternatives speeches.

In this context, my intention is to construct and deconstruct the idea of multiple identities in the cultural imaginary of Xocenpich by employing anthropological tools such as dialogical anthropology. In this order of ideas, Chapter 1 is entitled, _Self-Identification in Multiple Identity Contexts_. This first chapter has four sections. The first one is _Saints_,
Masks and Puppies. It is a dialogue with Francisco in which he reveals the complexity of his cosmovision of his Yucatec reality. This dialogue opens the doors to the literature review in which I discuss the theoretical interpretations of indigenous identities.

The purpose of the heading of Chapter 1 is to, by means of a dialogue with Francisco, present his cultural imagery in the context of particular anthropological interpretations including dialogical anthropology and ethnographic accounts. I discuss dialogical discourses in section three of the first chapter. I use the same style of opening with a dialogue between Francisco and myself when I discuss the methodology that I used in my research.

In Chapter 1 I propose that the dialogues among actors about their cultural imagery is one way to empower their cosmovisions as an alternative way to break the hegemony that anthropologists— and their cultural “truths”—have had in their relations with what they term the “indigenous world.”

Chapter 2 contains the necessary historic-geographical coordinates to situate the cultural imagery of Xocenpich. The first section reveals the deep cosmovision that this community has of its own history. Likewise, it shows the way in which the Xocenpicheños look upon their own past from an angle that contrasts the population, the cartographic, and historiographic data founded in this research. The collective memory of Xocenpich includes a list of its first inhabitants rolled up in a paper that was put inside a bottle that someone, for some reason whose logic does not enter anthropological knowledge, buried in a wall of the old Catholic Church in the town. The meaning that this story has seems more intense than the plaques to heroes and pastors, more than that of the parabolic antennas. This alternate
way of seeing the history, and the key role that it plays in a multiple identity context, is complemented with the information collected in archives, files and libraries of Mérida: the "center" of the "culture" and the official "history" of Yucatán.

The Chapter 3 is the heart of this dissertation. It is where the cultural scenery of Xocenpich implants its sounds and its logic through the conversations with Francisco. These conversations are a reflection on the essences and differences of identities in a multicultural context. But above all, this dialogue demonstrate the existing impenetrable borders among those who are trying to construct an anthropological truth and those who are inventing and reinventing the cultural imagery of Xocenpich.

In this context, the cultural imagery assigns me the status of Dzul, the Yucatec Maya term for white males with a Buenos días (in Spanish, “Good Day”; in English, “Good Morning.”), a greeting reserved for the Dzul. But to the other inhabitants the cultural imagery assigns them the status of a Xocenpicheño with a simple “días” (in Spanish, “days”). The meaning attached to the word could be translated as “good time” and should be taken seriously by any anthropologist in setting-up the criteria for fieldwork methodology. As I stated at the beginning of this introduction, my effort is not directed to test the validity of any anthropological theories or methods in the social reality of Xocenpich. Rather my intention is to construct and deconstruct ideas on the knowledge that arises from cultural imagery.
Finally the conversations with Francisco help me to visualize the limitations of dialogical anthropology because the anthropological dialogue is, sometimes, a conversation with imagery absents, without the voice of the actors. But, above all, it excludes the possibility of trapping a magic reality that according to Gabriel García Márquez (1978) does not require another invention or utopia; it only requires the desire of being included in the true concert of voices.
Chapter 1

Self-Identification in Multiple Identity Contexts

1. Saints, Masks, and Puppies

The noise of the traffic outside the Café Express, one of the most traditional coffee shops in Mérida, was intense. It was about seven in the morning, and the politicians, daily customers of the Express, were making a commotion equal to that of the traffic outside. Y no era para menos (And, this was to be expected). For on the previous day, January 4th, 2000, Gaspar Antonio Xiu Cachón, a prominent member of the PRI\(^1\) (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) and self-proclaimed descendant of the rulers of Uxmal,\(^2\) had staged a major scandal during a legislative session of the Yucatecan State Congress. Sr. Xiu Cachón had taken the stand and stated that the memory of the revered, late socialist governor of Yucatán, Felipe Carrillo Puerto,\(^3\) had been defamed by members of the PAN\(^4\) (Partido...
Acción Nacional) during the annual January 3rd grave-side ceremony held to commemorate the late governor.

During this ceremony, everyone, according to tradition and protocol—as soon as the Master of Ceremonies had mentioned Felipe Carrillo Puerto’s name and also the names of all the other persons who were executed with him in 1924—was supposed to shout: “¡Asesinado por la Reacción!” [“Murdered by the Reactionary Faction!”]. However, according to newspaper reports, the Master of Ceremonies had mistakenly said: “¡Asesinado por la Revolución!” [“Murdered by the Revolution!”] instead of “¡Asesinado por la Reacción!” This error caused part of the audience to shout in unison: “¡Asesinado por la Revolución!”

Sr. Xiu Cachón bluntly expressed that the panistas (members of the PAN), took advantage of the confusion created by the Master of Ceremonies by purposely shouting: “¡Asesinado por la Revolución!” with the intention of slandering the memory of a politician best known as a defender of the interests of the underprivileged classes, especially the Maya, and as a foe of the major capitalists of his time. This whole situation, according to Xiu Cachón, constituted an attack, not only against former Governor Carrillo Puerto, but also against the contemporary Maya and the ruling political system, the PRI.

Sr. Xiu Cachón, in his speech, exclaimed that Carrillo Puerto was murdered by the members of El Partido Liberal [The Liberal Party] and by the “reactionary faction.” According to him, this party was composed by the Casta Divina and the reactionary faction of Yucatán. He claimed that this party was the “predecessor of the PAN” and, for that reason, the panistas are their political heirs.

Sr. Xiu Cachón, went on to say that it was not only Carrillo Puerto whom the reactionary faction had killed, but also Jacinto Canek, a renowned Maya leader who rebelled
against Spanish rule in 1761. Sr. Xiu Cachón claimed “They killed him at the Plaza, broke his bones with a metal bar, burnt him, and his ashes were cast to the wind,” and that, meanwhile, in the Cathedral, the same people were celebrating a Te Deum mass. Furthermore, Sr. Xiu Cachón stated that the panistas were the same people who had massacred the Maya during the Caste War; and that they were the same ones that oppress the Maya today.

On the ensuing days, the media feverishly covered the responses of the Sociedad Yucateca to his accusations. Some collaborators of the Diario de Yucatán wrote that Gaspar Antonio Xiu Cachón, “seems to be keen on being the leader of another Caste War,” or that he had made an “abrupt indelicate remark.” He was referred to, among other epithets, as a “loose-mouthed congressman,” “a politician of the past” and a “congressman and a grotesque history professor.”

Returning to the original scene at the Café Express, now without politicians, the regular atmosphere had been restored to the coffee shop. A gabachero (a contemporary Yucatecan Don Juan with eyes solely fixed on the conquest of foreign women) had installed himself at a table near a blonde tourist, with a camera hanging on her chest and a bottle of purified water in her hand. At the same time, a billetero (someone who sells lottery tickets) and a performer of magic tricks had walked in as the waiters chatted to one another in Yucatec Maya mocking the alleged Maya leader and other politicians. The quotidian was back.

A few days after this scene, back in Xocenpich, I was talking with Francisco (a good friend and the main character of this dissertation). As we drank cups of hot chocolate, we spoke about what had happened at the State Congress and the events that had taken place at Café Express. Francisco asked, “Gaspar who? Who is Gaspar?”
I responded that he was a Maya that had inserted himself in the state government.

Confused, he responded, “A Maya? Where is he from?”

I answered, “I think that he is from Oxcutzcab (a town in southern Yucatán).”

Francisco touched his face and, seemingly unimpressed, as if the conversation no longer interested him, looked at me, and uttered, “Hmmm...” as though he were trying to exhibit his boredom. He changed the subject and began talking about his dog and the many puppies to which she had recently given birth. After a pause, he told me that he had just bought a color television, a Goldstar, and that he wanted to tell me about a program that he had recently watched:

“In this program they showed a picture of a man known as Subcommander Marcos, a man who wears a mask. They say on TV that he is fighting for the Indigenous people. Personally, I like to see men wearing mask, but without guns, like in the wrestling fights. My favorite wrestling star was the late Santo, El Enmascarado de Plata [The Saint, the Man with the Silver Mask.] He didn’t have a gun, but Subcommander Marcos does, and it’s a humongous one!”

“Do you know why the wrestler did not have a gun? Because he did not need one, his weapon was his mask.... Anyway, in the same program, many people were shouting: ‘All of us are Marcos!’ But, if all of them were Marcos, why weren’t they wearing a mask? Why don’t they shout ‘All of us are Lucas!’ I mean, Lucas and Marcos are the same, for they were both holy Apostles, so there’s no difference between one name and the other.”

“I think,” he said to me, smiling, “that the people should shout: ‘All of us are Chol!’ (Chol is Francisco’s nickname) Hey! by the way, this here Gaspar, does he have a gun, or a mask?”

“Hmmm...” I said, while I was scratching my arm, trying to think of the “correct” answer, but I realized that the correct answer was unattainable. It was not the first time that I was unable to answer some of the questions that had arisen in the conversations that I had with the people of Xocenpich. Initially, when I could not offer answers, I would worry. I
believe that this is one of the problems that many anthropologists face. Sometimes we see ourselves as a sort of cultural “guide,” taking on missions of giving “tours” in the social and cultural realms. We become like tourist guides at any archeological site who always have the “correct” answer to any question and, when they do not, they invent one. To have “the” answers is an intricate part of our profession. Yet, as time has passed, I have to come to understand that lack of answers helps to establish, reestablish, and continue dialogue.

In this context, speaking with Francisco in our ongoing dialogue, does not consist solely in emitting verbal sounds, but also in listening, and remaining silent. But, more than just speaking, listening, and keeping silent, we have to find together the interconnection between our personal histories, or stories, and their contexts—although, at times, it seems that such contexts are non-existent. For example, what connections could there possibly be between a Goldstar T.V., a political scandal, Marcos, and a dog and her puppies? Or, between a mask, Saint Lucas, and a cup of chocolate? I do not know, but for me, the chocolate seemed somehow sweeter.

Subsequently, in the following days, I found myself in Mérida, entertaining questions crucial to this research that began to arise in my mind: Who does Gaspar Antonio Xiu Cachón represent? What does he stand for? Who does he identify with and who identifies with him? Is it the Maya? And, ultimately, who are they? Events like the Xiu Cachón affair question the issue of identity in Yucatán. I think that identity is not something neither univocal nor that should be trivialized and allowed to undermine social insights. For Xiu Cachón, there is a clear-cut division of identities in Yucatán: Maya and Dzul, the Yucatec Maya term for white males. Similarly, the media utilizes the same categorizations in its writings. As far as the waiters at Café Express are concerned it might not be so, but assuredly, Francisco and I see ourselves as having many identities.
2. Literature Review

In numerous anthropological works there have been preoccupations about the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Whatever social researchers have concluded, one thing is consistent: the tendency to interpret ethnographic data in terms of binary oppositions. As Tong points out, binary oppositions come from a positivist stand that purports a universe polarized in two well-recognized antagonistic entities (1989: 219). “Self” and “Otherness”, male and female, reason and emotion, are just some examples of these dualities. For feminists and Native American women writers (Kenneth 1997; Cook-Lynn 1996, Andrews and Creed 1989, Gun Allen 1987) this is untenable because those notions are representative of a masculinist discourse in which woman and Indigenous peoples are “Othered” because of their gender or their ethnicity (Donovan 1998, Fujimara-Fanselow, and Kameda 1995; Jaquette 1994; Tong 1989).

Anthropological theories about the Maya, as well as other Indigenous groups throughout Latin America, have derived from premises on binary oppositions, as for instance, Maya and Dzul. These premises have long pervaded the anthropological studies of the Maya. Among the early anthropological studies carried out in the Yucatán Peninsula, is Robert Redfield’s *The Folk Culture of Yucatán* (1940). Redfield was concerned with the question of change. Hence, he made out of this phenomenon, the object of his systematic research. Redfield’s work was permeated by the conception of the urban-folk continuum a concept that purports that the more urban community plays a center to the less urban, folk,
community. Therefore, a city, urban by definition, is the center around which the smaller communities gravitate.

Within this conceptual framework, Redfield carried out a comparative study of four different communities: Tusic, a paraje (a very small isolated community); Chan Kom, a hamlet; Dzitás, a pueblo (town); and Mérida, a city. He considered that between the paraje, the hamlet, and the pueblo, there was a folk-urban continuum that eventually and inevitably resulted in the category of city. Subsequently, his conception was grounded on a lineal evolutionary scale that moves from a “primitive” pole to a “civilized” pole. Hence, the notion purported by Redfield is not a continuum in reality, but rather is a bipolar conception.

Similarly, in the early studies, Sol Tax (1941) suggested that in Guatemala, Maya identity is based on the sense of belonging to a community or locality, rather than to a generalized, ubiquitous cultural group. For Tax, identity is more of a result of territorial considerations than any ethnic or linguistic bond. Identity had its origin in political, economic, and social organizations that existed prior to the Conquest; and, therefore, the identity that is based upon territoriality constitutes a “primitive” conception of the Maya worldview, and not a “civilized” one. Subsequently, Sol Tax’s idea of identity constitutes a binary opposition between the local (primitive) and some larger entity (civilized).

More recently, Bonfil Batalla (1994), assumed an essentialist position based on historical-cultural comparisons, to regard contemporary México as a social and ethnic duality: México Imaginario [Imaginary México] and México Profundo [Real México]. The México Imaginario, is rooted in the Western civilization that came with the Spanish conquistadores more that 500 hundred years ago. The México Imaginario is a Proyecto Civilizatorio Occidental [a Western Civilizing Project] (Bonfil Batalla 1994: 10) that has
forged a society that follows the ways and norms of the Euro-North-American civilization, shaping their values, their expectations, their hopes and their longings. Nevertheless, its population constitutes only but a minority in the country.

According to Bonfil Batalla, the México Profundo is entrenched in the Mesoamerican civilization. It is a Proyecto Civilizatorio Milenario [Millenarian Civilizing Project] (Bonfil Batalla 1994: 10) that has forged, and keeps shaping, the lives of the vast majority of the Mexican people. This majority, aspire to a world founded on the Mesoamerican roots; manifests ethnic diversity and multiculturalism; and, they are united by their cosmovision.

The population of México Profundo differs from the one of México Imaginario in that their own ethnic identity is the result of a long historical process. According to him, both civilizing projects are mutually antagonistic, mutually excluding, and mutually unreconciled. Hence, Bonfil Batalla, envisions contemporary México as a dualistic entity. A duality, that as for him and for other analysts of Mexican identity such as Bartolomé (1988), is represented by the dialectics of colonizer/colonized. This duality exists regardless, according to Bonfil Batalla and others, of the fact that the colonized have the agency and the will to resist the colonizers and reinvent themselves. Hence, again the bipolar conceptions arise as a suitable explanation of social realities.

The explanations, interpretations, and analysis based on binary oppositions, places Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people in different, excluding, antagonistic, and irreconcilable social structures. This is not to say that “both” social groups live in perfect harmony with each other, in fact, conflict has been always present between them. Additionally, it is not to neglect the existence of these groups. Undoubtedly, they exist and are part of the social scenario, but it is one thing is to acknowledge their existence, and,
another to contend or to imply that each group is constituted by a homogenized mass of individuals. Furthermore, the bipolar conception maintains that each of these structures has a hierarchy of its own that determines their inter-social relationships. Hence, from this perspective, “Indigenous peoples” are only one “pole” while opposing the “non-Indigenous peoples” of the other “pole.” The question that presents itself is: Which Indigenous peoples? Which non-Indigenous peoples? This illustrates the inherent dangers of homogenizing diverse and distinct Indigenous or non-Indigenous peoples. It is important to question the validity of this perspective because of its own inherent limitations to explain the vast complexity of issues such as identity in a changing world.

Subsequently, it is necessary to acknowledge that within each group there are individuals who do not recognize themselves as belonging to a specific group. There are those that reject being placed, against their will and without their permission, in one group or another. Those that do not recognize themselves as individuals with only one identity, but see themselves as having many identities. Perhaps the primary identification of many individuals takes place within their own communities, towns or villages, rather than with a group.

Henry Favre (1984) admonished against the fallacy of binary premises. Departing from a holistic perspective, he pointed out that the diverse Mesoamerican Indigenous groups are socially interdependent. Furthermore, they are articulated not only among their communities, but also with the regional, national, and global society. Favre, in his research, which was carried out in Highland Chiapas among Maya Tzotzil and Tzeltal communities, pointed out, without underestimating the importance of an already set cultural tradition, that the coexistence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups are linked together by dynamic
social brackets, both internal and external, which play a strong role in shaping individuals as they undergo continual transformations.

These social brackets explain not only the dependencies and relations given between Indigenous groups, but, more importantly the structural articulations between and among the global society. These brackets give way to a better comprehension of the existing relations among members of a giving community, among individuals from different communities, and among the individuals of a community and the global society. In this sphere of relations context, whereby conflicts are not always present, there are occurring not only socio-cultural, political, and economic transformations, but also identity transformations. Hence, the notion of collective identity, opens new ways of understanding: its collective meaning does not necessary imply ready acceptance of all and each member of a community, because such an identity could be denied at the individual level.

An example of how an individual denies her/his “Maya” identity is the process of Ladinization or the transition from being Maya to being Ladino,¹⁸ a term used in Guatemala and Chiapas for a Maya who begins to use Spanish, wears western clothes, and who politically, socially and economically seeks to dominate his or her fellow Maya. Hence, Ladinization is a process whereby an Indigenous person moves away from her/his cultural identity in order to adopt others that are foreign to them. In the case of Guatemala and the highlands of Chiapas, many Maya become Ladinos sometimes against their will

“...in an effort to avoid cultural discrimination and to facilitate their integration into the national education system and regional commercial networks controlled by Ladinos. Successful ‘passing,’ however, requires not only that Indians adopt Ladino cultural traits and identify them as Ladino, but also that others recognize them as Ladino.” (Fischer and McKenna Brown 1996:11).
In this context, binary oppositions have failed to recognize that within and between each “pole,” or social group there are individuals\textsuperscript{19} that have multiple identities. This is to say, within each group there are individuals who do not recognize themselves as belonging to a homogenized “pole.” Instead, these individuals, recognize themselves as belonging to different groups and, therefore, being aware that they have not a single identity but multiple ones. Sometimes, depending on the context, they choose one identity over another, which is an act of self-affirmation. Nevertheless, these individuals live in a world that is not ready to give any concessions: sometimes, choosing an identity is not their prerogative, but that of the dominant society.

The capability of an individual to have more than one identity cannot be explained from a dualistic perspective, due its homogenizing tendency. Therefore, as Said (1993) states, the binary oppositions that are important for the interests of nationalists and imperialists are history. They are being substituted by the awareness that it is not a matter of replacing old authority with new authority, “but that new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view” (1993:xxiv). In this context, it is important to consider at least three things:

1. Neither the \textit{Ladino} nor the Indigenous groups are compact and homogeneous social units. Both terms are all-inclusive, all-exclusionary, all-embracing, and homogenizing categories. Hence, when using statements like “\textit{Ladinos} are oppressors of Indigenous peoples”; “\textit{Ladinos} and the Maya are in continuous antagonism and conflict”; “The Maya are resisting the process of globalization”; or “people in Xocenpich are Maya,” we are making broad generalizations. Therefore, it is important to question this kind of
generalization. We, as anthropologists, must bear in mind that we are interacting with people who might have multiple identities; that we are interacting not only with mere categories or with "our" objects of study. And, most importantly, we are immersing ourselves in reciprocal and mutually discursive conversations with the people with whom we are interacting. In our writings, following Crapanzano (1986) the extended use of puns, oppositions, and separationist stands, should be put aside.

