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### Het Pisaq Theater: Presentaties en beleving van "authentieke" Andes cultuur in toeristisch Peru

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## SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

In *Het Pisaq Theater (The Pisaq Theatre)* tourists are presented with a show that answers to their longing for authenticity. *The Pisaq Theatre* is an ethnographical study that describes how in a small town in the Peruvian Andes the people present themselves to tourists and how they experience their culture. Tourism takes a leading role in the current globalizing world. This has huge effects on the macro, meso and micro levels and this has led to discussions on the topic on different levels, and from different points of view and disciplines. What is missing in the writing about tourism are the local perspectives. In *The Pisaq Theatre*, the behaviour and thoughts of the local inhabitants take a central role. The voices of those receiving the tourists, at the grassroots level, are not normally heard, and therefore form the basis of this dissertation.

Irving Goffman's theatre metaphor and the ideas of Brad Shore about cultural models help shape an answer to the questions of how people in Pisaq use cultural models as an income strategy, what meaning they give to these cultural models, and what this implies for the sustainability of tourism. The theatre metaphor is a useful instrument to map out the complex processes that take place in touristic Peru. In this dissertation it becomes clear how inhabitants of Pisaq and the surrounding mountain communities present certain parts of their culture to tourists, and what the differences are between these *frontstage* presentations and their experiences or meaning *backstage*. Although people at the local level are often thought of as people who are "loosing their culture and identity", by having a look at their voices and their lives backstage, it is demonstrated that there are many dimensions to culture and identity. Although at first sight it might seem as if Piseños and comuneros are only interested in commercialising their culture, it is found that many schemata are still very important backstage.

The dissertation looks further and further behind the scenes, to find where the processes of meaning take place *in the minds* of Piseños and comuneros. The presentations and thoughts about the frontstage, the place where tourists and the local population meet each other, and actions and ideas backstage, the place where the local population are among each other and where usually no tourists appear, are elaborately discussed in detail. Naturally, the boundaries between the different stages are open and they are continuously adjusted. The way in which this is expressed depends on which actors expose themselves on a certain stage and depends on the cultural models or schemata that these people have *in the mind*. The way Piseños think and act *in the world* can be (at least partly) understood by gaining insight into the backstage meaning of the cosmology. Religious beliefs, either in nature, in God or in matters preached by the Protestant belief, are very important staples of identity, for how the world is seen and for the acting that takes place on the different stages of the Theatre. Actual thinking and acting on the different frontstages and backstages and the varying meanings that are given to it are formed by long existing continuously changing schemata. In the frontstage, the tourism industry has led Piseños to exaggerating certain elements of the indigenous syncretised belief especially for tourists. Backstage, the apus and Pachamama are honoured in order to earn money from tourism and not just in order to have a good harvest and healthy livestock.

Authenticity is the common, recurring theme throughout the dissertation. Authenticity plays a role in the tourist audience, the travel agencies and in the actors trying to live up to the expectations of authenticity by giving a special *performance* or authentic experience according to tourists' wishes. Authenticity is in fact a commercial concept on which a large sector of the tourism industry is based. The actual interpretation of the term is *in the eye of the beholder*. The expectations tourists have beforehand mainly determine the *experience* they have on their journey and lead to a stereotyping and essentializing of culture. Important concepts within the imaging beforehand and in the experience itself are "the real", "the authentic", "the traditional", and "the typical". Sometimes new "acts" are created which can result in increased feelings of self-respect and economic improvement. The success of a *performance* in the Pisaq Theatre depends on the expectations and *experiences* of tourists which are formed by the imaging that various media provide beforehand, de schemata that tourists have *in the mind*, de ways mediators can influence these schemata, and the way in which the *performance* is acted out in the Theatre.

The actual *performance* is created by the local population. The inhabitants of Pisaq and the surrounding areas use their culture in *performances* to gain an income in the tourism industry. In *The Pisaq Theater*, we see how *performance* takes place on the stages by presenting *arte-*

*sanía*, but also how the meanings given to the presentations of this material culture is mainly economic. Piseños and comuneros use verbal and non-verbal strategies to establish a beautiful “show” or “act”. Piseños try to get the attention of the audience by dressing themselves in a traditional way, play traditional music and by using or selling traditional *artesanía*. Also, people from the mountain communities (usually *tejedoras* and *sacamefotos*, weavers and women with children who have their picture taken in exchange for money) and varayoc (indigenous authorities) use their identity on the stages of the PISAQ Theatre in order to provide tourists with an authentic experience.

By having a look behind the scenes and arriving backstage, we see who the people behind the smiling faces and beautifully adorned actors are. The stages are connected to each other: the backstage meaning is connected with the frontstage presentation to the tourist audience. Frontstage presentations are not only staged for tourists but are also very important in the minds and the hearts of Piseños and comuneros. By studying “authentic presentations” of the past, it also becomes clear what is important for Piseños in the present time and although the functions of certain props and costumes change, *in their minds* they still receive a lot of significance. This is the case for props and costumes, as well as for the cosmology and festivities like Carnaval and Virgen del Carmen. In summary, the growing tourism industry means that culture is not only used as a commercial strategy, nor does it solely hold an economic meaning. Piseños and comuneros do not lose their cultural identity because of the arrival and the growth of tourism, as these festivities are of major meaning backstage, *in the minds* of the local population. They festivities only change partially.

