

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

This issue of *Revista Cultura-Hombre-Sociedad (CUHSO)* has been printed anew in terms of both form and content. Such changes are the result of editorial decisions aimed at devoting this journal to topics thematically focused on the Social Sciences. Through such changes we wish to address questions of thematic content that convey, and open to a wider audience, the research concerns pertaining to the various academic disciplines of the Faculty of Social and Juridical Sciences (i.e. sociology, anthropology, social work and political science). This newly acquired editorial phase would have been untenable without the preparatory work undertaken over the course of two previous issues and with the long-term assistance of the Center for Sociocultural Studies whose first director, Dr. Teresa Durán Pérez, played a central role in this project. We are indeed grateful for her wholehearted efforts and for the time and diligence she devoted to this task.

In this latest issue our readers will find a brand of interdisciplinary social science journal devoted to creating a context for publishing the research of our academic staff as well as the research conducted by other scholars both Chilean and foreign. A specialized social science journal such as this one, with the particular title “Culture-Man-Society”, raises a number of questions that span across the social sciences, and which each discipline will have the opportunity to address in specialized issues. The notions of “culture” and “society” suggest variegated theoretical questions upon which all human sciences converge particularly in the sense of alluding to macro-anthropological concepts, which in turn allude to an *anthropological a priori*, all the latter of which expresses concerns related to Man, to human diversity, and to what may be deemed as the project of humanity developed by those who undertook the construction of the social and human sciences since the late nineteenth century to the present era. Doubtlessly, cate-

gories such as culture, society, state, etc., are the product of terminology developed by social scientific positivism whose definitions cannot be blindly accepted and embraced. Indeed, such terms require epistemic redefinition and a reexamination of their anthropological premises. We are aware that these broad and all-embracing categories, which pertain to a social scientific and epistemic praxis emerging in the nineteenth century against a kind of humanist background, are under wide revision. The twenty-first century requires us to make headway not merely into new theoretical terrain by virtue of a recent turn toward “otherness” but also into other epistemic approaches by other societies, other cultures and other individuals, thus fostering a new perspective on humanity. The latter implies a redefinition of the notion of culture.

To this effect, it seems wholly pertinent to reconstruct the present notion of culture from a hermeneutical outlook on culture itself in the sense of it being viewed as a system of meanings and significations emerging from symbols, myths, utterings, tales, practices and reconstructions that express an understanding and reconstruction of the meaning of the totality of existence and of the meaning of the relationships forged between peoples. Cultures are not merely related to a comprehension and explication of humans as such (epistemological moment), but are also open to an existential dynamic constituted by a dialectic between self-understanding and hetero-understanding, which initially emerges from a human ethical dimensionality (ethico-political moment).

Hence, the journal wishes to explicitly incorporate critical definitions of culture and society that draw not only upon the epistemic dimension of knowledge but also upon its ethical and political implications. We may thus highlight the foundational watershed at which we are located in the particular sense

of affording an ethical and political perspective on social categories and theories. It is for this very reason that we set forth a critique of ambivalent notions of culture ever since their erstwhile use in the fields of ethnological and anthropological research. It is necessary to note that a scientific conception of culture, and its current fashionable derivations such as acculturation, transculturation, inculturation, etc., should emphasize the interpretive frameworks used by the corresponding community of scholars that utilize them, their mutual interweaving as cultural systems that are a constitutive part of a disciplinary understanding and explication of various life experiences that may be back-traced on the basis of a critique of those observations and interpretations stemming from a privileged viewpoint. Ambiguity arises when the acknowledgement of otherness, of other life experiences, does not include an immediate questioning of the premises of the observer and interpreter in terms of the primacy of a number of such systems. This is particularly significant in ethno-historical research.

Ethno-historical critiques are crucial for demonstrating the ethnocentric origin of many ethnological and cultural anthropological studies, still prevalent in our time, conducted by twentieth century European and American scholars. Such studies and frameworks of analysis focused on past indigenous societies end up enmeshed in a geopolitical exercise over others in terms of the interests of the great centers of world power which have promoted the maintenance of a particular and standard interpretation of world history.