2. Individuals within their groups have multiple identities. The Metis of Canada who are of mixed ethnic background are an example of a people that belong to more than one culture, the Euro-Canadian and Native Canadian cultures. Because they are excluded from both cultures "...they negotiate an identity that draws on the strength of each other" (Donovan 1998:10). Similarly, Latinos in the United States are aware of having multiple identities, and like the Metis, these individuals are constantly negotiating and renegotiating their identities not only with the people with whom they interact but also within their inner selves. In their inner dialogue, individuals, according to Trueba (1999), disclose the different facets or layers of their personalities and their multiple identities as a consequence of their interaction with people from a myriad of cultures, languages and social classes. As Trueba explains:

"I cannot detach issues of my personal identity from issues of Latino solidarity, cultural hegemony in America, and the terrifying experience of discovering that our enduring self is gone or is a stranger from our past; so distant from our situated self (or our situated selves) that a major reconstruction job becomes essential. Let me explain. Contrary to a simple theory of adaptive strategies that mark in our lives a sequence of 'situated selves,' a chain of consecutive identities modifying the original enduring self, formed and nursed by our family of origin, through the early years of our life in the company of our parents and other adults, my identities (and probably those of many Latinos) seem to coexist and remain vital throughout my entire
life. Each identity becomes dominant vis-à-vis the group I interact with and the topic or focus of our interaction. I then can code-switch and take another identity, deal with another group, manage other matters, and move on to a third or fourth” (Trueba 1999: xxvii)

3. We must also be aware that it does not matter how many identities or cultures an individual has since these are socially constructed, reinvented, and reified. This is not to neglect the macro approach, though it is not enough to rely solely on it in order to understand cultural groups (Ritzer 1992:541). Therefore, it is also important to focus on a micro perspective, specifically on the individual level, to grasp the way people are able to bypass the borders of Otherness by establishing relationships that create new ways of understanding each other. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that there is a mutually informing dialectics between the micro and macro reality. Hence, neither of these perspectives are by themselves adequate in discussing the phenomenon of Indigenous and non-Indigenous identity. Even though that it seems to be that terms micro and macro are being used here as a dichotomy, in reality, I am aware, as pointed out by Ritzer, that “there is a continuum ranging from the micro to the macro end” (1992: 537). In other words, there is a dialectics between the two sets of realities—the micro and the macro linkage.

It is difficult to continue talking about an Indigenous México and a non-Indigenous México. Nowadays, at least in the case of Yucatán, it would be very difficult to say who is Maya and who is not Maya. Even though Bonfil Batalla (1992) talks about self-ascription to an ethnic group, no one can claim to be completely isolated from the influences of cultural and ethnic transformation. Which raises the question: to which group should I self-ascribe? Why are Indigenous peoples the Other? Or, why are Ladinos Other? Indigenous peoples disregard exotic views of themselves. Indigenous peoples have jumped out of the pristine
box in which we—the Other—have put them.

Native American writers have also raised those questions. Sherman Alexie, who was raised on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Washington State, calls himself Indian, “Indians, that’s what we call each other” (Mabe 1998:1D). In his screenplay “Smoke Signals”, he portrays Indians as modern Americans, not as noble savages or exotic beings trapped in a romantic past, and claims that:

“We are Americans too, citizens of this country as well as citizens of a particular tribe...That’s what we’ve not been allowed to be. We know it’s the 20th century. One myth is that we have trouble adapting to two worlds, but that is not true. I was born in Sacred Heart Hospital, where my mother sang to me in the Spokane Indian Language... The key is not whether Indians can live in both worlds, but whether they want to...” (Mabe 1998:2D).

In my opinion, we are not living in just two worlds but in many worlds. Direct communication among them is not necessarily taking place but they still influence one another. For example, in Cobá, Quintana Roo, a village with probably no more than a few hundred inhabitants, a person buys a Coca-Cola at the store. He drinks it by the main pyramid and speaks Maya with someone. He is showing the archeological site to a group of German tourists. They consider Coca-Cola as the symbol of American colonialism, without understanding how five worlds could exist together: the drinker (a contemporary Maya?), the Maya language, the Coca-Cola, the Maya archeological site, and the German tourists. For the Coca-Cola drinker, however, it is just that: a drink and a fit of five worlds.

As reported by Donovan (1998), Native American women writers and feminists (Van Cott 1994; Jaquette 1994; Tong 1989) share a serious concern about ways of self-identification in multiple identity contexts. They have in common a history of domination
by different forces that are now being contested. To speak up, to contest the long established patriarchal society is a way of resisting and therefore ensuring survival and persistence (Donovan 1998). In such cases, the oppressed are dealt with by their oppressors as objects, and are therefore voiceless: only subjects can speak. Furthermore, this condition prevents the oppressed from actively taking part in a process of self-transformation.

3. Ethnography and Dialogic Anthropology

It is becoming increasingly difficult to do the kind of ethnographic work based on analogy with One and a binary opposition with the Other. Within anthropology there have been several approaches to trans-cultural understanding. One very general division is between the positivist tradition that seeks to emulate the natural sciences, that have been understood to be the search for laws and universal models, and the interpretative tradition, that pays closer attention to the understandings of social actors themselves and seeks to translate cultural meanings.

In this grand theoretical context, very little attention was given to the character of ethnographic writing. The assumption was that “writing up” research is relatively straightforward, a matter of general writing skills. Recently, this situation has changed dramatically. As a result of the influence of structuralism, post-structuralism, and the revival of the ancient discipline of rhetoric (Vickers 1989; Barilli 1989; Dixon 1971), much greater attention is now given to the study of texts, including not only those produced by natural scientists and historians, but also those produced by social scientists as well (White 1978).
The narration and employment of the ethnographic practice has been problematized based mainly on the study of the reflexive ethnographies written in the last fifteen years under the epistemological and methodological pressures of phenomenology, critical theory, interpretivism and, particularly, postmodernism.

In this context, interest in ethnographic writing has greatly increased. The generalist and comparativist theorists who dominated anthropology at mid-century (e.g., Radcliffe-Brown, Leslie White, and George Murdock) seem in the process of being mnemonically pruned from the anthropological family tree, while the work of those remembered as great fieldworkers (e.g., Malinowski, Boas, Evans-Pritchard, and Leenhardt) continues to be much more widely discussed. Not only are there now several books concerned with how to write ethnographic or qualitative accounts (Richardson 1990; Becker 1986), but there is also a growing literature of a more theoretical kind concerned with the rhetorical devices that ethnographers deploy, the presuppositions on which these are based, and the functions they perform.

In this context, a key text is Clifford and Marcus’s *Writing Culture* (1986), though there had been significant work before this (see: Marcus 1999; Atkinson 1983; Edmondson 1984; Brown 1977), and there have been important recent additions to the literature, notably the books by Ellis and Bochner (1996), Atkinson (1990 and 1992), Sanjek (1990), and Van Maanen (1988). This interest in ethnographic rhetoric has often been associated with criticism of conventional forms of anthropological and sociological writing on philosophical and political grounds, and with the development of “experimental” forms (see: Ellis and Bochner 1996; Crapanzano 1986).

Among “the interpreters,” Clifford Geertz (1973), is perhaps the anthropologist who is best known outside of the discipline. For Geertz, it is the task of the anthropologist to
"translate" one culture into another in the process of making foreign cultures comprehensible for "us." Ideally, this is achieved by the presentation of "thick descriptions," that is detailed ethnographic accounts of other people's lives, culture and societies. Other anthropologists have argued that the work of interpretation ought not to stop with the cultural phenomena under study, but should extend to the anthropologist herself. The focus should include the anthropological method, the "dialogical" relationship between ethnographer and informants (Tedlock 1983), and not least the consequences of ethnographic fieldwork for the individual self of the anthropologist (Okley and Callaway 1992). Dennis Tedlock (1983: 325-326) has pointed out that even in Clifford Geertz' pursuit of a "deep description", such as outlined in Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight (1973), "We find once again that the natives have little to say, and on the one occasion when they speak their own tongue, they do so collectively."

Carlos Bojórquez (1992) has pointed out that the dialogical critique of ethnography, inspired in large part by Mikhail Bakhtin (1984, 1981) in Europe and by Roberto Fernández Retamar (1974) in Latin America, was an effort to move beyond sociolinguistics and performance theory. These authors pondered literature and folktale as a way to find common elements between the esthetic discourse and culture, but most importantly, they tried to incorporate folkloric and artistic discourses with the quotidian life. In short, the dialogical critic on ethnography was aimed towards the integration of the linguistic processes with interpretive approaches to culture.

Mannheim and Tedlock (1995: 8-9) refer to this as the ontological sense of dialogue in which linguistic and cultural patterns and social relations are not regenerated with every interaction, rather every interaction occurs within specific sociohistorical and institutional contexts. Mannheim and van Vleet (1998: 327-28) add to this by differentiating between
four levels of dialogism in Southern Quechua narrative: formal dialogue, embedded discourse, intertextual dialogue, and participation format. 1. Formal dialogue is conversational narrative between participants, as distinct from monological narratives (which the authors claim to have fallen prey to in their original misinterpretation of Quechua conversation). 2. Embedded discourse is directly related to Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of citation in relation to the written work of an author appropriating words as one’s own, but in the context of conversational and oral narrative. 3. The term intertextual dialogue is borrowed from Julia Kristeva’s now famous distinction between the “semiotic” and the “symbolic,” which she develops in her early works of Revolution in Poetic Language (1984) and Powers of Horror (1982). Kristeva maintains that all signification is composed of semiotic and symbolic elements, where intertextuality is used to designate the transposition of one or more systems of signs on to another, accompanied by a new enunciative and denotative position. And, 4. Finally, participation format is used to articulate a particular relationship between storytelling, the ethnographer, and the intertextual network within which narrative is understood.

The mediating function of language in dialogical perspectives provides an important basis for considering how a dialogical framework contrasts with the postmodernist and/or poststructuralist reliance upon a rhetoric of the image, a binary logic of sameness and difference (or self and other), and a relativist conception of cultural representation in general. Bakhtin’s (1967) model of dialogism is a useful example of such a framework, and so too is Gadamer’s (1991) reconstruction of the hermeneutic circle in terms of how practices of cultural representation and critical interpretation are not simply intersubjective exchanges but mediated across time, space and different cultural (or representational) contexts by the metaphoric and conventional nature of language use. In short, dialogism is not simply a
method or model described by various theorists but a convergent and practical framework of dialectical and rhetorical criticism referenced not by some transcendental principle but by specific, mediated human interactions or performances conceived progressively as discourses, texts and localized traditions.

In his genealogical study *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (1984), Bakhtin examines the origins of parody and attempts to demonstrate how the novel as a genre grew out of a polyglotic tradition of “representing another’s word.” The implications drawn from his text, with all the pretenses to monologism and originary necessity (“In the beginning was the Word and the Word became flesh”), are fundamentally reliant on a polyglotic “interanimation of languages” which is simultaneously a necessary condition of parody. The novel, as described in Bakhtin’s essay *Discourse and the Novel* (1981) is a fluid genre that is constantly reinventing itself. Bakhtin examines the idea of the novel as a genre in itself rather than as a discourse comprising a set of completed sub-genres. The novel, unlike the epic, is an open-ended and indeterminate genre because it is simultaneously critical and self-critical. It is open because whoever reads it, recreates it, and whoever writes it, also creates it—without this dialogue the novel is incomplete—as in the dialogue between Francisco and me.

Two important elements of the prehistory of the novel that Bakhtin locates are laughter and polyglossia. Laughter is defined as the ridiculing of another’s language and direct discourse, though I think that the author should laugh at himself and at the preconceived aesthetic language. In this context, more than any other, the anthropologist should be self-reflexive, self-critical, and even satirical about himself or herself. Polyglossia is the interanimation of languages essential for subversively representing the word of another. Such a concept is essential to the novelistic genre, yet it can be an important part
in the anthropological discussion. This process becomes a central condition of the novel in which the word is always “looking over its shoulder” at another word, which should not be taken literally in the anthropological discourse, since this dialogue is not between texts or words, but among human beings.

Bakhtin, in the chapter “Discourse and the Novel” of the book *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Holquist 1981), writes of the epic becoming an object of satire when it is removed from its original context and replaced in the present. The epic is brought down to the level of the quotidian: it is defamiliarized precisely through the attempt to familiarize it. Here the vulgar language—what I would call vernacular language—speaks the epic and the epic speaks the vulgar.

The price of undertaking this mystical movement (from symbolic to real) is supposedly a loss of self, which according to Georges Bataille (1977) is brought about by laughter. If laughter is understood in Bakhtin’s sense as existing through the disparity between the word and its comic image, or the distance between language and reality, then this can be transposed to Bataille’s laughter, which occurs through a transgression brought about by the limits representing one another. Echoing Bakhtin, Bataille claims “nothing sublime can exist in man without its necessarily evoking laughter (1977: 36).

The relevance of dialogism as an interpretative tool has also been utilized for discourse on colonialism. The problematic of colonialism is that however explicitly monological a discourse or interaction may seem to be in terms of contents and forms—imposed either by physical force or as, say, cultural assimilation—it remains dialogical in the implicit sense that it is appropriated and transformed by “the Other.” As Albert Memmi (1967: ix) recognized, the colonizer and colonized are implicitly bound together in an “implacable dependence.” This is a point further recognized by recent and influential
theorists of ethnographic practice who refer to the dialogical models cited above or deploy their own (e.g. Maranhao 1990; Clifford 1986; and Geertz 1973).

In contrast, just as Paul Ricoeur’s (1982, 1984) dialogical model describes how such representational binaries are appropriated within the interpretative act of refiguration, Hans Jauss’s (1982, 1984) dialogism is conceived as a model of textual reception mediated as “interaction patterns” transformed in the act of reading or performance. Thus, dialogical models generally locate the interactive mediation of discourses, texts, and traditions in terms of conventional language use rather than discrete imagery. Possibly the most useful dialogical tactic for the study of “postcolonial fictions” is Jauss’s recovery of the concept of literary histories in terms of reception theory as a device of cultural criticism. A dialogical framework such as Jauss’s not only recognizes how, as arbitrary or monological models such opposing views presuppose an “other,” but also implicitly recognizes processes of rhetorical and cultural transformation.

Donovan (1998) points out the importance of the dialogical nature of speaking: we actually expect to hear our own answers echoed by the others. Also the dialogical potential of oral tradition, that can, in some cases, be equated with written records. But what is most important is the negotiation of identities through speaking and the subversive potential of oral tradition; the role language plays in a world of multiple identities. For Native American writers, as for feminist writers, there is concern with outside communication. Both Native American writers and feminist theoreticians raise many questions as to the actual circumstances, the actors, discourse, feedback, and action to be taken.

According to Tedlock (1986), ethnographies are not the final product in themselves—as they are considered in analogical anthropology. For him ethnography is more like a disclosure stemming from dialogues in which the re-invention of culture is done
by both sides of a dialogue—the anthropologist and the one or ones who are not anthropologists. Ethnography then is no longer the anthropologist’s sole interpretation, analysis, or reflection on the “object”, but more the result of a dialogue among the parts involved. Nevertheless, Tedlock (1996:275-89), points out the risk of dialogues becoming monologues, confessional, autobiographical, and authoritarian—as in Levi-Strauss’ *Tristes Tropiques* (1968) where the interpreter “interprets” the interpreted. Tedlock establishes a difference between a classic monologue—as in the Classic Greek theater where there is a dialogue between the sole actor and others imaginary absent—and the monologue that results from a pretended dialogue between an anthropologist and “his/her” informants.

In the manner of Greek Theater, social scientists seem to be more interested in dialoguing among themselves than with their subjects, without taking in to consideration that they are subjects as well where there is a pre-established agenda in which “data” must fit any pretended theoretical perspectives (Burawoy 1991:27). A telling example of this is Harris’ and Divale (1976) protein hypothesis on infanticide practices among the Yanomami Indigenous people of Brazil—a study highly criticized by Fjellman (1979), who pointed out the inaccuracy of the records of these practices, and the way Harris and Divale interpreted and manipulated them. As in the case of the Yanomami, anthropologists are frequently immersed in what seems to be an everlasting monologue. Another example was the fierce debate between Chagnon and Brazilian anthropologists over an article that Chagnon published in *Science* (1988) in which he portrayed the Yanomami as aggressive, blood-thirsty, vibrant, and exotic (Booth 1989:1138). The Brazilian anthropologists reacted against him, as reported by Booth,

“Maria Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, warned her colleagues of the ‘political
consequences of academic images’ and ‘the extremely serious consequences that such publicity can have for the land rights and the survival of the Yanomami of Brazil’ She also spoke of how ‘wide publicity of Yanomami violence in racist terms’ was being used by the mining lobby in Brazil to incite public opinion against the Indians” (Booth 1989:1139).

The omission of the Yanomami in this “dialogue” it is obvious. Therefore, the re-invention of the Yanomami cultures of the Amazonia is not based on a dialogue between the Yanomami Indigenous peoples and the anthropologists—or on conversations among Yanomami Indigenous peoples themselves—but on a tête-à-tête between anthropologists. Therefore for many “Yanomamists”, dialogical anthropology is a dialogue only among anthropologists. Hence, for me, more than a dialogue, it is more like a monologic dialogue. As Tedlock has pointed out, “when we talk about dialogue in a play or in a novel, we are not talking about two persons only. Furthermore, \textit{dia-}\textsuperscript{22} as in dialogue, it does not mean “two,” but “through” (1996: 275). For him, a monologue is a dialogue between the sole orator and his absent or imaginary interlocutors. Hence, the dialogue between anthropologists and “their” absent or imaginary interlocutors—the people that are their “objects” or “subjects” of study—is, sadly, a monologic dialogue.

In dialogue, as Watanabe (1995), has pointed out, an ethnographer should deal with differences, commonalties, contested meanings, codes and representations—and even emergent hybrid cultures—and by so doing surpass the “scientistic” extreme or the literary self-reflection. In Clifford’s view an ethnography “decodes and re-codes, telling the ground of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. It describes processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes” (1986:2).

But coding and recoding, dealing with differences and commonalities is unavailing if when telling the basis of the collective order we do not ask ourselves—before we start
retelling—who, what, how, and why might we represent? Most importantly, am I representing myself, and how? And, furthermore: What about the people that I interact with? How and what is their representation about me? Sadly, in our “fieldwork accounts” we choose not to take these questions into consideration.

These questions are directly related with the issues of representation. But representing requires a strategy of ethnographic writing: the self-reflexive “fieldwork account.” For Josephides (1997), the self-reflexive ethnographic approach is understood

“...as one that questions its authority but does not abandon interpretation. While it assumes a shared horizon of knowledge between the reader and the ethnographer, the success of interpretation rests on a hermeneutically achieved unity between the ethnographer, as the subject of knowledge, and the studied people, as the object of knowledge” (1997: 17).

For Clifford (1986), when writing about self-reflexive “fieldwork account,” defining it as a subgenre of ethnography, the observer becomes as much a part of the account as the observed, and vice versa. To him, this new form of ethnography has the characteristics of fiction, autobiography, ironic self-portrait, and specific instances of discourse. It digresses from other ways of doing ethnography in that it doesn’t consider itself as a representation of sources from “informants”, nor does it place itself in an authorial position. Its contribution is best considered as “fragments among fragments” (Clifford 1986:14). This “new ethnography” is contextually reciprocal, polyphonic, historical and intersubjective. These interpersonal dialogues are between subjects that see and are seen, “evade and probe back”, and, most of the time, are in relations of power.