Identity plays a significant part on the different frontstages as well as behind the scenes in The PISAQ Theatre. On the one hand, identity forms a basis for the impression management of the actors, but backstage and especially *in the minds* of Piseños’ identity construction, the image people have of themselves and others largely defines their *culture in mind*. On the one hand, in Peru the Inca past is idealized. The frontstage dimension of the PISAQ Theatre is built on this past and many Piseños are proud of what they display. In the meantime, however, people have feelings of shame, which can especially be felt backstage, experienced *in the minds* of Piseños and comuneros and away from the gaze of tourists. Why Piseños and comuneros perform in certain ways and why they sometimes do and sometimes do not give this meaning, is fed by a long existing continuum between Indians and Mestizos, which is based on place of origin (location). Apart from that, it appeared that especially the stage which an individual acts on at a certain moment (for instance the ruins or town square) is also a defining factor. It is not so much that they are ethnic categories defined from above, which determine how an action is presented on a frontstage or backstage, but rather it is the cultural schemata *in the minds* of the people. This dissertation extensively illustrates how in the identity construction of Piseños, feelings of pride and shame are important schemata that influence thought and feelings with regard to themselves but also towards others.

We saw how tourism within the Theatre has led to an increased awareness of identity and accordingly has led to an increased awareness of cultural heritage. This awareness, in turn, results in a continuum of pride and shame in which on the one hand, Piseños are proud of their Inca heritage (which is not seldom idealized) and on the other hand, leads to feelings of inferiority in comparison to the “great wise ancestors”. Other feelings of shame exist over “other Piseños” who are thought of as becoming arrogant because of their increasing economic mobility. People are also ashamed of the mentality of young people and the influence of the colonial past. They think that these have led to a deterioration of Piseño-culture. Comuneros are also looked down upon, even though they form an essential part of the PISAQ-experience. Comuneros mainly feel very proud of themselves and their frontstage presentation. On the other hand, comuneros are ashamed of their clothing and poor living conditions. It is interesting to see how the actors in the PISAQ Theatre try to keep tensions and conflicts as far as possible from the frontstage because this could harm the image of PISAQ. All internal tensions of identity and the external tensions between all the different actors concerning identity and other issues that take place mainly backstage and *in the minds* of the actors, in fact have existed for a long time and have evolved further because of the arrival and the growth of tourism. They have been enlarged because from the demand-side, from the frontstage, there is a pressure to see PISAQ as a harmo-

nious and authentic town with friendly authentic inhabitants. In this ideal frontstage image, there is no space for all the tensions that take place backstage.

In the last part of the dissertation, all the presentations, experiences and meanings come together in ideas about the future. Actors and mediators in The Písaq Theatre appeared to think frequently about the future and about the role tourism will play. By mapping out the local voices from *the minds* of the players in the Písaq Theatre and by describing the daily *performances* on the plaza, the grass roots level insights are profoundly discussed and it becomes clear that culture and the way the Písaq Theatre is imagined, is far from static but in a continuous process concentrated on improvements. There are desires to implement some of the *in the mind* ideas in order to develop better frontstages and a better living environment backstage. We can also see how tensions over pursuing modernity versus the presentations of the *performance* of traditions are expressed in lively discussions. There appeared to exist a concern over the demise of beautiful *costumbres*, traditions, norms and values. Therefore, certain cultural models are kept alive so that they can still exist for future generations. These new impulses are not only important for the backstage *in the mind* meaning for local people but can also get significance for the tourist audience frontstage, what can have economic benefits for the actors. For the mountain communities, tourism is an attractive alternative to agriculture, which suffers many problems. Here principles and traditions from the past are also being applied in the pursuit of a better future. We see how in certain areas huge steps are being taken to engage in tourism, and in areas where people are not engaged much in tourism yet, there is a wish to develop more touristic possibilities in the future.

The opinions about *what* Písaq should look like in the future differ, but practically all actors want the region to be attractive for both tourists as for themselves, for their own self-esteem. . People are aware of the fact that it is necessary to invest in the environment, as this makes the town more attractive for visitors, but that this also can influence their quality of life in positive way. This way an eco-tourism could arise that could be combined with the already existing – especially cultural – tourism. All the plans about the future have in common that people want to create a beautiful Theatre for themselves but especially for the tourist audience. The emphasis in all the plans is on the impressions generated for the tourists. The most important goals have to do with frontstage impression management and the economic meaning this has backstage. Backstage *in the mind* ideas come in the second place. Some future plans of Píseños and the local government could be interesting for tourists, but other ideas differ from the *experience* that is desired by tourists.

The dissertation ends by bringing together all the plans and visions about the future into a local definition of the future of the Písaq Theatre and can be formulated as a local definition of sustainability. Although in Písaq the term sustainability is practically not used, in the ideas about the future there are elements that can be linked to the worldwide debate on sustainability. Sustainability is a complex topic that is invented by the western world and usually is implemented from above. As for the content, it shows similarities with how the future is thought of at the local level. A sustainable Písaq would include “a good future” with a constant or preferably, a growing flow of tourists to the region. These tourists should also have a lot of money to spend and enjoy the frontstage *performances*. This would result in a decreased need for migration so that future generations can continue living in the region. Cultural models would be preserved, the town would appear neat and clean without polluting the environment, and everybody would benefit economically. Finally, people would be able to modernise backstage without having trouble or differently said, without greatly influencing the *performance* for the tourists.