James, Hockey, and Dawson (1997), are in accordance with Clifford in recognizing the situated ‘fictional’ nature of our accounts. Nevertheless, they have pointed out that the
mere recognition of its nature is not enough: it is imperative to put those accounts forward, “as the basis for decision making and the formation of policy” (1997: 13). Furthermore, we must bear in mind that our ethnographic strategies “are also shaped by the subjects’ situations, their global as well as local perceptions, and their demands and expectations of us” (Josephides 1997: 32).

Behar (1995) in reviewing Clifford and Marcus’s *Writing Culture* (1986) and the purposes of the “new ethnography”, beseeches the need for innovation in anthropology, whether it be dialogical, reflexive or experimental. The “new ethnography” must take into account power relations, especially those stemming from the totality of an economic world system and the process of globalization as well. However, Behar differs from Clifford and Marcus in that there is a watershed between *Writing Culture* and *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1987) which turns her *Women Writing Culture* (1995) into a totally different enterprise: a feminist project. Behar makes a review of Clifford’s assertions, inclusions, and omissions. In her opinion, Clifford somehow considers women anthropologists writers as “daughters” of a patriarchal academy. Since “father” Boas, the best women anthropologists could do was to imitate a model of a male anthropologist specially in non-western cultures. Even the works of these early women anthropologists—who were mostly Euro-American—were taken more as literary forms of novelistic autobiographic self-expressions, rather than what was considered science, including the work of Margaret Mead.

For Behar, a woman anthropologist is “Othered”, just like any “informant” (women or man), simply because of their gender—as is the case of Native American, Chicano, Black, and women writers of other ethnic groups in the United States—since their writings must go through a male academic filter. Ironically, the writings of the vast majority of feminists
followed their same canon. Behar, therefore, suggests a new agenda: one that takes into account the widest assortment of people: the privileged and the underprivileged, the nationals and transnationals, the Indigenous and non-Indigenous, an agenda that embraces nations, genders, ages, and ethnic groups. In short, does away with the traditional “Others.”

Cintron (1997), even though he himself is not about to embark on a well defined form of dialogical anthropology, is nevertheless doubtful about ready-made tickets for anthropological interpretation of facts, including those interpreted by the so-called scientific anthropology and the post-modernistic current. In this respect, Chernela (1997) points out that there are no closed doors in the debate about the ongoing interdisciplinary dispute between “scientific,” as an extreme, and the interpretative-humanistic perspectives. In other words: the heterodox versus the heteroglossic anthropology. In this context, Tedlock (1995, 1991, 1979); Watanabe (1997); Behar (1995, 1993); and, Clifford (1986), without implicitly mentioning it, are drawing attention to the issue of the loss of respect, through objectification, authoritarianism, and the restriction of poly-glossia, when writing about cultures. But, as Cintron asks: “How does one create respect under conditions of little or no respect?” (1997:x.)
4. On the Borders of Cultural Schizophrenia:

The "Price" of Being Othered

Eight o’clock in the morning. Francisco and his wife, Enriqueta, their children and I are waiting for the gate of the archaeological site of Chichén Itzá to open. The reason we are there is because a month ago his wife asked me if I could take her to Chichén Itzá. She asked me: “Juan, please, could you take me to Chichén Itzá? I’m scared that I may die without ever visiting that place built by the antiguos (the Pre-Hispanic Maya people). I told her: “Yes, we will go there on Sunday, because Sunday is the only day that they won’t charge us the $75.00 pesos ($8.19 US)23 to walk in.” The admission fee is a lot of money for them. In Mérida the minimum wage is, for example, $30.00 pesos ($3.27 US) per day. In Xocenpich, the vast majority of the people work in their own milpas (corn fields) and therefore they have no salaries. Their income from other economic activities is around $10.00 pesos ($1.09 US) per day. This amount has been calculated on a yearly base from the profit obtained from the sale of their milpa products (corn, chile, squash, tomatoes, and watermelons), and the animals that they rear, such as pigs, chickens, and turkeys.

Since then, I have been thinking about how ironic it is that she never visited the site, considering that her town, Xocenpich, is only five miles away. Not only that but, I thought, that she was only able to visit this place, built by her ancestors, on sundays. What is more, the irony of it all, is that I would be in charge of explaining to them their own "History", simply because I was the “expert” on it. An expert, yes, because I was taught “this History”,
in the canons of academia outside the Maya, from non-Mayans. In other words, I had the chance to go to school, University, and I was currently working towards my Ph.D. Nevertheless, I was aware that most of the books about it were written by non-Maya people, which imply that I understand the re-invention of the Mayan culture from the work of non-Maya people. Those scholarly works seem to have been construed in the way of monologues rather than dialogues.

I was about to narrate stories to them, which, in the eyes of academia, were true, objective, analytical, reflexive, critical, interpretative, subjective, intersubjective, translated, and more. And precisely at this point, I felt trapped in a dilemma: Should I tell them the truth? Should I have told them that what I knew was the interpretation of our Others? Those who observe us, that study us, that spent months doing their field-work among us, those who call themselves our “friends” while in our towns, and then depart to disappear forever? Disappear, as Behar (1997) says, into their offices, and compare what they call “data” with the theories and works of people like Marx, Weber, and Durkheim for the benefit of “Others” still? Should I tell them the truth? I suppose I cannot, because I too am an observer, and a vulnerable one at that.

I have been observing myself, especially at the way I have been transformed from a Xocenpicheño (In general, it means “people of Xocenpich.” For the people of Xocenpich, this term implies that they were in fact born in that town) to Maya; from a Maya to a Dzul; from a Dzul to a Yucatec, from a Yucatec to a Mexican; from a Mexican to an American, and from an American, back to a Xocenpicheño. I am bordering on schizophrenia! My observations lead me to believe that is not schizophrenia, but just that I have multiple identities. I am just someone that is paying the price for being Othered.

I am Juan Ariel Castillo Cocom, I am Maya, I am Dzul, I am Xocenpicheño, I am
Yucateco, I am Latin American, I am Hispanic, I am Mexican, I am North American.... I am an anthropologist. I am a vulnerable observer and I am a friend—as an anthropologist and a Maya I am not merely an external observer, but also an internal one: I am both. In fact, I am many things, I fit into many roles and have many identities, but within myself I lack a secure knowledge of which one is really ME, which one I really am. My identities increased, for example, when I left my village of Xocenpich and entered school in Mérida and then university in Miami.

But with each new identity that I acquire, I become distanced from my other identities and from the so-called Others. But each time I become distant from an “old” identity, paradoxically I become closer to it, depending on the context. For example, while in Miami, even though I relate to the American culture, I cannot avoid feeling more Xocenpicheño than the people that live in Xocenpich. As they say, English people are more English when outside of England. By the same token, in Mérida when I try to date a Yucatec girl of Spanish descent I tend to put aside my Maya background and enhance my “new” American identity.

Consequently, does my Maya identity and that of my friend Francisco, the person who is central character of my dissertation, who has stayed in our village, remain the same? I will try to establish this through the dialogue between my friend and myself. The methodology is based on four considerations: positioning, fieldwork conversations, self reflexivity and vulnerability—all will be expanded upon further in the text. Thus, I hope that this dissertation breaks with authoritarian models of ethnography. It is not guided by the notion of Other but instead, in accordance with Neumann (1996), on how cultural observations continuously retell a story about the dialectics of self and culture. This dissertation is a dialogue between Francisco and me, a conversation between ourselves.
This dissertation is a dialogue between Francisco and myself, with people of my town, but from whom, somehow I feel I have become distanced. It is a dialogue about life, about the lives of two Maya Indigenous individuals who at times identify each other as Xocenпиcheños. How? When we talk about Xocenpich, while drinking Coca-Cola, while we laugh, while we cry, while we remain silence.... In short, doing the same things that any friends, anywhere, anytime, do: just being friends. And yet, sometimes it seems to us that we belong in different worlds. When? When I act and think as a Dzul, Yucateco, Latin American, Hispanic, Mexican, or North American. Nevertheless, to have whatever identity is less important than being friends. Hence, identity is contextual implying that who you are depends on whom you are with and in what social context?

Although identity is contextual, somehow it does affect me, even when I am alone at my house—I am perfectly aware that my house is constructed and deconstructed with elements of the identity context, nevertheless, my home allows me to find refuge in my interior-self, in my essential being, beyond culture. It is if somehow I internalize that contextuality and I take it back home, to me, to my intimate self. It was like having many identities, and some of them were extremely painful. Let me explain. When I was younger, when I looked at myself in the mirror, I used to think that I was a physical aberration because of my Maya features—I am crying while I am typing this chingado\textsuperscript{24} paragraph, it is painful—and I start to rehearse the molds of a “Western person.”

The context of this discussion is the American “invention” of Daylight-Saving Time. This program was applied in México a few years ago and in Canada earlier. I will illustrate this with a conversation between Francisco and a Comisario—the authority who holds the power to execute political and judicial decisions within a Comisaria, who depends, in turn, on the orders of the Presidente Municipal, or Mayor—of Xocenpich. A year ago Francisco
was appointed as the head of the police department of Xocenpich. Among his duties, he was required to do maintenance work in the *Palacio Municipal* [town hall]. It was his responsibility to carry out such tasks as janitorial work, providing defense against invading chickens, turkeys, dogs and other stray animals, care for the civic lighting and incarcerate local law breakers. The *Comisario* asked him to be there at six o’clock in the morning.

Francisco replied that he was not going to be there at six, but at five.

“Why would you like to show up at five when I’m telling you to show up at six? Listen, Francisco, why don’t you get an extra hour of sleep?” the *Comisario* asked.

“No, I will show up at five!” Francisco replied.

To which the *Comisario* said, “Come at six!... Your problem, Francisco, is that you are living in the ‘old’ time! Don’t you know that we have changed the time and now we are an hour ahead?”

Francisco replied: “Sure, I know that you have changed the time, but my rooster hasn’t changed his time. You know my rooster crows at five in the morning, and for me, it’s five. Maybe you call it six, but my rooster and I call it five. Perhaps five and six are the same time, except that we regard them differently. Señor *Comisario*, I am sorry but I will be there at five!”

And the *Comisario* answered Francisco, “all right, arrive at ‘your’ five. By the way, I hope that when we change the time again your rooster will be roasted!!!”

Whatever the degree of literacy Francisco may have, the content and the context of this dissertation will by no means be foreign to him: this is a dialogue between two Maya, there is “sameness” between us. As with Castañeda (1996), I agree that to adopt a Maya
identity is a Western cultural invention, a quest into a maze out of which one is forced to enter meta-identity. Thus, to meet the challenge of being, and at the same time not being, Maya is another important issue to be discussed in this dissertation.

It is now time that Francisco and I regain our voices. If we, as Indigenous people, do not have power over the means of intellectual production, at least we can control our own voices. Hence, if we have power over our own voices, should we then speak? Our ancestors did. Our contemporaries do.

All of these ideas came to mind while we were waiting for the gate at Chichén Itzá to open. At that moment we heard the guard shouting in English, “welcome to Chichén Itzá!” The gate opened and at that moment the question of telling them the truth came to mind again. Should I tell them the truth? Then Enriqueta said, “ma’ tin bin cimi”, which in Spanish means no voy a morir or I am not going to die (without visiting Chichén Itzá). She spoke the truth.
5. Methodology

Rappaport mentions that Gabriel García Márquez: in *Los Funerales de la Mamá Grande* felt compelled to tell his story “before the historians have time to arrive” (1990:1). By replacing the term “historians” with the term “anthropologists” certain questions arise: how much can the actor tell; how would the anthropologist interpret it; how will he transmit it to the reader; how would the reader interpret the interpretation of the anthropologist; how would we all relate to the story, and how will all be affected by the story? And one of the questions that we always forget to ask ourselves is: what about the interpretation of the people we write about?

Neumann (1996) points out that in an alternative writing of anthropology there is an identification between the writer and the story that is being written. This form of writing breaks with authoritative models of ethnography. Its aim is to focus on “how cultural observations continuously retell a story about the dialectics of self and culture” (Neumann 1996: 173) pointing out that conventional ethnography has looked in different directions guided by the notion of “Other.” It is the replacement of the dialectics Anthropologists/Other by the dialectics Self/Culture.

For Neumann, the trend in these writings is a rhetoric of desire which implicates the notion of “us” in “them” and the notion of “them” in “us.” In this context ethnography is an imaginative discourse. Everybody occupies a place in the stories and I can imagine myself as part of their world too. The ethnographer is continuously reminding us that the border is always with us and within us. According to him, their accounts, compiled through the collection of artifacts and stories, show us how we mark and cross those lines as we seek to
understand the dialectics of self and culture.

In this context, the methodology proposed for this dissertation is based on five main points: one, a theoretical discussion and literature review; two, the concept of “positioning”; three, fieldwork conversations; four, the concept of “self-reflexivity” and five, “vulnerability.”

1. Theoretical Discussion

2. Positioning, is about placing ourselves, as anthropologists, in a human context. Putting ourselves in such context is an excellent way to bypass the borders of Otherness, because it help us to establish relationships that creates new ways of understanding each other.

3. Fieldwork is about observing and talking to people. Nevertheless, talking to people should not be understood as carrying out interviews, but rather as conversations in which we, the people that are dialoguing, are echoing each other and reverberating our own answers. Hence, these are conversations among ourselves in which we are seeking to understand the self and the culture.

4. Self-Reflexivity is the insight derived from the conversations between self and culture or cultures. As a result, we become able to communicate and receive. It is a dialogue with one’s-self. Reflexivity has also been used in different ways. I use this term as a conversation with myself. The cultural surroundings and the actors of culture, in this case Francisco and I, have an interaction whereby events are assumed an understood in personal contexts and we are both aware of it.

Although, our identities and perspectives are at times dissimilar—which does not mean that they are necessarily antagonistic—, through dialogue we can be coalesced beings in many ways. Let me explain, when Francisco and I are echoing and reverberating each
other, events, circumstances, possibilities, actions, interactions, laughs, emotions, tears, sadness, fears, and feelings, are assumed and understood, by Francisco and I, in an extremely personal contexts. This is to say, we recognize the contexts because they are familiar to us. Thus, reflexivity shapes the context of the dialogue. Hence, without self-reflexivity there is no dialogue.

5. Vulnerability, according to Behar, is the scary method in ethnography of becoming vulnerable and making others vulnerable. It is to perceive the world and the topic that is being considered with skill, nuance, and the willingness not to become distant and, therefore, making the others become distant. By exposing oneself, the anthropologist can be better observed, and therefore observe better. And by doing so, respect is brought back into the dialogue.

The advantage of this method is that it focuses on identification rather than on difference. It makes dichotomies, such as Self/Other and Subject/Object, obsolete. And, most important, it reconsiders the role of emotions (Behar 1996). The disadvantage of this method is that it can easily become self-serving, superficial and too confessional. In my opinion, the most serious disadvantage is the tendency to forget that, in so doing, we make the ones we observe so much more vulnerable. When this happens, there are many consequences, but among them, most seriously, is the danger of loss of respect.
My favorite coffee shop in Mérida is called Café Express, a place with a cosmopolitan atmosphere where it is possible to meet and interact with people from everywhere. The clientele includes a mix of Germans, Italians, Americans, Greeks, English, Mexicans, Yucatecans, and Mayas. For me to identify a Maya is far more difficult than to identify the nationality of a tourist. Some waiters at Café Express, speak Maya, but they do not identify themselves as a Maya. First they call themselves Tixpehualeño, Akeleño, or Ichmuleño, people who came from the towns of Tixpehual, Aké, and Ichmul, Yucatán, respectively, and then as Maya. Their identity is based on a sense of belonging to their communities and not to an ethnic group and at the same time they are aware of their other identities that make them multicultural.

Like them, I identify myself first as a Xocenpicheño because I grew up in Xocenpich, and then I self-ascribe to a Maya identity. But my Maya identity is a western invention. By adopting that particular identity, and other identities, my ability of being, and not being, Maya at the same time, is being challenged (who you are vis-a-vis an “audience”). The waiters of Café Express, Francisco and me, are challenging the notion that we are members of a compact and a homogeneous Mayan group. This is a notion that has guided many anthropological studies of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas are now contesting that idea.

As reported by Wearne (1997), from the Inuit of Canada to the Mapuche of Chile, Indigenous people are constantly redefining their identities and many others are adopting
new ones. Today many of them are working in the industry, thousands of them are bilingual or even trilingual, and many others have university titles. It is difficult to “define” them only as Mapuche or Inuit, because they have multiple identities. Who are we to “define” them in terms of bipolar notions? As Valerio Grefa, who has an office in downtown Quito, Ecuador, points out:

“Who says I can’t be Quechua running COICA, the largest multinational Indigenous organization in the Americas, in a big city like Quito? Who best defines me, them or me?” (Wearne 1997:20).

The tendency of the vast majority of anthropological studies to interpret ethnographic “data” in terms of binary oppositions in which they emphasize the macro perspective, have failed to recognize that individual groups are not homogenous social groups and have neglected the possibilities that within those groups there are individuals with multiple identities drawn from the individual’s own and as well as other cultures.

Analogical anthropology is being highly criticized because of its authoritarianism, its emphasis on binary oppositions, and the notion of the “Other.” In contrast, dialogical anthropology places great importance on the relationship between the individuals and the anthropologist. A relation in which both, the anthropologist and the subject, are immersed in a dialogue, because of the identification between the writer and the story that is being written. A dialogue, in which the questions expressly mirror the actual circumstances, the actors, discourse, feedback, and action to be taken, are raised. As pointed by Neumann (1996), the trend in these writings is a rhetoric of desire which implicates the notion of “us” in “them” and vice versa. In this context, ethnography is an imaginary discourse.

However, anthropologists seem to be more interested in “dialoguing” among
themselves rather than with the people that they write about. Indigenous people are relegated, they are voiceless, and, therefore, we keep treating them as “objects,” and not as individuals. This is ironic, precisely because it undermines the aim of the dialogical discourse. In “our” ethnographies people are voiceless, just another picture, a simple image, something that simply gives content to our ethnographies and opens for us, the doors of academia. How vulnerable we are, how vulnerable we make them!

Awareness of self-identity or self-identities and the various ways in which Francisco assumes them, and the way I assume them, within multicultural contexts, leads us along the road to establish communication. One dialogue was established when my childhood was interrupted because I went away from my community to go to school in Mérida, the capital of the Yucatán State. In this city I acquired other identities and had new forms of communication prescribed for me. In my eyes I became distanced from my former identity, almost as if I was ashamed of it. Was I? Meanwhile, Francisco, who stayed home, remained, I thought, the same. Did he? These last two questions, the rupture of communication, and the reinstatement of the dialogue constitute the main subjects of Chapter III.

Subsequently, I would like to immerse myself in a dialogue with Francisco. Is he willing to have a conversation with me? I would like to break the authoritative model of ethnography, but can I? I would like to replace the dialectics Anthropologist/Other by the dialectics of Self and Culture, but can I?

Few days ago we were talking about the deer he hunted and the way he had to share the deer meat among twelve other hunters. He said, “that day everybody ate meat in Xocenpich, even my dogs ate the intestines of that animal, everybody except you Juan, where
were you?”

I did not give him an answer, but I thought myself “Where was I?”

“Francisco,” I replied, “I think that we need to talk, shall we?”

“Let’s talk,” Francisco said.
Chapter II

Xocenpich on a Plaque and in a Bottle

1. The Mosaic

In the center of the main square in Xocenpich, Yucatán, México, there is a small monument with a plaque that is dated November the 20th, 1968, which commemorates the date on which this park was built. It is dedicated, not to a national hero, nor even to a regional one, but to Dr. Theodore R. Finley and to Frances N. Finley, two American missionaries. In front of this monument across from the highway, a Catholic church stands with another plaque imbedded in its wall dated December 8, 1815, marking the date of the construction of this church. One date opposite another, and even though there is more than a hundred-year difference between the two, they both mark the presence of two cultures that differ from that of the people living in Xocenpich long before either date.
Ironically, it is rare for any visitor to take notice of these plaques. Instead, the visitor would more likely notice the three parabolic antennae on the northern side of the park, atop the roofs of the houses belonging to the wealthiest families in town, the Estrella Ek, and the Haas Mex. The antennae would not amaze anyone. Such items are no longer a source of awe since they are now part of the cultural landscape in Yucatán. The surprise is that there are no surprises because the dynamics of culture imagery are in constant transformation. Material objects may not surprise visitors but what might call their attention, however, is hearing that there are two North Americans buried in the local cemetery: Dr. Frederick R. Passler,26 and Dr. Norman Riedessel,27 both of them Presbyterian missionaries.

But, if it is a question of memorial tablets, there are more. At the Bethesda Clinic, a hospital inaugurated in 1956, founded by the Presbyterian Mission, there is one such tablet dedicated to Mrs. Hazel Clawson.28 At the Instituto Bíblico del Sureste, there is another one dedicated to Dr. John T. Molloy.29 And, the Telesecundaria (T.V. Junior High School) bears the name of Dr. Frederick R. Passler. There also exists another plaque that is half-hidden on one side of the Xocenpich-Dzitás highway. It is a commemorative plaque that was inaugurated by Governor Felipe Carrillo Puerto in 1923. Additionally, at the town’s City Hall there is one that bears the name of Efrain Ek Mex.30

Even though all of these commemoratives are visible plaques, they do not mark the events and people most remembered by the town. For Xocenpich those "plaques" that are remembered commemorate those men and women who left an imprint in the collective memory of the town. This memory is not written on stone, nor dated, and, perhaps, because
of this, it is difficult to forget. Where are the plaques for Don Atalo Perera? Don Pablo Ek? Doña Domitila Cauich? Don Sabino and Doña Josefa Perera? Don Antonio Cupul? Doña Elsy Perera? Don Agapito Cen? Doña Tránsita Chan? Where are the plaques for many others? On the tombs in which they rest, one can only see small crosses, but no plaques.

This mosaic of plaques, antennas, and burials, constitutes a sociocultural map of Xocenpich. The terms “map” and “tour” are concepts utilized by de Certeau (1984). For him, maps are more connected with space and spatial descriptions, narratives, strategies of powers and places, and functionalist ethnography. Maps are also frames of reference that have their ultimate origin in everyday life, and are critical, and an objective representation of the known. Places and ethnographies are good examples of maps.

Tours are subjective and inter-subjective knowledge based on experience. Tours are associated with displacements, action, tactics of the dynamic, momentary use of space, and dialogical ethnography. The temporary use of space within a period of time can be an example of a tour (Castañeda 1996:2). Hence, for Castañeda (1996) culture is understood as the relations between maps and tours, a combination of these two forms of narrative.

Nevertheless, this town is more than a map: I visualize Xocenpich as scenes of people and events that are echoing their cultures and their histories. This is to say; I conceive this town as a tour and not as mere frame of reference for anthropological analysis. Hence, this mosaic represents the inter-connectivity between different cultures and dissimilar historical moments, like testimony of a myriad of unofficial histories that are not registered in any anthropological study, neither on the ethnocentric interpretations of non-Indigenous writers.
Subsequently, this mosaic is not echoing, is not finding its resonance in the collective memory of men, women, and children of Xocenpich.

Don Atalo Perera, Don Pablo Ek, Doña Domitila Cauich, Don Sabino and Doña Josefa Perera, Don Antonio Cupul, Doña Elsy Perera, Don Agapito Cen, Doña Tránsita Chan, and many others, unlike the mosaic, are still a part of the scene and events of Xocenpich and they are still echoing and finding resonance in the collective memory of people of Xocenpich. Although they left us, paradoxically they departed to remain with us forever. Hence, in the daily life and the imaginary of the townspeople of Xocenpich they are still present. For example, if one walks slowly, as if distraught, or without spirit, they tell you: “you walk like Don Valuch,” [his real name was Don Valerio Aké.] A young man named Amadeo Cupul Chan, 5’ 9” tall, and 25 years old, was nicknamed, by the young fellows of Xocenpich, as “difunto (late) Sabino”, in reference to his height and especially because he married a very short woman—as Don Sabino had done. The young fellow had never actually met Don Sabino, because he had died more than 30 years before, but had “met him” through the collective memory and the cultural imagery, not through commemorative plaques.

Many Xocenpicheños—term that it means “people of Xocenpich,” but, for the people of Xocenpich, implies that they were in fact born in that town—remember the American missionaries as well. They recollect the jeep that Reverend Leonard Legters used to drive
in the 1940’s, the airplanes that the missionaries piloted, the American kids that lived in their midst and, especially, their big shoes.

These Xocenpicheños also recall the communication of the missionaries with the community, whether thorough their sermons, their educational activity and, most importantly, through the sharing of everyday life with their members. Subsequently, living in the community, participating in daily activities, and specially the friendship bonds created between the children of the missionaries and some of the children of Xocenpich, is a good way to get close to the people, in their hearts and in their memories. But to enter in the collective memory of a community and become a part of it is a different matter all together, the best and kindest regards and comments, when being referred to, notwithstanding. Thus, one might hear an old person from the town say something like: “Dr. Finley? Sure I remember him well. A very good man....” And then a stare far away into the distance....

This is to say, when the Xocenpicheños, refer to them, there is a sort of detachment between the people and the missionaries, not just because they were Americans, or foreigners, or physically different or because they spoke a different language—in fact, many of those missionaries learned Maya, and some Maya people, in turn, learned English—but simply because they were not born in Xocenpich. It is as if being born in Xocenpich were a pre-requisite for acceptance in the community as one of “ours,” one of “us.” If one is not born in Xocenpich one becomes one of the “others,” one of “them.”
At least, that is the way that it looks on the social map, but not on the territory, because among "us" there are differences as well. Someone could be born in Xocenpich and be, for some circumstance segregated from mainstream Xocenpich. Some Maya individuals, who were born in Xocenpich, say that they were born in Mérida, because they believe that by being born in the capital of the state of Yucatán they acquire a higher status in the town. On the other hand, others say that they were born in Xocenpich, when in reality they were not. This perhaps might give them a sense of security about their self-identity, regardless of the question of status.

Maps and territories, as narrative forms, are inadequate in explaining the various meanings of "us," because its connection with space and spatial descriptions, and, specially, because their tendency to objectivise issues such as self-identification. Hence, tours are more suitable to explain the multiply meanings of "us," due its inter-subjectiveness and its association with social interaction, displacements, tactics of the dynamic, momentary use of space within a period of time, and dialogs. As an example of one of the possible meanings of "us," a friend of mine told me in the summer of 1999:

"I know that you are studying in Miami, and I know as well that in Miami is where they produce the T.V. program 'Sabado Gigante' conducted by Don Francisco. Subsequently, could you go to that program and send greetings to all of us, the people of Xocenpich? That would make us so proud, because you know, Juan, you are from Xocenpich, and like all of us, we are proud of being Xocenpicheños."
Yet, I wasn’t myself born in Xocenpich, but in Tekax,, a community located in the south of the state of Yucatán. What irony! It is not the people of Xocenpich who would make me one of “them,” but Don Francisco, the conductor of the program. Suddenly, I understood that—by going to that T.V. program, sending greetings to the people of Xocenpich, and saying in front of the cameras that I was myself a Xocenpicheño—this public presentation it was going to be my Confirmation and my Confession of Faith: I suddenly became a new-born Xocenpicheño.
2. Yucatán: Indulge in a Fantasy

Xocenpich is a town in the jurisdiction of the state of Yucatán. This state is geographically situated in the south-east México. “The Yucatán”, as the majority of English-speaking people refer to this part of the country, is part of the Yucatán Peninsula, which also comprises Campeche and Quintana Roo, two states formed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, through a decree issued by the Mexican Federal Government.

In order to locate Xocenpich in the dimension of an ample map, but that integrates contextually, geography history and culture, it is necessary to situate this small town in the crossroads of the Mexican and Yucatec space, and, also in the cadence of its movements through the time.

Yucatán is a northern oriented peninsula scarcely a few meters above sea level. It is formed of sedimentary rock, one of the last portions of the American Continent to emerge from the sea. Millions of years ago, the Cretaceous and Tertiary mollusks in their death formed the porous limestone that is characteristic of the landscape (National Geographic 1989: 435). Because of its chemical composition, the topography of Yucatán is known as Karst topography, characteristically noted for its great variety of sinkholes, termed cenotes, or naturally formed wells, given the soft consistency of the soil, and the erosion caused by rain-fall. Because in the northern part of the peninsula—also referred to as “The Maya Low-Lands”—there are no rivers, lakes, nor any other sources of fresh water, there have been more than considerable researches about how it was possible that the Maya civilization reached extraordinary heights. What was extraordinary was their brilliant use of water
The Classic Maya (A.D. 250-900) is regarded as one of the most complex civilizations of antiquity, excelled because of their cultural achievements, calendric, astronomical, and mathematical knowledge, that included the concept of zero, and a unique and original art style. Their polytheistic religion was in accordance with a theocratic form of government that endorsed a mode of production based on corn agriculture, or milpa, as the spearhead of a veritable and varied pyramid of subsistence. The Pre-Classic (B.C. 2500-250 A.D.) is a period of formation in which other cultures, like the Olmec—a people of a different linguistic family, as well as physical appearance—left their imprint on the Maya. The Post-Classic (A.D. 900-1200) was a period marked by the influence of Nahua-speaking groups, for example, the Toltecas, upon the Maya. Nevertheless, new archeological studies demonstrate influences going the other way (Piña Chan 1980).

The fall of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec Imperial city, in 1521, marked the beginning of the establishment of the colonial order throughout the “New World.” The colonized were no longer Mayas, nor Incas, Aztecs, Yanomami, Ashaninka, Kayapo, Miskito, Quechua, or Aymara, as they called themselves before the Conquest. Instead, they became “Indios”, a term, invented by the Europeans, thus inscribing all the Indigenous people that were living here before and after the Conquest in that generic category. The conquistadores never took into account their differences, their languages, their identities, their similarities, their commonalities, and their cultures. Thus, “Indio” became a term to define the colonized (Bonfil Batalla 1992:74-75). Hence, if “Indio” is a category, “Maya” is just another one, a European invention.

The colonial system denied Indigenous peoples their autonomous social, economic, and political systems. These structures were severely altered by the colonizadores,
displacing Indigenous peoples from their territories, and their land was appropriated; their cosmovision was subdued by Christianity, while at the same time, they were not fully accepted nor integrated within the colonial system. Throughout the colonial period, the colonizers based their hegemony and livelihood on the exploitation and throughout the Colonial Period, the colonizers based their hegemony and livelihood and the control of the exploitation of the Indigenous labor and land, through a series of institutionalized measures sanctioned by the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church, such as the encomienda and tithes. These institutions were maintained though armed force and ethnic discrimination (Peacock 1995:1). The primary instrument of colonization was the encomienda “...a grant of one or more Indian towns to a Spaniard...with the right to extract tribute.” (Taylor 1972:5). This institution was the extrinsic economic basis of the Spanish colonies, until its abolition in 1785. Aside from the tribute payments, the Indigenous people also had to fulfill the servicio personal (personal labor tasks for the encomenderos or the holders of the encomiendas).

Since the encomienda did not satisfy the material cravings of the Spaniards, they created the estancia—a landed estate to foster cattle-raising and agriculture—to exact plus value from the Indigenous people, called peones, who provided the labor that supported the estancias (Taylor 1972:110-121). In the middle of the 17th century, the estancia was replaced by the hacienda, an entity aimed to supply local markets with agricultural and animal products (Taylor 1972:121).

The hacienda grew at the expense of the communal Indigenous land as the hacendados (hacienda owners) encroached on these Indigenous communities through a variety of illegal means (Florescano 1971:123). Furthermore, the demands of the clergy placed even greater economic pressures on the already overburdened Indigenous people.
These included a mandatory tithe, as well as fees for baptism, marriages, burials, and *doctrina* (catechism classes).

The Indigenous responses to the colonial rule were manifested through the culture of resistance. The perseverance of the Maya languages and certain religious practices—for example, the *Ch’a-Chaac*, the ceremony to ask for rain, or the *Okotbatam*, the ceremony to ask for protection—were manifestations of the internal cultural dynamics of the Indigenous people. Some aspects of the Indigenous culture such as the use of their languages persisted because they were not thought to represent a great challenge to the colonial order. As Nancy Farris has stated:

"The persistence...is symptomatic of the resilience of Maya Culture. Some of the resilience rested on a history of accommodation.... Much, however, was due the circumstances of colonial rule itself." (Farris: 1993:62).

Yet, this culture of resistance is not a passive one, but an active struggle assumed by Indigenous people by any means necessary in order to survive, physically and culturally. Sometimes, violence was a necessary means. Between the 17th and the 18th century, millenarian\^2 Indgenous rebellions took place all over the Americas.\^3

The Maya had a collective awareness of the injustice of their situation; they were seeking liberation from the oppression of the Spanish Rule. Their most important rebellion was The Caste War, a social political movement, arose in the eastern portion of the state of Yucatán, an insurrection that lasted from 1847 to 1901, although from 1915 to 1937, there were intermittent skirmishes until the rebels were subdued by military means (Bartolomé 1988:179). The most violent period of this war was between 1847 and 1862. According to Bartolomé (1988), after 1862, the Indigenous population of the Peninsula was divided into
two camps: the Maya that didn’t participate in the war, namely the hacienda peones (peasants), and the Maya rebels who made the eastern jungles of Quintana Roo their center of resistance. The town of Chan Santa Cruz became their spiritual sanctuary until the 4th of May of 1901 when it was taken-over by General Ignacio Bravo.

It is not my intention to discuss the origins, development, and outcome of this conflict, given that it is not the central theme of my dissertation, and, besides, there is vast literature on the subject (Montalvo 1988; Villa Rojas 1987; González Navarro 1970; Reed 1964) Rather, I seek to link this historical armed conflict with the effects it had on the depopulation of many towns and some cities of the Peninsula. Bartolomé estimates that between 1846 and 1862 more than 180,000 people were lost as direct or indirect consequences of the war and 1,057 towns were destroyed out of a total of 3,153 (1988: 189).

3. Xocenpich: Echoes of its History

Xocenpich is one among the large number of towns that were destroyed or abandoned during the Caste War. It was well within the area of conflict and suffered severe damage inflicted by the rebels who destroyed part of the town and burned the Catholic Church. It wasn’t until the beginning of the 20th century that it was repopulated.
Chart I. Population by Partidos and Towns from 1821 through 1900.

Chart I indicates that the towns of Xocenpich and Dzitás were of a considerable size before the Caste War (1847-1901). Xocenpich in 1846 had 544 inhabitants—almost the same as it has today—but, from 1862 to 1900, there is no evidence of population. Dzitás it had 1,500 inhabitants in 1846, almost one half of the population it has today. But after the war, its population decreased to 429 inhabitants.

Xocenpich was depopulated during the Caste War. The narratives that I have heard through conversations with the oldest inhabitants of this town reinforce the idea that this town was abandoned in that war. Don Fidelio Hau Tun, 77 years old, sacristan of the Catholic Church, invited me one afternoon to visit his Church. He wanted to show me the exact place where he buried, in the walls of the church, a bottle that contained the names of the people that helped to reconstruct the church many years ago.
"It is here", he said to me.

I just saw a wall, I was expecting to see the bottle, and I stupidly asked him if he could show it to me. He stared at me and I confirmed that I was, indeed, very stupid.

"Why do you want to see the bottle?" He asked me.

I answered, "Well, I am trying to write something about Xocenpich, and it is important to me to get those names so I can write them down in my dissertation."

"Again!?" Don Fidelio replied, "Why? They are already written on the bottle! Why would you like to write their names again?"

I thought "True, why do I want to write their names again?" I had no answers.

And the bottle? I never saw it, but I saw Don Fidelio smiling every time he told me, without having to break the walls of the church, the name of each person that had helped to rebuild the church. We had a wonderful conversation.

And the names in the bottle? One day I will smile when I repeat each name. No, I didn’t write their names. Somebody more objective than I will do it in the future. They are better off inside the bottle. They remain inside the collective memory. This was a class of history and anthropology without a blackboard.

Don Fidelio proudly showed me his church. He explained to me that this church never had a roof made out of concrete, but made out of palms instead. He showed me the hole of the pole that supported the roof: it was burnt. I asked him if he knew when this roof was burnt. "My grandfather told me that when he came to Xocenpich it was the way they found it. That he didn’t know who did it, but that it possibly happened during the Gran Guerra (the Caste War)."
The present inhabitants of Xocenpich arrived from diverse places surrounding the area around 1905. They came from places like Tunkás, Dzitás, Uayma, Pisté, Káua, Yokdzonót, and some haciendas such as Tacchilá, and San Luis. Many of them had just been liberated from slavery. Don Juan Chan told me:

"My grandfather, Don Florentino Chan, came to Xocenpich when he was freed from the Hacienda San Luis. He told me that when he arrived in this town, there was no one living here; that there were enormous trees in what today is the Plaza, inside the church, and growing wildly inside the abandoned houses."

Efrain Ek Mex, told me that his grandfather, Don Pablo Ek, came from the same hacienda as Don Florentino,

"He was looking for fertile soils to make his milpa, and because nobody was living here he decided that Xocenpich was a good place to start a new life. And he was right! This land, was full of deers, wild boars, wild turkeys, monkeys, lots and lots of honey, huge trees and plenty water. My grandfather, later on, got married, and still later on, we are here."

I heard similar stories from many people in Xocenpich. They all talk, especially about the big trees, the good game for hunting, the fertile soil, the good honey and the good people. But they speak of the bad times as well. For instance, the locust plague in 1940, that caused another depopulation of Xocenpich.

There is not a great deal of information on Xocenpich and Dzitás during the Spanish Colonial period and the Caste War as it is for the period of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1921). Among the scarce information available, Manuela Cristina García Bernal (1978) points out that, in 1549, the first holder of the encomienda of Dzitás (see Chart II, following García Bernal, for an account of the holders of the encomienda of Dzitás from 1549 through 1652).
Integrated into Bolonkauihl, was Juan Cano. It is interesting to note that this *encomienda* was established only seven years after the founding of Mérida (1542), giving us an idea of the age of this *encomienda* and the population of *encomendados*—Indigenous individuals at the service of an *encomendero*, or *encomienda* holder—in that region of Yucatán. In 1652, the holders of the same *encomienda*, who shared it half-and-half, were Francisco Rodríguez Montalvo and Francisco Briceño.

As can be seen, the information about the years, and, more important, the numbers of *encomendados* for each period of a given holder are, in most cases, missing. This recounting is incomplete, taking into consideration that the *encomienda* was abolished in 1785 (Zavala 1940). Notwithstanding that García Bernal’s work is one of the most complete, no record of Xocenpich appears in her account. It is not clear whether Xocenpich was part of an *encomienda*, or an *encomienda* in and of itself.

As mentioned above, the information on Xocenpich is very scarce. It was not until later in the 1920s when Xocenpich began to be mentioned at least occasionally in some Yucatecan newspapers—i.e. *Tierra, La Revista de Yucatán, La Razón*, and *El Correo*. One

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**Chart II.** The *Encomienda* and the Encomenderos of Dzítás (1549-1652).
such story ran on July 14, 1923 when Governor Felipe Carrillo Puerto inaugurated the Dzitás-Chichén Itzá highway which passed through Xocenpich.

Xocenpich was briefly mentioned in one of the classics of anthropology, *The Folk Culture of Yucatán*, written by Robert Redfield (1941). All what he said about Xocenpich it was that this town was very near to Dzitás. He carried out his fieldwork in three communities: Tusic, Dzitás, and Chan Kom. The latter two are near Xocenpich, 5 and 20 miles away, respectively. Tusic is situated in what is today the state of Quintana Roo, while Dzitás and Chan Kom are in the state of Yucatán.

It was not until the Instituto Bíblico del Sureste (The Southeastern Bible Institute), founded originally in Mérida in 1924, was relocated to Xocenpich in 1942 that a considerable amount of information about how the town started was published. Most of the information focused on religion and missionary work and so was limited in its scope (Legters 1946; Mathews 1946-1972; Passler 1945; Dame 1968; Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana 1956, 1973). The Instituto Bíblico del Sureste was founded by American Presbyterian missionaries who were affiliated to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Although the official history leaves many questions opened about the remote origin of Xocenpich, the collective memory allow us to watch events and happenings that transcends historicists narratives. In this perspective, based in the cosmovision of the men and women that officially do not have history, I will begin by locating Xocenpich geographically, and latter introduce ourselves into its history.

Xocenpich is located in the so-called maize-growing zone in southeastern Yucatán state; south of the old Mérida-Puerto Juárez road that bisects the state. This zone is one of the five economic zones of this Yucatán: 1. Corn Production Zone; 2. Cattle Raising Zone;
3. Coast Fishing Zone; 4. Citrus Production Zone and 5. Henequen Production Zone (an Agavaceae plant—Agave fourcroydes—its strong greenish or yellowish hard fiber is excellent for making cordage and binder twine manufactures).

Even though Xocenpich is on the borderline of the cattle-raising zone, the majority of its male population is dedicated to agricultural activities. Mainly they work in the *milpa*—a corn-growing plot, a form of swidden agriculture predominant in many regions of México, characterized by slash-and-burn techniques—an agriculture that is ancient in the cultures of maize.39

The *Municipio* of Dzitás (from the Maya *dzit*, a tree, and *haas*, banana, which can be translated, as “a banana tree”) currently has two *Comisarias*, Yaxché and Xocenpich. However, the latter was not always a *Comisaría* of Dzitás, nor did it always belong politically to Dzitás.40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>District</th>
<th>Partido</th>
<th>Capital of the Partido</th>
<th>Community</th>
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Chart III illustrates the changes that Xocenpich and Dzitas underwent in the political division of Yucatán; the political entities to which both pueblos (towns) belonged; the political category ascribed to them (City, Villa, Ayuntamiento, or Pueblo), and the authority structures that corresponded to them in each period (Presidente Municipal or Mayor, Junta Municipal or Board of Constables, and Juez de Paz or Justice of the Peace).  

Xocenpich is located 5 miles southeast of the town of Dzitas, and 6 miles south by southwest of Chichén Itzá. It is a Comisaría of the Municipio of Dzitas—the latter is the territorial and administrative jurisdictions of Mexican townships. The former is a territory within a Municipio—that is about 75 miles southeast of Mérida, and 25 miles southwest of Valladolid. A Presidente Municipal, or a Mayor administers a Municipio. A Comisaría is under the authority of a Comisario—a person who holds the power to execute decisions within that locality—who depends, in turn, on the orders of the Presidente Municipal.

The Municipio of Dzitas has total area of 45,603 hectares, of which 52.4% (23,389 hectares) are private property, and 47.6% (21,704 hectares) are ejidal (communal) property. Its territory consists of several ranches, like San Andrés, San Juan, and Sahcaba, with smaller estates that surround the ejidos (communal-owned land). Much of the private-owned land, in this Municipio, comprises the urban settlements, the 651 dwellings, of which the majority are masonry constructions, and the rest are made of perishable materials, like huts and
cardboard houses (Flores Torres 1997:62-63).

The Municipio of Dzitás has three ejidos: the ejido of Dzitás, with 15,197 hectares and 368 ejidatarios (members of an ejido); the ejido of Xocenpich, with 4,995 hectares, with 108 ejidatarios; and the ejido of Yaxché, with 1,512 hectares and 45 ejidatarios.
4. Xocenpich: Origin and Formation of its *Ejido*

Appropriation of its Own Space

On the 2nd of November of 1923, a group of townspeople from Xocenpich requested from Governor Felipe Carrillo Puerto an allotment of land for them. The basis of their request was their lack of land for agriculture, because all of them were *milperos* (people dedicated to *milpa* farming, or corn production). It was President Plutarco Elías Calles who signed the Presidential Resolution to allot land to the *ejido* of Xocenpich on the 18th of August of 1927.

The official installment of land took place at the locale of the *Comisaria Municipal* of Xocenpich on November the 10th of 1927, at 5:27 PM, as registered in the *Acta Constitutiva* [Constitutive Act.]. This Act was signed before Engineer Adán Cárdenas, representative of the *Honorable Comisión Nacional Agraria* (the Honorable National Agrarian Commission); Citizens Don Gonzalo Chan, Cesario Chí, and Gregorio Chí, President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively, of the *Comité Particular Administrativo Agrario*; Candido Oxté (President of the *Comité Particular Administrativo Agrario* of Dzítás); and Galo Martín (Representative of the *Honorable Ayuntamiento* de Dzítás, whose *Presidente Municipal* was Ramón Pérez).

For Xocenpich the signatories were Julian Tun, *Comisario* Municipal; Sabino Perera,43 *Presidente de La Liga de Resistencia del Partido Socialista del Sureste* (President of the League of Resistance of the Southeast Socialist Party); Atalo Perera, Amado Perera, Faustino Chan, Florentino Chan, and Antonio Cupul.

The Presidential Resolution of August the 18th of 1927, which was published in the
Diario Oficial de la Federación, on Thursday, November the 10th of 1927—in México, a bill only becomes official when it is published in that official newspaper—assigned to the pueblo of Xocenpich an area of 2,772 hectares that benefitted 77 ejidatarios.

On August the 7th of 1937, the Xocenpicheños requested the amplification of the ejido. On August the 26th of 1942, this petition was granted to them by President Manuel Avila Camacho, his resolution was published in the Diario Oficial del Estado (Año XLIX No.15257) on February the 20th of 1948. An area of 2,223 hectares was granted, benefitting 31 ejidatarios.

The Acta Constitutiva [the Constitutive Act] of this amplification was signed in the Comisariado Municipal on May the 23rd of 1942, at 8:00 AM. Among the signatories were Engineer Romeo Antonio Rosales (Commissioner of the Agrarian Department of the State); Cándido Hau, Patricio Cupul, and José Gregorio Hau, President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Comisariado Ejidal, respectively.

The new signers of this act, that rearranged the agrarian map of Xocenpich, were Alberto Chan K., Felipe Ek, Catalino Cen, Marcos Hau, Sabino Perera, Julián Tun, Ambrosio Cupul, Bonifacio Cupul, Adriano Cen, Fermín Cutz, Andrés Báas, Demetrio Chan, Victor Chi, Moisés Pech, Elias Mukul Pat, Pedro Mis, Santiago Mex, Isidro Pech, Fidencio Hau, and Miguel Tun.

This amplification affected: 1,365 hectares of the National Reserve; 794 hectares of the plots of Cosil; and 62 hectares of the Hacienda San Andrés, 2,223 hectares all told. Adding this amount to the 2,772 hectares of the original ejido, yields a total of 4,495 hectares, which is the total extension of the ejido today.

The ejido of Xocenpich borders the ejido of Dzitás to the North; Balché and Chan-Dzonót (both private properties) to the Northeast; Kik (private property) and Terrenos
Nacionales [National Land Reserve], to the East; San Juan, Kuxché, Yaxché, and Terrenos Nacionales, to the Southeast; Pisté, to the South; Lucchebihol No. 1, Lucchebihol No. 2 to the Southwest; Cosil, and Dzulutok, Maxcapixoy, to the West; Hacienda Maxcapixoy, Terrenos de Aneb, and Hacienda de San Andrés to the Northwest; and, finally, Terrenos Nacionales, to the North. A Terreno Nacional is a National Land Reserve, in the custody and under the administration of the Federal Government, that cannot be used for any economic purpose, like agriculture, mining, ranches, or timber industry, whether on a communal basis or by privateers.

5. Hush of the History, Echoes of the Map, Resonances of the Etymology

Nowadays, Xocenpich is a small village of some 700 inhabitants. Its Maya name has been translated etymologically by Justino Fernandez as: “the Pich tree entered (into a well?).” X (femenine nominal prefix); Ocen (participle form for Oc, ‘to enter’); Pich (Enterolobium cyclocarpum)” (1945: 168). The term for Pich in Spanish is Guanacaste or Orejon, someone or something with big ears, because the fruits of the Guanacaste, or Pich, resemble big ears.

Pich is a giant tree, that can have a trunk as thick as 14 feet in diameter, and a height of about 45 to 50 feet. Its roots reach the water table, its top is ample and spread-out, and its branches cast a shadow that extends as far as 60 feet. Its leaves are very abundant and small, with a linear-oblong shape, of approximately half an inch long. Its flowers are white and small, and its fruit is a wide, flat, and coiled pod, dark brown in color. Its wood is gray, with yellow streaks, and it is hard, resistant, and flexible; it is used in joinery and construction in
The hardness of the **Pich** tree is well known in Xocenpich, to the point of becoming almost legendary. The inhabitants of this town point out that when the highway was built in 1923, and enlarged in the 1970’s, the bulldozers could not knockdown these trees. Therefore, the builders were forced to use TNT. Not even the hurricanes could destroy them. Nevertheless, nowadays there are only a few of them. Because of the tourist industry the **Pich** tree roots are the prime material for wooden sculptures sold to tourists in Pisté and Chichen Itzá. This has gradually caused the almost total disappearance of these trees in the town. Today, the most visible one, at the entrance of the town, is one of the few that is left.

Manuel García Rejón (pen-named Marcos de Chimay), even though he wrote a book on Maya etymologies of several Yucatec towns, does not include Xocenpich in his work. However, when he translates **Xocen**—a town that is currently within the jurisdiction of Valladolid, and that belonged to the Cupul chiefdom before the Spanish Conquest—he points out that: “**Xoc** is a Maya word, and its ending (**en**) makes it mean in that language ‘I am **Xoc**’, or, I am **Xooc**.” (1910: 52).

Xocenpich was part of the Cupul chiefdom, along with Xocen, some 20 miles distant. The Cupul family was one of the most powerful of the Peninsula during the Post-Classic period, along with the Xiu, the Canul, and the Cocom, four Maya-Toltec, or Nahua-Maya lineages that were in Yucatán at the time of the Spanish Conquest. Because of the power and influence of the Cupul family and the awesome characteristics of the **Pich** tree, it could be speculated that there was an identification of the Cupul with the **Pich** tree. It is as though the tree were a symbol of protection and power such as becomes those who are powerful. In fact, nowadays, one of the most politically influential families in Xocenpich is the Cupul...
family, whose members are considered leaders of the town. Xocenpich then, could be translated, following Justino Fernandez and García Rejón, as “I am Xoc, the Pich tree.” This translation makes sense.

Miguel Cibeira Taboada points out that Xoc is generally accepted as ‘to count’ (numbers), though not always, since it is contextual and it could also mean ‘to read’, or to ‘tell a story’. For example, Xocchel is translated as ‘to count magpies’, and not ‘to read magpies’. This is because ‘to count’ (numbers) in Maya is Dzak’ab—Dzac means ‘to give’, and K’ab means ‘hand’, which could be translated as that ‘given by the hand’. Thus, Xocchel should be translated as ‘to count magpies’ (1977: 123). And Xocenpich, following Cibeira Taboada, could be: ‘I am counting the Pich trees.’

The Cordemex Maya dictionary (1980) translates Xoc as counting (numbers); also as reading, lesson, and ‘to learn’; it is also translated as ‘roots’. The same dictionary points out that En is a name in the first person: I am; it is the first person of the simple present tense of the verb Ental (auxiliary verb, to be, to have) it is never found alone, but is linked to a name or participle following the main verb, or a stem. When linked to a verb, it is a first person pronoun. Then, Xocen could mean: I am Xoc; I am learned, I am knowledgeable. Pich, accordingly to this dictionary, is a tree whose fruits resemble big ears. Hence, Xocenpich could then be translated as: I am Xoc, the Pich tree.

The older people of Xocenpich pronounce it as Xoocenpich (double o). Xoocen (from the verb Xoc, to count, to read, to tell a story) it means “I was counted,” or “I was taken into account,” or “count on me,” or “I was chosen.” In order to explain the option “chosen”, we may use, as an example, a situation whereby a certain amount of goods, or places, or opportunities, are to be divided, or shared-out among a limited number of people such as a place in a hunting party. Someone may ask a fellow Xocenpicheño “Xoocech
wa?” [Did they count you?, Did they take you into consideration?, Were you chosen?]. The answers could be one of three forms: “Má in wojelí” [I do not know]; or “Má Xooceni” [I was not counted, or I was not taken into account, or, I was not chosen]; or “Xoocen” [I was counted in, or taken into consideration, or, simply, I was chosen]. Thus, the people of Xocenpich translate the name of their town as: “I am a Chosen one, like the Pich tree, I am Xoc.” In my opinion, this is the way that Xocenpich should be translated. The Xocenpicheños give to their translation a touch of kindness, warmth, and love, because they are referring to their home-town. Nevertheless, when they translate it as: “I am a Chosen one, like the Pich tree. I am Xoc.” Though it makes sense to them, their faces express sadness, because there are no more Pich trees left. I myself become sad as well.

6. The Identity as Reverberation of Their Own Stories

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Xocenpich was repopulated, after being destroyed during the Caste War. Therefore the Xocenpicheño Identity based on “being born there” it is constructed, deconstructed, and reified from an historical perspective that is different from the “official” history of the colonial and postcolonial period of Yucatán. That is to say, the “official” history has constructed “the” identity of the Mayan towns. Nevertheless, the Xocenpicheño identity, that has an historical base grounded in the XX century, is constructed from the individual histories of the people who repopulated Xocenpich around 1905. Each one of those people, whose names are written in the bottle that never saw, brought with himself pieces of histories and identities of other Yucatec towns or haciendas where they were enslaved. Together they have been weaving that map and that
tour that is its “Maya” culture, and gives them their identity as Xocenpicheños.

Of course, to be Xocenpicheño is a form to be Maya, not the form it of being “Maya.” Then, my dissertation constitutes an alert, against the possible theoretical and practical implications that are inherent to any generalization: to delimit and conceive the Maya identities as a univocal one. One is not to return to functionalism, but to question the unipolar Maya identity that has been constructed in academic imaginary, but not and not by the imaginary of the diverse Maya people.

In this context, Francisco is not a “informant,” is not an object of ethnographic study, he is simply a name in the historical bottle of Xocenpich, whose lessons without blackboard teach to feel the cultural tracks of the thousand Mayan identities
Chapter III

Conversations Among Ourselves

1. The Reinstatement of the Dialogues

In Yucatán, one of the most important traditions rivaling the daily *Siesta Time* is to go to the *Plaza* or Main Park of the town to chat, to converse, and to gossip among friends. This social gathering generally happens during the late afternoon after taking a shower and eating dinner. In Xocenpich this tradition is religiously observed. The plaza, of this town, as discussed in chapter two, is a mosaic that represents the inter-connectivity between different cultures. Francisco and I sometimes used the *Plaza* as a space for our conversations, and other times we would converse while waiting under the beating sun for the bus or while walking to the *tortillería* to buy fresh tortillas. The spaces and places that constituted our conversations were not simply disposable locales, but were ‘temporary’ sites embedded within the process of dialoging with each other while traveling through the experiences of everyday life.

All along these dialogues, Francisco and I were echoing each other, and we were
reverberating events, circumstances, possibilities, actions, interactions, laughs, emotions, tears, sadness, fears, and feelings. Nevertheless, in the quotidian life’s travel, inserted in a multicultural context, our perspectives and our identities were at times dissimilar, antagonistic, and contradictory. These actual circumstances, discourses, feedbacks, and the various ways in which Francisco and I assume our self-identities leads us along the road to establish, reestablish, and continue communication.

As discussed in Chapter 1, one dialogue was interrupted during my childhood because I went away from my community and I entered other “worlds.” In those social spheres I acquired other identities. In my eyes I became distanced from my former identity. Did I? In the meantime, Francisco, who stayed in Xocenpich, remained, I thought, the same. Did he? These last two questions, the rupture of communication, and the reinstatement of the dialogue constitute the main subjects of this Chapter. The following are excerpts of many conversations that Francisco and I had since 1997. I am starting with my inner-echoes.

2. Francisco
Rumors, Gossips, and Imagination

October 1999

One way or another, Francisco, has always fascinated me. When I was a little boy I was both weary and scared of him, influenced by the things that people were saying about him in Xocenpich, a town where rumor and gossip are as natural as the wind. For example, at the end of the 1960s, when electricity had not yet arrived to Xocenpich, the gossip was that at nights there was a masked-man, full dressed in black, wandering around and hiding in the town’s darkest corners. There, he waited for a future victim, not to assault, but rather to
scare. The infamous masked-man, according to people, was Francisco. Of course, many children were frightened, including myself. Although, I never saw the masked-man, with the mind's eye of a 10-year-old boy I started seen Francisco as the masked-man. Besides being weary of him, I completely dislike him because he was not Presbyterian and because he drunk too much alcohol.

Similarly, Francisco told me that he did not like me because I was a rich boy, son of the most respected Dzul of the town, son of the Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, and, above all, because I had a complex of superiority in relation to the other children in Xocenpich. In this context of a mutually rejection, it never crossed my mind that someday we were going to develop excellent friendship bonds. I did not think, as well, that some day I was going to become an alcoholic myself. But, in spite of all we became good friends. That is life.

Francisco believes that he is 48 years old, but he does not know for sure because he lost all of his identification papers when hurricane “Gilbert” struck the Yucatán Peninsula in 1988. His parents were Don Agapito Cen and Doña María Kú Campos. They had 6 children Socórro Cen Kú, Genoveva Cen Kú, Filiberto Cen Kú, Candelaria Cen Kú, Francisco Cen Kú, and Higinia Cen Kú. Francisco is the fifth child and he is married to Enriqueta Chi Xoc.

“T was 16 years old and Enriqueta was 14, when we decided to form a family. At that time we did not have enough money to celebrate a proper marriage and, therefore we decided to run away from our houses without the permission of our parents. We planned it very carefully: we had to escape at night. We waited until everybody was sleeping in Xocenpich. I took my father’s horse, put on his mount, and very quietly I went to her house....and, she was there waiting. Oh! I remember that night! Habia una lluvia que lloviznaba [it was raining but it was only drizzing.] My heart was beating so fast that even the horse started getting nervous!”

“We both got on the horse and we escaped as fast as a lightening. We
run, and run, and we didn’t stop until we arrive to X’lubché [‘Fallen wood.’
A small abandoned ranch, located 2 miles North of Xocenpich], and, there,
with no witnesses, we consumed our love...3 times.”

“Meanwhile, back in Xocenpich, there was a public commotion, the
gossip reached incredible levels because what Enriqueta and I have just have
done. Of course, our parents were very angry with us, we had just
embarrassed them very badly.”

“After a couple of days in X’lubché, we went back to Xocenpich. As
soon as my mother-in-law saw Enriqueta she took a stick and beat her up so
badly. I didn’t get beat up myself, but my father called the police and I spent
a couple of hours in the local prison. That was so embarrassing! After I was
released, we built our house and we started our own life.”

“But my mother-in-law was still upset at Enriqueta and kept beating
her up, to the point that one day Enriqueta told me while crying: ‘You see,
Chol, I decided to escape with you, but my mother keeps beating me up.’ I
decided to go and talk to my mother-in-low, I told her: ‘stop beating
Enriqueta, because now she is my wife.’”

“I got to beat her up, so the anger that I feel will vanish.” She replied.

“I understand, but you already beat her up so much and so many
times... What else do you want?” I replied.

“What else do I want? I want to beat you up as well!” She screamed
at me.

“She didn’t hit me, but after that conversation with her, she stopped
beating Enriqueta. Nowadays, she is happy with us, and with the 5
grandchildren we gave her she become even happier: Inocenta Cen Xoc,
Francisco de Asís Cen Xoc, Rosendo Cen Xoc, José Leonardo Cen Xoc, and
Juan Cen Xoc.”

### 3. To See and To Be Seen

December 1998

In writing self-reflexive fieldwork account, I, the observer, become as much a part
of the account as the observed, and vice versa. This is to say, I am being observed as
well. Hence, Francisco is not my informant, although I attempted avoiding to position
myself in an authoritative position, I have to recognize that I failed. Nevertheless, our conversations were contextually reciprocal, polyphonic, historical and intersubjective. We were dialoguing as subjects that see and are seen, evade and probe back, echoing and reverberating each other.

“Stop asking stupid questions and hold the wheel of this bicycle that I am trying to repair!” Francisco screamed at me. I turned off my tape recorder, and I held the wheel.

“Francisco, I do not think that these are stupid questions. You know that this is not an interview, I am just recording our conversations,” I replied.

“Is that right? Then, how come I am not recording our conversations? How come, I am not holding a tape recorder myself? Who is holding that machine? Me or you?” Angrily, Francisco told me.

“I am sorry,” I said.

“I am sorry,” Francisco said. “It is just that sometimes you treat me as if I was stupid. For example, a minute ago you were asking me to count the number of identities you think you have, and, at the same time, you wanted me to tell you how many identities I think I have.”

“No, Francisco, I didn’t ask you to count them, I just commented that I think that I have many identities, and that you might as well...” I replied.

“Here you go again....!” Francisco said. “Let me be honest with you: You are either going crazy because the amount of books you have read, or, simply you are a hypocrite! I think that you are like the Talco Dos Caras [a brand of talcum powder that is fabricated in Mérida. It means ‘Two Faces Talcum Powder’] because you don’t show
your real face, you only show faces that are not your faces. One hand you are telling me that you ‘feel’ Xocenpicheño, and, in the other, you tell that you ‘feel’ North American. Other times, you ‘feel’ Yucatec or whatever.... And me? How many identities do I have? Can you count them? Do you think that I am like my hut that has only one room? Or do you think that I am like the Chac-Mol (Red Jaguar, a Maya deity. It is sculpted in a single piece of rock and it is located in one chamber of the “Castillo” of Chichén Itzá)? Listen, Juan, I breathe, I walk, I talk, I repair bicycles, I make Milpa, I am a police officer, and I have a family! Are these identities?”

4. Seen Ourselves as Xocenpicheños

April 1998

Francisco and I have known each other for many years. Although, during a period of our lives we did not like each other, we become friends around 25 years ago. Our friendship allows us to have intimate and imaginative conversations in which we both occupy a place in our stories. Our conversations are fragments of Xocenpich, embedded in ourselves as we are entrenched in the walls of the historical bottle of “our” town. Yet, sometimes we think that we are not welcome in such urn.

Sometimes I think that having many identities is an impediment to me fitting into that bottle, that it may cause me to lose sight of the fact that the bottle is itself inserted in the wall of a Spanish Catholic Church, which is in and by itself another identity. This is to say, a
Xocenpicheño identity inserted in a European one. Furthermore, these identities are, at the same time, incrusted in a mosaic of identities: the ones represented by plaques, antennas, and burials.

“Chol, Do you consider me as a Xocenpicheño?”

He looked at me, right to my eyes, and then he asked me: “do you want the truth, or do you want me to please you?”

“...Well, I want the truth.”

“...Well, you know, you’re not from here.” Francisco told me.

“What are you talking about?” I replied.

“...Well, you were not born here. .... You were not born here!” He said.

“True, I know that, but I’ve been living in this town many, many years.”

“Cotz, you can live an eternity here, but you will never be Xocenpicheño. You have to be born in this town to be one of us!”

When I am reminded what my real “status” is in Xocenpich I get upset, I do not know what to think. But one thing is for sure: it hurts, identity, sometimes hurts. Many Xocenpicheños reject me, not as a person, but as a Xocenpicheño. I think that is ridiculous because I grew up there, I grew up with them, I do speak the same languages, they were my friends, and still they are my friends.

In counterpart, in Xocenpich I am highly respected, but it is the kind of respect that implies detachment, the kind of respect that hurts. For example, sometimes the oldest people in town, when they see me and before I say something, they salute me with a Buenos Días (Good Morning). On first glance, to an outsider this might be fine, but not to me, because
I know that: 1. I am younger than them; therefore, I am the one that is supposed to greet them first, and 2. Generally, they deserve the *Buenos Dias* to salute a *Dzul*. But when Xocenpicheños, that are not *Dzulo’ob* themselves, greed each other they only say *Días* (without *Buenos*). Under those circumstances, I have to recognize, against my will, that I am *Dzul*. Paradoxically, the *Dzulo’ob* are also Xocenpicheños.

5. A *Verdadero* Xocenpicheño

July 1999

"Francisco, few days ago I suggested to the *Comisario* to forbid the youth to gamble in the middle of the Plaza. He told that it was a good idea and that he was going to ask you, as the police officer of town, to keep an eye on those guys. Well, yesterday one of the guys told me that I shouldn’t interfere on issues that only concern to Xocenpicheños. He bluntly told me: ‘*Ma’ huayé sijeché ... mina’an tech derecho a t’an*’ (You were not born here...you got no right to say anything).”

“That guy is an idiot.” Francisco, told me. “If the condition to be a *verdadero* (a truly) Xocenpicheño is being born here, then the old people like the late Don Tiburcio Cupul, father of Don Ambrosio Cupul, were fake Xocenpicheños because they were not born here.” Francisco exclaimed!

“That guy is an ignorant and an idiot,” Francisco repeated. “The vast majority of the founding fathers and mothers of Xocenpich were not born here. For example, my great-grandfather was born in the *Hacienda K’amful*; my father was born in Pol Kitam; and my wife came from Uayma.”

“Aha!” I said, while I snapped my fingers and pointed his head, and with an impish

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smile I told him: “Aha! There you go, Chol, I am a Xocenpicheño! You said it, not me!

“Don’t point your Dzul fingers at me!” he said. “Perhaps you are a Xocenpicheño, but you are a Dzul as well.” “Buenos Dias” he told me.

“Días” I told him.

“Días,” he told me.

6. Reflections on Myself

Sometimes I wonder why I want to be a Xocenpicheño so badly. At other times I wonder why I do not want to be a Xocenpicheño. Many times I spoke to Francisco about it, but all what he tells is that I am like the Dos Caras talcum powder. Maybe he is right.

I am someone that sometimes “feels” indigenous and other times I do not. When I “feel” indigenous I want to be accepted as an indigenous person by other indigenous people. I do not want to be “accepted” as indigenous people by those ones that are not indigenous peoples themselves because their “acceptance” is based on the notion of “Indio.” Let me explain. If I am in Mérida and somebody calls me “Indio” I would react according to the context in which this word was uttered. If is in the middle of a conflict I will take “Indio” as an insult.

Sometimes, when I go to Pancho’s [one of the most famous restaurant-bars in Mérida] and if a female tourist approaches me because of my long hair and my physical appearance—in reality, in the Hollywood imaginary I look more an “Apache” than a “Maya”—and she asks me: Are you a “real Indian?” My answer might vary, depending on the circumstances, on my mood, on the time, on the weather; on how the question was asked, nicely, with respect or lack of, and so forth. If the whole context looks “great” I might play or perform the “role” of an “exotic Indian.” by saying things like, “yes, I am indigenous, last
week I attended a ceremony to honor and worship Mother Moon. We humbly asked to give us a deer, the holy deer. She answered our petitions."

At the same time, and still in the same bar, if I receive a phone call from my professor, I immediately switch to another identity [the western scholar] and I might say something like:

"I agree with you to a certain extend, but you are not taking into consideration that Charles Cooley, in 1902 refused to separate consciousness from the social context. He understood that people possess consciousness and that it is shaped through continuous social interaction. Similarly, for Karl Marx, the basic nature of human beings is to be productive, and productivity is a natural way to express creativity...."

When I do not want to "feel" indigenous, I have to fill my pocket with all sorts of credentials to show that I am not an indigenous person. For example, my academic credentials. Saying that I have a Master degree and that I am a Doctoral Candidate makes me "feel" that I succeed in proving that, indeed I am not indigenous. Sadly, I am like those Guatemalan Maya Scholars, as pointed by Fischer and McKenna Brown (1996), that have immersed themselves in the Social Mobility game. La verdad duele [truth hurts].

In this context, identities become something like a chip on my shoulder. And as a chip on the shoulder it helps me to get many material things, but at the same time it could become extremely painful, like a pain in the soul. It's not black or white. In this context, to a certain extent, identities are like masks. I can put them on and take them out. But this does not mean that I am in control of my set of masks because most of the time is the prerogative of other people. Hence, against my will they put the masks on me as they whish. I have the feeling that there are many other people in the same position as me: people with many identities, many masks, and a lot of pain.
7. A Truly Xocenpicheño Should Not Write Poetry

August 1998

On the social map of Xocenpich Francisco is a Xocenpicheño because he was born in that town, which is the prerequisite for acceptance in the community as one of "ours," one of "us" and not as one of "them." Nevertheless, on the territory of the "us" he is considered as one who is "in-between" which implies that on the territory of the "us" there are differences as well. This is to say, even though Francisco was born in Xocenpich, paradoxically, he is not regarded as what is considered "us" all the time, in his own pueblo.

In this context, "our" dialogues are not just conversations between Francisco and me, because dialogues are not only between two people, but also through people. Hence, we are having a conversation with the community of Xocenpich as well: a dialogue in a very fantastic and imaginative way. For example, in talking to an important member of the Presbyterian Church and a verdadera Xocenpicheña I mentioned to her that I was writing "something" about Xocenpich and that Francisco was at the center of my writings. She looked at me with incredulity,

"Are you writing a book about Francisco? Why him and not someone that has left a positive imprint in this town as Dr. Finley did? Write something on the founding fathers of the Presbyterian Church! Come on! You know
that Francisco is not a "well-born" Xocenpicheño; I mean he is not an exemplary Xocenpicheño. In this town we all go to a Church, but he never goes to any, perhaps because he drinks too much; he doesn't have good manners; he doesn't know how to read and write; he is not a truly priista; he doesn't.... well, he also behaves like a teenager, what is this thing about playing basketball everyday with people that could well be his grandchildren?

On top of all, he has strange ideas. For example, he told me that he is "half" American, because in the past there were American people living here and today the young people of Xocenpich are bringing in town ideas that they copy from the American kids that they see in Cancun. Can you believe that he thinks that he is poet? Did you know that he is taping on his tape recorder 'poems' and stories that he himself invents? I think he is crazy.

En fin [in short] it is your decision if you want to write about him, but I think that you are making a big mistake. Why don't you write a book about the Instituto Bíblico del Sureste."

8. Stories with Semantic Cadence

August 1998

"Did she tell you that I am recording and inventing stories?" Francisco asked me.

"Exactly." I said.

"Well, I used to record some stories, but I didn’t invent them. I made several tapes, because I wanted to send them to the Radio station in Peto—a town that is located 80 miles south of Xocenpich. This radio station transmits most of its programs in Yucatec Maya. It is owned by the Federal Government and is administrated by the INI, or Instituto Nacional Indigenista—so I can hear my own voice on the Radio. But, couple of years ago, I lent them to my cousin Rosendo, and he hasn’t returned them to me. I think that I will never see them again."
"But, did you invent them? I asked him.

"No I didn’t invent them. The things that I said did happened in reality. Many of the stories that I know I learned them from the antiguos [the founders of the town] such as difunto Don Valuch [Don Valerio Aké]. He didn’t invent the stories as well. He saw many things. He foresaw many things. He always spoke the truth."

"Can you tell one? I begged him."

"Yes, but open your ears. Don Valuch told me this story, so I am going to repeat it as I heard it from that old man. Are you ready? Here is how this story begins." Francisco said.

9. Conversation Between Don Valuch and Francisco

August 1998

[Don Valuch]. “One day we heard a strange noise in the sky, we looked up, and we saw a strange bird flying over the town. Everyone fled in terror, seeking refuge in caves and in their houses. They closed their doors, some cried.

After the strange bird disappeared, I told the people: ¡Ay! ¡Señores no valemos nada en esta tierra! ¡NO VALEMOS NADA EN ESTA TIERRA! [Men! We do not worth anything on this earth! WE DO NOT WORTH ANYTHING ON THIS EARTH!]’ The Chac-Shich’o’ob [term used by Maya to refer to Anglo-Saxon people] have just arrived! Many more of them will come, so many that they will cover the sun with many more silver birds. The day has arrived! It has arrived the terrible day in which the Chac-Shich’o’ob, are going to step on us! They will step on us!’ Cry people! Cry people! Cry!’

Francisco. “How are they going to step on us, great old man?”

Don Valuch. “With their money, they will step on us with their green money. Their
money is green, very powerful color. Our money does not worth anything. It is the time of
the green, be ready people! But this is nothing compared to what I am going to tell you...."

Francisco. “Tell me!”

Don Valuch. “¡Ay! Señor, someday they will occupy this land, and sometime in the
near future we are going to be mixed with them!”

10. Stories with Rhythm

August 1998

“Don Valerio was right, he was speaking with the truth. Don Valerio, spoke with the
truth!” Francisco exclaimed!

“I know.” I said.

“Do you know how much is a dollar worth? Check this out: with one dollar, the
Chac-Shich’o’ob can buy many Coca-Colas. But if I want to buy one Coca-Cola, I will
need many pesos. Don Valerio was absolutely right; he was hitting the nail on the head!

“Don Valuch was also right about his vision that we were going to get mixed. Few
years after the airplanes flew over this town, the Americans arrived here. Although, we
didn’t get mixed with them through marriages nor we had children with them, still we were
mixed together; they were living here. So tell me, was Don Valuch speaking the truth or was
he telling me lies?” Francisco asked me.

Francisco was expecting to hear his own answers echoed by me as I was expecting
to hear my own answers to be echoed by him. As Donovan (1998) has pointed out, the
dialogical nature of speaking is grounded in the expectation of hearing our voices being echoed by our interlocutors. Nevertheless, we are eager to hear, as well, the reverberations of those interlocutors, like Don Valuch, that are not longer physically among us, we expect to hear them echoing our own answers. We hear them through the subversive power of oral tradition. In this context, our conversations are not only with the community of Xocenpich, but with our ancestors as well, because through dialogue it is possible to transcend any limits, borders, times, spaces, realities, and identities. Hence, our dialogues have their own rhythm.

11. Marlins or Dolphins, Maybe Fishes
March 2000

Dialogues are in and by themselves a fantastic and imaginative tour. They play a key role in the negotiations and renegotiations of identities in a world of multiple identities. When talking to Francisco our multiple identities emerge as a direct or indirect interaction with people from other cultures, other realities, other voices, sounds, and images. Xocenpicheños as Francisco are not isolated from other worlds, they are part of them, they reinvent them, they imagine them, and they reproduce them in their quotidian life.

"When are you going to go to Miami? Francisco asked me.

"In two weeks." I replied.

"Do you like baseball?" he asked me.
“Not really.” I replied.

“What! Don’t you like baseball? You have been telling me, all these months, that you are a Xocenpicheño, and now you tell me that you don’t like El Rey de los Deportes [The King of the Sports]? What kind of Xocenpicheño are you? If you are a Xocenpicheño you got to love baseball! Francisco said.

“I am a Xocenpicheño that doesn’t like baseball.” I replied.

“Ja, ja, ja, ja, very funny! Never mind. As a matter of interest, could you bring me a baseball-cap? I want one of the Marlins de Miami [Miami Marlins] because they were the Champions in 1997.” He asked me.

“What about if I bring you one of the Delfines de Miami [Miami Dolphins]?” I asked him.

“Although, I am perfectly aware that both are fishes, I rather have one of the Marlins. I don’t like Futbol Americano [American Football.”] He said.

“No problem, I will bring you one.” I responded.

“So, when are you going to finish that thing that you are writing? I mean, the book that you are writing about me.” He asked me.

“Very soon. Its title will be the same as the song that you composed: Ella Sóla Se Entregó, but I will add to it something like: La Vida De Chol.” So its complete title will be Ella Sóla Se Entregó: La Vida De Chol. [She Came To My Life Willingly: The History of the Life Chol].” I told him while I was laughing.

“I don’t like that title. Why don’t you invent your title? He told me.

“No problem.” I said.

“Hmmm, by the way, don’t you dare write pendejadas [In this context, this term could be translated as trivialities, things with nonsense] when you write about me. Say
everything, put all the words that came out of my mouth, including that I “robbed” my mother-in-law because, as you know, I nabbed Enriqueta from her!” Francisco told me.

“’No problem.’ I said. “By the way, today I have to go back to Mérida because I have to get my passport and my visa so I can go to the United States.” I said.

“Do you need a visa? I thought that you didn’t need one because you “feel” American! Francisco said while he was laughing in a very nice way. I felt embarrassed, but I laugh myself. We both laugh at loud.
IV

Final Considerations

Xocenpich is a metaphor. It is a place with endless dialogues among people and with the spirits of their ancestors who are more alive than dead. It is a space where the contrast between the mosaic of plaques, antennas, and burials, and the echoes of the cultures and histories of the Xocenpicheños, are evasive and intangible—especially to those who believe that Xocenpich can be equated as a homogenized “Maya” “pole” opposed to non-Maya or non-indigenous “pole.”

As discussed in Chapter 1, anthropological theories about the “Maya”, as well as other Indigenous groups throughout Latin America, have been derived from premises on binary oppositions, as for instance, Maya and Dzul. Bipolar notions are untenable because they are representative of a colonialist discourse in which Indigenous peoples are “Othered” because of their ethnicity.

The pervasiveness of these premises entails a lack of respect of the desire of people to be whatever “kind” of people they want to be: whether they want to be Maya when they drink a Coca-Cola in front of the main pyramid of Cobá, Quintana Roo, or they want to date foreign woman; Non-Maya, when they try to date a Yucatec girl of Spanish descent, or when they are applying for a job in Mérida; Dzul when they want to gain respect; Yucatec when they say that they were born in Mérida (believing that by being born in the capital of
Yucatán state they acquire a higher status in the town); **Mexican** when they sing mariachi songs or when they watch on television *La Selección Nacional de Futbol* (The National Soccer Team) playing in international tournaments; **American** when they live in a town mixed with American missionaries and living with kids that have become “Americanized” in Cancun; or **verdadero Xocenpicheño** because they were born in Xocenpich; or **Xocenpicheño** although they were not born in that town but it gives them a sense of security about their self-identity, regardless of the question of status.

In this context, in this dissertation, I am drawing attention to the issue of the loss of respect, through objectification, authoritarianism, and the restriction of people’s desires, when we, as anthropologists, write about cultures. But, the crucial question that arises here is: “How does one create respect under conditions of little or no respect?” (Cintron 1997:x.)

Dialogical anthropology, as discussed in the same chapter, it might well be a good way to start to bring back the issue of respect in our writings. This genre of anthropology places great importance on the relationship between the individuals and the anthropologist. Such intimate relationships are based on dialogues, which it establishes and creates identification between the writer and the story that is being written. Therefore, as pointed out by Tedlock (1986), ethnography is no longer the anthropologist’s sole interpretation, analysis, or reflection on the “object”, but more the result of a dialogue among the people involved.

The inherent risk of a dialogue, as pointed out by Tedlock (1996:275-89), is that it might turn into a confessional, autobiographic, and authoritarian. But its major risk is that a dialogue might become a dialogue like the ones of the Classic Greek Theater where there was a dialogue between the sole actor and other imaginary absent. This is to say, that a
dialogue might become a monologue.

In my opinion, following the same canons of Greek Theater, social scientists seem to be more interested in dialoguing among themselves than with the people about whom they write. In their dialogues there is a pre-established agenda in which “data” must fit: there are pretended theoretical perspectives (Burawoy 1991:27). When people become “data” or when they become written words in our ethnographies they become voiceless. One could argue, taking an opposite stand, and say that in reality we are giving back to them their voices. That is an act of arrogance: who are we “to give” them their own voices? The remnants of paternalism, objectification, and authoritarianism are still present in such pretended dialogues. Hence, the dialogue between anthropologists and “their” absent or imaginary interlocutors is, sadly, what I call a “monologic dialogue.” It is a monological dialogue at least in four senses:

1. In the process of writing “our” papers our interlocutors becomes silent. They become a sort of written records, in which their voice, although presented as “their” voice, is only but a representation of their voices. A representation that many times is not grounded on the questions: Who, What, How, and Why might we represent? If we, in “normal” circumstances, tend to avoid asking ourselves those elemental questions; seldom, if ever, we have the courage to ask ourselves: Am I representing myself? How? Furthermore, How are the people, “our” subjects, representing me; and what do they represent about me? Sadly, in our “fieldwork accounts” we choose not to take these questions into consideration.

2. In the process of dialoguing with our interlocutors, although we do not consider them as “our” informants, we are still in a position of power. There is a disparity in our relationship. When Francisco asked me to turn off my tape recorder and threw at my face the question “...how come I am not recording our conversations? How come, I am not
holding a tape recorder myself? Who is holding that machine? Me or you?” he was indeed pointing to me that I was putting myself in a position of the “anthropologist” and that his position was merely to answer my questions. I was overpowering him.

Of course, he was fixing a bicycle and all what he wanted was to get some help. That is true as well, as it is the fact that my relation with him was not a “fictional” one but a real one. But it is not enough to recognize the situated ‘fictional’ nature of our accounts. It is imperative to put those accounts forward, “as the basis for decision making and the formation of policy” (James, Hockey and Dawson 1997: 13). Furthermore, we must bear in mind that our ethnographic strategies “are also shaped by the subjects’ situations, their global as well as local perceptions, and their demands and expectations of us” (Josephides 1997: 32).

3. In the process of dialoguing we are still authoritarian; arguing against this idea makes us even more authoritarian because in a true dialogue a degree of humbleness is always welcome. Here I am not referring to dialogues that we had during our fieldwork with our interlocutors but to what comes after the “work” is done. In our relationships with our interlocutors I believe that any anthropologist would put aside such pretenses, but when we interact with our fellow anthropologists, our audiences such as general public, anthropological meetings, their students, the media, and friends we become the authorities on “our” fields. We, as anthropologists, become “the” voice of so many “our” “Franciscos.” Our voice is the only voice that resounds in those contexts: the voices of “our” “Franciscos” will not be there to tell us: “turn off the tape recorder.”

4. It is a monological dialogue because, as pointed out by Ricoeur (1982;1984) dialogical model describes how such representational binaries are appropriated within the interpretative act of refiguration. For Jauss (1982; 1984), dialogical models generally locate the interactive
mediation of discourses, texts, and traditions in terms of conventional language rather than using discrete imagery. Hence, when Indigenous people are presented as discrete imagery, they become relegated and voiceless. Consequently, we keep treating them as “objects,” and not as individuals. This is ironic, precisely because it undermines the aim of the dialogical discourse. In “our” ethnographies people are voiceless, just another picture, a simple image, something that simply gives content to our writings ethnographies and opens for us, the doors of academia.

Somebody could argue that by criticizing the dialogical perspective I am undermining the whole purpose of my dissertation. I am aware of that, but, as pointed out, my aim here is not to probe the validity of any perspective or theoretical stand. My dissertation is aimed to open a discussion on issues that are pertinent to the ways we do anthropology. Specifically, in how we represent people “without representation.” This is to say, people, like Francisco, who is not in control of the means of “intellectual” production. I am also aware that Francisco might not agree with many of the things I said about him. If I did not represent the way he wanted to be represented I will go and ask him to forgive me. He might tell again that I am like the Talco dos Caras.

In Chapter Two, I presented the history of Xocenpich from three perspectives: the official, some of the Xocenpicheños perspectives, and my own. Metaphorically speaking those three perspectives, although they might contradict each other, can all fit in the bottle that is buried in the Old Catholic Church. The same bottle that I attempted to dig it out from that wall. The same bottle that I never saw and by not seeing it, I got a class of history and anthropology without a blackboard.

This dissertation constitutes my small contribution to the historical bottle of Xocenpich. When I get back to Xocenpich, as one time my ancestors did, I will put this
dissertation in a bottle, literally speaking, and bury it somewhere there. Then, I will pray that nobody will open it ever. It will be added to the collection of bottles that Xocenpich has.

Just before I come to Miami I was talking to Efrain Ek Mex, an elder of my Presbyterian Church. I mentioned to him about the bottle buried in the Catholic Church. He then made a comment that astonished me:

"We have one bottle buried in our church as well! In 1940s, when they started building our church my difunto father, Don Felipe Ek; my grandfather, Don Pablo Ek, Don Sabino Perera and other members of the church, placed a bottle in one of the corner of the church. They buried the bottle that contained the names of the builders of our church in front of many witnesses, practically the whole community. That day, there was a big party going on in town."

Chapter 3 is the heart of this thesis. It is a chapter that deals with the desire of hearing our voices being echoed by each other. This is to say Francisco was expecting to hear his own answers echoed by me as I was expecting to hear my own answers to be echoed by him. Nevertheless, in those conversations the spirits of our ancestors were also talking with us through the subversive power of oral tradition. Therefore, "our" dialogues were not just conversations between Francisco and me but with the community of Xocenpich as well: a dialogue in a very fantastic and imaginative way.

In my final considerations I decided not to write a "conclusion" about the conversations between Francisco and me as a sign of respect to Francisco, who asked me to write every word that came out of his mouth, not to make comments on them.

In this context this dissertation is an open-ended dialogue. It is open because whoever reads it, recreates it, and whoever writes it, also creates it. I would like, not to close,
but to open this dissertation to anyone that does not want to consider herself or himself as an absent imaginary. To anyone that has the same answers but her or his answer does not find an echo in this deaf postmodern world. Hence, in paraphrasing Francisco when he told me the story that he had heard from Don Valuch, I invite any potential listener to hear our conversations just as we had them:

“.... Here is how this story begins.” Francisco said.
Notes

1. The PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) is the main political force of México since the triumph of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. The slogan of the PRI *Sufragio Efectivo No Reelección* (Effective Suffrage No Re-election), synthesizes the ambiguity of the nationalistic doctrine of the PRI. Since its origins, the nationalistic doctrine of the PRI has been characterized by its ambivalent application, which depends on the prevailing international contexts and on the diverse historical moments. The complexity of this party, has allowed it to remain for more than 70 years in the presidential chair; to successfully transit from its Revolutionary-Nationalism doctrine to the Populist doctrine; and, in the last three presidential periods, to practice and defend the neoliberal doctrine. It is within the context of the ideological ambivalence of the PRI, that it is possible to explain the speech that Xiu Cachón delivered during the legislative session at the Yucatec State Congress.

2. Uxmal is a Classic Maya city that reached its maximum splendor between A.D. 600-900. It is located in the Puuc region, which in Maya means “hills,” and from which the architectural style of this region derived its name. This Maya city is famous for the purity and delicacy of its architecture and decorative art. During the Post-Classic (A.D. 900-1200) Uxmal was ruled by the Xiu family. The Xiu, along with the Cupul, the Canul, and the Cocom, were Maya-Putun or Maya-Nahua families that arrived to Yucatan around A.D. 1000.

Gaspar Antonio Xiu Cachón bears the last name of the Uxmal rulers, but he is not closely related to the direct descendants of the Xiu family that nowadays live in Oxcutzcab. People who know him personally told me that he started calling himself a *Príncipe Maya* [Maya Prince] because that is how the late Governor Carlos Loret de Mola (1972-1976) used to call him. Similarly, Maximino Yam Cocom, member of the PRI and a former congressman, is also called *Príncipe Maya* because he bears Cocom as a last name—the Cocom family were the Rulers of Mayapan during the Post-Classic—but, he is not closely related to the descendants of that family.

3. Felipe Carrillo Puerto was a socialist Governor of Yucatán from January 1st, 1922 to December 12th, 1923. Yucatán, in this period of time, was known as the “Russia” of México because of its socialist tendency and its social conditions. Carrillo Puerto organized the *Partido Socialista del Sureste* (the Southeast Socialist Party), a political party that had around 80,000 members. Additionally, he masterminded the *Ligas de Resistencia del Partido Socialista del Sureste* (the Resistance Leagues of the Southeast Socialist Party), a political organization that sought to reorganize the Yucatec society economically and politically.

During the Government of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, laws were passed, in accordance to his revolutionary ideas. Examples of these bills are the Law on Rational Education, the Divorce Law; the Agrarian Law, and the Expropriation Law. This series of reforms was seen as a threat by the conservative and traditionalist segment of the Yucatec Society, especially the Agrarian Law, which stipulated the expropriation of the haciendas and other properties that kept idle lands. With this Law, Carrillo Puerto was promoting an Agrarian Reform and the formation of *ejidos* (communal-owned land). The Agrarian Reform of 1922 resulted beneficent for 10,727 people who received 208,972 hectares of land (Quintal 1990: 87). Xocenpich was one of the towns that benefited from the Agrarian Reform. The Agrarian Law resulted in the exacerbation of the *hacendados* (Hacienda owners) with Carrillo Puerto. Hence, they sought to eliminate Carrillo Puerto, not only politically, but also physically. (See: Dominguez Aké 1992; Gilbert 1992; Quintal Martín 1990; Paoli y Montalvo 1987; Bustillos 1959).

4. The PAN (Partido Acción Nacional) is a political institute composed mainly by middle-class people (who are professionals in their vast majority) and minor Catholic retailers. Their political ideals are quite near to the ideology of the Christian Democracy, a doctrine that explains that social equality can be achieved by applying the principles of the Catholic Ethic. However, the lack of
attention that the PAN places on the Mexican economic reality (e.g., the extreme poverty of 40 million of Mexicans) prevents the PAN to see that these inequalities are not a product of the lack of ethics, but that they are structural problems derived from the economic, social, and political reality of México. Their vision of the Mexican reality, allows the PAN to justify the neoliberal doctrine and the savage capitalism. From this perspective, the PAN envisions the neoliberal doctrine and the savage capitalism as simple products of the human action, and because of this particularity these doctrines are perfectible, but only with the application of principles of the Catholic Ethic.


8. The term Casta Divina or Casta Privilegiada (Divine Caste, or Privileged Caste), was coined by Salvador Alvarado (Governor of Yucatán from 1915 to 1918) as a reference to the oligarchic regional group which was made up by the hacendados (plantation owners), wealthy businessmen, and rich functionaries who, in conspired with the great American trusts, to control the henequen industry. The Casta Divina dominated the political, economic and social life in Yucatán. According to Paoli and Montalvo, “In reality, the Casta Divina includes the entire dominant group that formed at the time that faction (the Liberal Party) allied with the bourgeoisie of exporters and the high functionaries of the State Government “ (1990: 34).

At the present day, according to Bartolomé, “technocrats, industrialists, politicians, professionists and functionaries of a different hierarchy make up the Casta Divina. For the most part, they live in the regional metropolises and specific sections that, as is the case of Mérida, configure an urban social ecology that tends to maintain especially the inter-ethnic borders” (1988: 296).


12. Xiu Cachón was not satisfied and additionally began a frontal attack on the Catholic Church, by saying that the priests were the “exemplary teachers” of the panistas. His attack on the Church was corroborated by the priista (member of the PRI) Congresswoman Myrna Hoyos Schlamme, who added that many priests have had both heterosexual and homosexual relationships.


17. In this context, Francisco was jokingly equating Marcos with Saint Mark; and Lucas with Saint Luke.

18. The specialists in Yucatec Maya studies do not use the term Ladino in their writings. An exception, nevertheless, was Nelson Reed, who used this term in his work La Guerra de Castas de Yucatán (1976) and defined Ladinos as: “...all the people with Spanish or semi-Spanish ascendency that considered themselves as “white.”...(They) were living, dressing, and thinking in accords with their European heritage.”(1976: 17).

In Yucatán, instead of Ladino, the terms used are Mestizo, Catrin, or at times, Dzul, the Yucatec Maya term for white males. These terms have many implications. In general, a difference between a Mestizo and a Catrin is the latter’s more pronounced reliance on Spanish as an everyday language, reserving Maya language only to deal with Mestizos in the community. The Catrin, generally employed in service and commercial jobs, speak Spanish among themselves and with the Dzulo ’ob (plural of Dzul). Another difference between a Mestizo and a Catrin is their different ways of dressing. The Mestizo wears “traditional” clothes and the Catrin wears western clothes. Consequently, a Maya woman “...dressed with the traditional huipil is mostly referred to as a Mestiza” (Re Cruz 1996:179). Nevertheless, wearing a hipil does not necessarily mean that someone is a Mestizo. There are many women who are non-Maya and wear “hipils” at home, at parties, and for certain festivals (Logan 1995). According to the renowned anthropologist, Salvador Rodríguez Losa, the term “hipil” derives from the Náhuatl word “huipil.” In other areas of México the term “huipil” or “güipil” is used to name the dress worn by Indigenous woman. In Yucatán the word used is “hipil” (Diario de Yucatán 1997c).

The definitions concerning the term Ladino are very general. In the past, there have been particular meanings attributed to it. David Frye has pointed that in Mexquitic—a village situated in the State of San Luis Potosí, México—Ladino meant “bilingual”, during the colonial period (1996:37).

19. Dr. Janet Chernela, in reading my firsts drafts, posed the following question: does culture reside in the individuals? According to Geertz, the concept of culture is essentially semiotic, it is an acted document “...thus is public, like a burlesqued wink. Though ideational, it does not exist in someone’s head; though unphysical, it is not occult identity. The interminable debate within anthropology as to whether culture is “subjective” or “objective” is wholly misconceived. Once human behavior is seen as symbolic action—action, which, like phonation in speech, pigment in painting, line in writing, signifies—the question as to whether culture is a patterned culture or a frame of mind, or mixed together, loses sense. The thing to ask about a burlesqued wink is not what their ontological status is. The thing to ask is what their import is: what it is, ridicule or chafe, irony or anger, that, in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said”(1973: 10).

Cooley (1902) refused to separate consciousness from the social context. He understood that people possess consciousness and that it is shaped through continuous social interaction. Similarly, George H. Mead (1934) stated that meaning and mind have their origins in the social act and are made possible by language. Thus, the self emerges as a product of social interaction.

For Marx, the basic principle of materialism is that human consciousness rests on certain
material conditions, without which it would not exist. As Marx and Engels stated in The German Ideology (1845), ideas are cultural creations of the most powerful members of society because they control the means of mental production. This implies that each social class has its distinctive culture and the worldview, reflecting the social circumstances in which they live. For Marx, the basic nature of human beings is to be productive, and productivity is a natural way to express creativity. Nevertheless, in order to survive, people need to work in as well as with nature: “Their productivity is a perfectly natural way by which they express basic creative impulses. Furthermore, these impulses are expressed in concert with other people; in other words, people are inherently social. They need to work together to produce what they need to survive” (Ritzer 1992: 24 emphasis added).

From this, I would argue that culture is within individuals, and, at the same time, it is also outside of them (socially created). Culture is within, because no two individuals are exactly alike; and it is outside of the individual because all individuals share culture, whether through everyday activities, or through their collective memory. Both occur in the individual simultaneously because it is a mutually enforcing inner-dialogue that shapes her/his identity. When this happens, the individual is able to choose one identity or another, depending on the context, the situation. Nevertheless, sometimes, choosing an identity is beyond the control of the individual, and becomes the Other’s prerogative.

20. Semiotic is the science of signs (that which creates the need for symbolic) cyclical through time, pre-Oedipal, and creates unpressed writing. Exists in children before language acquisition and has significance.

21. Kristeva maintains that all signification is composed of these two elements. The semiotic element is the bodily drive as it is discharged in signification. The semiotic is associated with the rhythms, tones, and movement of signifying practices. As the discharge of drives, it is also associated with the maternal body, the first source of rhythms, tones, and movements for every human being since we all have resided in that body.

22. dia-: Etymology: Middle English, from Old French, from Latin, from Greek, through, apart, from dia; akin to Latin dis-: through <diapositive> : across <diadromous> Merrian-Webster Online: The Language Center.http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary. dia-: Etymology: Middle English, from Old French, from Latin, from Greek, through, apart, from dia; akin to Latin dis-: through <diapositive> : across <diadromous> Merrian-Webster Online: The Language Center.http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary.

23. On February 19th, 2000, the exchange rate, in Mexican pesos for US dollars, was $9.1500 pesos per one dollar.

24. It is not my intention to cite any specialized dictionary on Mexicanisms in order to explain the polysemous value that the verb chingar may deliver in a contextual situation. From my perspective the most profound semiotic meaning of this verb rests in the living cross-cultural experience and practice, rather than in the word chingar. In this context, I use this term to express a very deep pain, which can only be described and understood by those who share the same pain, as with the Mexican expression that keeps us so aware of the pain in the soul.

25. Theodore R. Finley and Frances Pernella Finley, a married couple of North American missionaries, arrived in Xocenpich in 1942, where they resided and worked until 1968. Kray (1993) cites that in 1943 in the annual report of The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., it was conveyed that,
"In the little Mayan hamlet of Xocenpich, Yucatán, a missionary and his wife [the Rev. and Mrs. Theodore Finley] have buried themselves in the desolate jungle of Yucatán to develop a Bible Institute that will train Mayan evangelists to carry the gospel in their own tongue to their fellows...although the conditions under the representatives of the Cross labor are extremely difficult, the work pays large dividends" (Kray 1993: 5).

The Rev. Finley was the director of the Instituto Bíblico del Sureste (Southeastern Bible Institute), or the IBS by its initials in Spanish, from 1942 through 1968. While in Xocenpich, they introduced religious, cultural, and technical innovations that changed Xocenpich dramatically. For example, in 1952 they opened the Centro de Salud Bethesda (Bethesda Health Center) that, in 1956, turns into the Bethesda Clinic. In 1961, at the same hospital, they opened a nurse school for Maya women ((Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de México 1973: 823)

Additionally, in the 1950s, Mr. And Mrs. Finley set up an electricity generator, that was activated by a tractor, that provided electricity, from 7 A.M. to 10. P.M., to the IBS installations, the Centro de Salud Bethesda, and the homes of the missionaries. But, it did not provide energy to townpeople. However, towards the end of the 1960s, he campaigned for the electrification of Xocenpich. With the economic support of the Presbyterian churches in the United States in the decade of the 1970s the Comisión Federal de Electricidad (Federal Commission of Electricity) began the works of electrification in Xocenpich. Furthermore, through the support of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the local cemetery and the Primary School were reconstructed, and in 1968, the central park of the town was built. That is why the park honors the name of Rev. Theodore Finley and Frances Pernella Finley.

26. Reverend Passler was a pilot of the Pioneer Mission Agency (PMA), which in Spanish was called Alas de Socorro (the Wings of Help), who died in an airplane accident between Progreso and Mérida, in November of 1962. The PMA used their airplanes to transport the Maya obreros (seminarists) to places that were inaccessible by land or by sea. Additionally, the PMA served to transport presbyterian physicians to provide medical services to the people that were living in the most remote rural communities, and, therefore, the PMA built over a hundred landing strips all over the Yucatán Peninsula. In the beginning of the 1960s, at the small airport of Xocenpich, sometimes there were three, or even four, small Cessna airplanes.

27. Dr. Riedessel was a retired presbyterian priest who arrived in Xocenpich in the 1970s and stayed there until his death in 1984.

28. Hazel Clawson or "Mamá Gleyda," as she is known in Xocenpich, is an American lady from the state of Iowa that has been sponsoring the work of the Bethesda Clinic since the 1970s. With her support, the clinic has been able to acquire new medical equipment, to add new rooms to clinic, and to change the old roofs for new ones. Interestingly, the construction work has been made by groups of presbyterians from the United States that she brings to Xocenpich on a yearly basis.

29. Dr. Juan T. Molloy, was a missionary of the North American Presbyterian Church, who worked in Yucatán in the 1920s. In 1921, he founded in Mérida the Escuela Bíblica (Bible School) that later on, in 1924, was renamed as Instituto Bíblico del Sureste. In 1942, the IBS was moved to Xocenpich, where the missionaries acquired several acres of land, in order to lay down its infrastructure, where they built dormitories, dining rooms, and classrooms. Additionally, they set up a carpentry, a tailor-work shop, a leather work-shop, a book-making shop, and a bakery. Furthermore, the missionaries promoted apiculture, agriculture, house-orchards, and poultry.
30. Efrain Ek Mex was the Comisario of Xocenpich in the 1990s when the town’s City Hall was rebuilt.


32. By millenarian, what it is meant is “a religious movement obsessed with salvation and the moral regeneration of society. This is a movement that viewed the world as a ‘dominated by an evil tyrannous power’, a power that could be defeated only by a holy war sanctioned by God....Millenarianism became the vehicle of peasant protest” (Diacon 1991:7-8).

33. During this period (1600-1700), 42 Indigenous rebellions occurred in La Capitanía General de Guatemala, and 137 in the Capitanía General de la Nueva España (Coatsworth 1990:35). In Yucatán, according to Bartolomé (1988) there were numerous Indigenous rebellions, starting with the rebellion of Ah Kin Chuy in 1542; the messianic insurrection of Chilam Ambal (1546); the rebellion of Sotuta and Maní (1560-1562); the prophetic movement in Valladolid (1565); the rebellions of Francisco Chi (1580), and Andrés Cocom (1585) in Campeche; the messianic movement of Andres Chí, in Sotuta (1597); the Tekax movement of Chablé and Canul (1610); the uprising of Ah Kin Pol, in Sacalum (1624): the Bacalar insurrection (1636); the prophetic movement in Campeche (1660-1670); the messianic insurrection of Jacinto Canek, in Sotuta (1761); and the Caste War, which lasted from 1847 to 1901.

34. Nowadays, the church has a concrete roof that was built by the PRI, just before the elections for Governor and Congressmen, in 1994.

35. Officially, slavery was abolished in México in 1821, but in Yucatán slavery existed up until the very beginning of the twentieth century (Quintal Martín 1990; Montalvo 1988; Villa Rojas 1987; Paoli and Montalvo 1984; Turner 1979; González Navarro 1970).

36. Tierra was published, in its III epoch, between 1923 and 1924; La Revista de Yucatán was published, after being re-inaugurated, between 1918 to 1924; La Razón was published, in its III epoch, from 1922 throughout 1924; and, El Correo was published between 1914 and 1923.

37. Tusic was considered by Redfield as a paraje (a very small isolated community), Chan Kom, as a hamlet, Dzitás as a pueblo (town), and Mérida, the city. All four categorizations were made-up according to certain criteria, among which demography was important. Redfield considered that between the paraje, the hamlet, and the pueblo there was a folk-urban-continuum that eventually ended up in the category of city.

38. In general, as for instance in the Enciclopedia Yucatánense (Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán 1980), there is recognition that the maize-growing zone (the Southern and Oriental geographical portions of the State) is located South of the old Mérida-Puerto Juárez road that bisects the State of Yucatán. The former henequen zone used to exist as such north of this road. In an area of the eastern-northern portion of the State is the cattle-raising zone. The fishery zone is on the shores of Yucatán of the Gulf of México. With regard to the Henequen zone, its denomination comes from an agave genre, henequen. From the extraction and processing of its fiber a great industry in the international markets was developed until the advent of synthetic fibers. The first henequen haciendas were formed and consolidated in the second half of the nineteenth century and they became booming capitalistic enterprises until they were nationalized towards the first half of this century. Nevertheless, henequen as a state managed industry continued until its virtual demise in
the decade of the 1980s. Henequen production required large extensions of land that were growing at the expense of the land that the Maya had dedicated to the cultivation of corn (Montalvo Ortega 1988). Thus, since the middle of the nineteenth century the Yucatán Peninsula was divided into two socioeconomic regions: the henequen-zone, which surrounded the cities of Mérida and Campeche within a ratio of 80 kilometer, and the maize-zone, which includes the eastern portion of the State of Yucatán and a considerable part of the State of Quintana Roo. On this subject see: Villanueva Mukul 1993; Montalvo Ortega 1988; Paoli 1984; Joseph 1982; Robert Patch 1976; González Navarro 1970; Reed 1964; Benitez 1956).

39. Since the ancient Maya civilization the corn was the center of their lives, as written in the sacred book of the Quiché Maya, the Popol Vuh and the Yucatec Maya sacred books of the Chilam Balam. Nowadays, as in the past, is not only an economic resource for the contemporary Maya, but it is the base of their religiosity, spirituality, and cosmovision.

40. According to Rodríguez Losa (1989), between 1821 and 1900—the Mexican Post-Independence period and prior to the 1910 Revolutionary period—Xocenpich were fluctuating between the political jurisdiction of Valladolid or, at times to Espita.

41. As Rodríguez Loza (1989:91) has pointed out in 1840, “El Reglamento para el Gobierno Interior de los Pueblos”(The Regulations for the Internal Government of the Pueblos) states what specific authority/authorities each community should have based on demographic criteria. In ranches that were not private, and in the small pueblos with less than ten citizens in the exercise of their rights, that could read and write, there must be a Juez de Paz, or Justice of the Peace and his Substitutes. This official was a magistrate in charge of civil legislation, like marriages, births, and deaths. Xocenpich had a Juez de Paz before 1840, which leads us to infer from incomplete evidence the population of Xocenpich (see Appendix).

42. A Municipio belongs politically to a district, and the district, to a state. Yucatán nowadays is made of 106 Municipios that are divided into 11 districts. As shown by Rodríguez Losa (1989), in one of the most accurate and current works on this subject, this political geographical division has been historically all but static. For example, Xocenpich at times was in the jurisdiction of the district, or Partido, of Valladolid; other times it belonged to Espita.

43. According to Fidelio Quintal (1990), the expropriation of the haciendas was based upon a request of the Ligas de Resistencia del Partido Socialista del Sureste (the Resistance Leagues of the Southeast Socialist Party). When the State Congress approved that request, the government was in charge of the social redistribution of private lands (1990: 87). Hence, the pediment of ejido land for Xocenpich was signed by Don Sabino Perera as President of the Ligas de Resistencia del Partido Socialista in Xocenpich. In this context it is possible to infer that the land of this town could have been part of a hacienda.

44. Quetzil Castañeda has carried out a thorough research on the craft industry in Piste, along with all the details involved, such as techniques, marketing, costs and prices, and the like. One of his fundamental points is the invention of the Maya World by western culture, and how the artisans and the people of Piste re-invent what has already been invented.

45. Juan Ramon Bastarrachea (1984) points out that the territory of the Yucatán Peninsula was divided in 17 small autonomous States, before the arrival of the Spaniards, which they named “provinces.” These States, or provinces, varied considerably in size, for there were some States like the Cupul with 9,000 Km², whereas the States of Hocaba and Chakan had 1,200 and 1,500 Km²,
respectively. Their populations went from 30,000 to 120,000 inhabitants. See also: Repetto-Tió 1981; Kurjack 1967; Roys 1957; and Morley 1946.

46. Cibeira Taboada (1977) points out that the Maya vigesimal number system stems from the total number of fingers and toes that humans have.
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Glossary

**Antiguos.** Depending on the context it could mean, for the Xocenpicheños, “the Pre-Hispanic Maya” or the founders of Xocenpich.

**Billetero.** Someone who sells lottery tickets.

**Comisaría.** A political territory within a *Municipio*.

**Comisario.** The authority who holds the power to execute political and judicial decisions within a Comisaría, who depends, in turn, on the orders of the *Presidente Municipal*, or Mayor.

**Ch'a-Chaac.** The ceremony to ask for rain.

**Dzul.** The Yucatec Maya term for white males.

**Dzulo'ob.** Plural of *Dzul*

**Ejido.** Communal-owned land

**Gabachero.** A contemporary Yucatec Don Juan with eyes solely fixed on the conquest of foreign women.

**Juez de Paz.** Justice of the Peace. A magistrate in charge of civil legislation, like marriages, births, and dead.

**Ladinization.** It is a process whereby an Indigenous person moves away from his or her cultural identity in order to adopt others that are foreign to them.

**Ladino.** A term used in Guatemala and Chiapas for a Maya who begins to use Spanish, wears western clothes, and who politically, socially and economically seeks to dominate his or her fellow Maya.

**Ligas de Resistencia del Partido Socialista del Sureste** [The Resistance Leagues of the Southeast Socialist Party.] It was a political organization of the *Partido Socialista del Sureste* [Southeast Socialist Party] that sought to reorganize, economically and politically, the Yucatec society.

**Municipio.** The territorial and administrative jurisdiction of Mexican townships.

**Ejidatario.** Member of an *ejido*

**Okotbatam.** The ceremony to ask for protection to all the Maya Gods.

**Panista.** Member of the PAN.

**Pich (Enterolobium cyclocarpum).** A giant tree, that can have a trunk as thick as 14 feet in diameter, and a height of about 45 to 50 feet. Its roots reach the water table, its top is ample and spread-out, and its branches cast a shadow that extends as far as 60 feet. Its leaves are very abundant and small, with a linear-oblong shape, of approximately half an inch long. Its flowers are white and small, and its fruit is a wide, flat, and coiled pod, dark brown in color. Its wood is gray, with yellow streaks, and it is hard, resistant, and flexible; it is used in joinery and construction in general (Diccionario
Maya-Cordemex 1980: 651).

Presidente Municipal. Mayor.

Priísta. Member of the PRI.

Verdadero Xocenpicheño. Truly Xocenpicheño. Someone that was not only born in that town, but, also follows the norms and rules coded and recoded by the Xocenpicheños themselves.

Xocenpicheño. In general, it means “people of Xocenpich.” For the people of Xocenpich, this term implies that they were in fact born in that town.

Y no era para menos. And, this was to be expected.
Abbreviations

**IBS**  Instituto Bíblico del Sureste (Southeastern Bible Institute).

**INI**  Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

**PAN**  Partido Acción Nacional.

**PMA**  Pioneer Mission Agency.

**PRI**  Partido Revolucionario Institucional.
Appendix

Xocenpich and Dzitás in 1821

In 1821, the pueblo Xocenpich, along with Ayuntamiento of Dzitás, were part of the Partido of Valladolid (Capital of the Municipio of Valladolid). This Partido had one Villa, 26 Pueblos, and 17 Municipalities, or Ayuntamientos. In 1821, Yucatán was divided in 15 Partidos, 2 Cities, 2 Villas, 221 Pueblos, and 168 Municipalities.

Xocenpich and Dzitás in 1837

In 1837, the pueblos of Xocenpich and Dzitas passed over to the Partido of Espita—which was also the Capital of the Municipio, and located 15 miles Northeast of Xocenpich—that consisted in 7 pueblos. This Partido was, in turn part of the Distrito of Valladolid. In 1837, the Department of Yucatán was divided into 5 Districts, 20 Partidos, 3 Cities, 6 Villas, and 226 Pueblos, with 235 communities all told (Rodriguez Losa 1989: 31-49).

Xocenpich and Dzitás in 1840

On the 4th of March of 1840, the 7th Constitutional Congress of the State of Yucatán, passed on a decree through which Yucatán became separate from the Mexican nation, as a result of an uprising in Tizimin on May 29th of 1839. This rebellion, led by Santiago Iman, proclaimed the reestablishment of the Federal Government. But, when Iman succeeded, his movement was declared factious by the Centralist Mexican Government Therefore, a new territorial reform was put into office on November 30th, 1840, based on the decree of the 7th Constitutional Congress of the State of Yucatán

In 1840, the pueblos Xocenpich and Dzitas, belonged to the Partido of Espita—the Capital of the Municipio—that was composed of 7 pueblos. This Partido was a section of the Department of Valladolid. This Department was composed of one City and 50 Pueblos. In 1840, the State of Yucatán was divided into 5 Departments, which, in turn, were divided in 18 Partidos. These Partidos were formed by 3 Cities, 6 Villas, and 227 Pueblos (Rodriguez Losa 1989: 63-73).

“El Reglamento para el Gobierno Interior de los Pueblos”

On March 31st de 1840, a bill was passed that contained “El Reglamento para el Gobierno Interior de los Pueblos” (The Regulations for the Internal Government of the Pueblos). Rodríguez Losa (1989: 91) transcribes some of its articles, that are relevant for this work, because they will give us an idea of the population of Xocenpich and Dzitás at that time:

Article 17. In places where the population is under 3,000 people, there shall be two Mayors, four Councillors, and two Síndicos (someone who looks after the interests of a corporation or, in this case the interests of a town).

In places where the population is more than 3,000 but less than 8,000 people, there shall be two Mayors, six Councillors, and one Attorney.

In places where the population is more than 8,000 but less than 13,000 people, there shall be two Mayors, eight Councillors, and one Attorney.

In places where the population is more than 13,000 but less than 18,000 people, there shall
be three Mayors, and twelve Councillors.

In places where the population is more than 18,000, there shall be three Mayors, twelve Councillors, and two Sindicados.

Article 67. In ranches that are not private, and in the small pueblos where there are not at least ten citizens in the exercise of their rights, that can read and write, there shall be a Justice of the Peace and his Substitutes. Their positions will be held by popular and direct election.

In 1840, Xocenpich had one Justice of the Peace (Rodríguez Losa 1989: 91), which allows me to infer that the population of Xocenpich was very small. In the case of Dzitas, having one Municipal Mayor, the population must have been below 3,000 inhabitants. In 1846, according to a chart outlined by Rodríguez Losa (1989: 192), Dzitas had 1,500 inhabitants and Xocenpich, 544. The total population of the Partido of Espita was 9,825 people.

In 1862, Dzitas had 429 inhabitants (Rodríguez Losa 1989: 207). However, for some reason Xocenpich does not figure any more until the next century—presumably because it was destroyed and abandoned during the Caste War—for instance, in 1900, Dzitas had 759 inhabitants, but there is no data on Xocenpich. The Partido of Espita had a total population of 4,666 inhabitants (Rodríguez Losa 1989: 220).

In 1841, Don Antonio López de Santa Anna, Provisional President of México, sent Don Andrés Quintana Roo, Magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice, to Yucatán, with the mission of negotiating the reincorporation of Yucatán to the Mexican Republic. On the 28th of December of 1841, the “Tratados de Avenimiento” (“The Treaties of Reconciliation”) celebrated between the Commissioners appointed by the Governments of Yucatán and México, reached an agreement. On January 5th, 1842, the Congress of Yucatán ratified these treaties, but three articles were appended which referred to the military stationed in Yucatán.

Santa Anna rejected such modifications based on the argument that the Department of Yucatán assumed the position of a Sovereign Nation, as an ally, and not as an integral part of the Republic. Santa Anna declared the Department of Yucatán as an enemy of the Nation and, consequently, he declared war. Santa Anna’s campaign to militarily dominate Yucatán ended up in failure, thus opening a new round of negotiations that ended with the signing, on the 14th of December of 1843, the reincorporation of the Department of Yucatán to the Mexican Nation. This agreement did not last long due to the lack of compliance of the terms of the agreement on the part of the National Government, and, on the 2nd of July, 1846, Yucatán became separate once more from the rest of the Mexican Republic (Rodríguez Losa 1989: 85-88). This situation resulted in a new territorial division of the Department of Yucatán in 1846.

Xocenpich and Dzitas in 1846

In 1846, the pueblo of Xocenpich—which a Justice of the Peace— and the Ayuntamiento of Dzitas—which had a Mayor— belonged to the District of Valladolid, and to the Partido of Espita. In the same year, the State of Yucatán was divided into 5 Districts, 18 Partidos, 5 Cities, 7 Villas, and 228 Pueblos, 240 communities all told (Rodríguez Losa 1989: 101).

On November 12, 1846, Yucatán was once again reincorporated to the Mexican Nation. A few months later, on the 30th of July of 1847, the so-called “Caste War” exploded. And, on the 3rd of May of 1858, Campeche separated from the Department of Yucatán.
Dzítás in 1862

In 1862, the Junta Municipal (a council or board of local citizens who held the authority) of Dzítás, which was part of District of Espita. This District was composed of one Villa, four Pueblos, and one Port. Once more Xocenpich does not figure in the statistics. In the same year, the State of Yucatán was divided into 12 Partidos, 4 Cities, 8 Villas, and 144 Pueblos, and 12 Ports. 128 communities all told (Rodríguez Losa 1989: 127).

Dzítás in 1867

In 1867, the pueblo of Dzítás, which was part of the Partido of Espita—a Villa and the Capital of the Municipio). This Partido consisted in 1 Villa and 4 Pueblos. Once again, Xocenpich does not figure in the statistics. In 1867, Yucatán was divided into 16 Partidos, 5 Cities, 10 Villas, 140 Pueblos, and 12 Ports. 167 communities all told (Rodríguez Losa 1989: 145).

Dzítás in 1870

In 1870, the Junta Municipal of Dzítás, which was part of the Partido of Espita (which was a Villa and the Capital of the Municipio, and an Ayuntamiento). This Partido consisted in 1 villa and 4 pueblos. Again, Xocenpich is absent from the records. In 1870, Yucatán was divided into 16 Partidos, 5 Cities, 10 Villas, 12 Ports, and 145 Pueblos. 172 communities all told (Rodríguez Losa 1989: 157).

Dzítás in 1905

In 1905, the pueblo of Dzítás, part of the Partido of Espita (which was a Villa and the Capital of the Municipio). This district consisted in 2 Villas and 5 Pueblos. Once more there are no records of Xocenpich.
VITA

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