The present issue (number 15) of the journal will address ethno-historical themes on the basis of a hermeneutic conception of culture, which seeks to shed light on this ethico-political and semantic ambiguity. That task would consist of critically examining the act of understanding one's own culture and other cultures.

If such a critical examination were not conducted in both the theoretical and practical realms it is likely that we would find ourselves unable to overcome a monocultural history and hegemonic perspective in the fields of social and cultural studies. This means

completely revising what we have previously learned in matters of particular histories of peoples, and incorporating a perspective that surmounts the prevailing metaphor of the "observer" perspective by emphasizing one that is more oriented toward "listening" to other voices and other "silences". Such silences are related to an historical reconstruction of conquered societies.

As previously mentioned, this issue focuses on ethno-historical themes. The issue has been carefully put together by Dr. José Manuel Zavala (School of Anthropology, Catholic University of Temuco) and Dr. Jimena Obregón Iturra (University of Rennes). This collection of articles consists of a number of contributions from anthropology and history that aim at expanding and re-thinking traditional primary source material. The published articles were presented at the VI Chilean Congress of Anthropology which took place in Valdivia between the 13th and 17th of March, 2007.

In the Symposium of Anthropology on the "Margins of America" scholars from Argentina, Brazil and France were brought together, and their presentations are now part of the present issue of CUHSO.

In the first article, Dr. Zavala examines the writings of two chroniclers who witnessed the XVI century Chilean wars: Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, author of the epic poem, *La Araucana*, and Miguel de Olaverria, author of two brief military reports of the period. Professor Zavala offers an original re-reading of the material in question by examining ethnographic data and emphasizing the crucial importance of the spatiality of the local mountain region by demonstrating that what was behind that which had been described as "the state of Arauco" was none other than a complex interweaving of territorial relations in the mountains around Nahuelbuta. The complementary nature of the high and low lands that had been shown to exist in the Andean world emerges as an important feature for the Araucanian state and surrounding territory.

Jimena Obregón Iturra, lecturer and scholar of the Rennes Institute of Political Studies (Sciencepo), France, offers a critical consideration centered on the concepts of

“friendly Indian” and “enemy Indian”. Aside from the partial perspective of the Spanish who used such terms, the uncritical usage of such terminology implies a narrowing down of other possible analytical perspectives. The piece draws upon the controversial legacy of such categories particularly as used by Carl Schmitt who supported and justified German National Socialism. An inspection of the mid-XVII century source material (product of the Marqués de Baides government in Chile, 1639-1646, under which the well-known Quillín Parliament took place) allows for an understanding of what such a dichotomous view, which divides the world into friends and enemies, actually manages to exclude and bar.

Francis Goicovich, professor of History at the University of Chile, conducts a meticulous analysis of colonial documentation that justified policies of depopulation of Isla Mocha island located in front of the Chilean coastline. The incursion by the English ship led by Captain Swan was one of many threatened by Spain’s Pacific Ocean dominions that managed to demonstrate how the other extant maritime powers, principally the English and the Dutch, did not relinquish their objectives in the far corners of the Spanish empire. Collaborative efforts between natives and the enemies of Europe were, by 1684, considered a significant threat. This had led to deportation policies affecting all natives of the island who were indeed forced to migrate to the continent near the city of Concepción. Goicovich’s thesis hold that interrogations had been manipulated to the extent of exaggerating the degree of collaboration between the aforementioned parties as a means of justifying the radical policies that had been implemented. In addition to accusations of treason by virtue of alleged commercial trade with Spain’s enemies, a second decisive reason proffered in defense of that policy was the apparent fact that both civil and religious authorities argued that evangelization of the natives and the introduction of “civilization” were tasks difficult to carry out in such far-removed territories. It became, hence, necessary to foster their migration to closer and more accessible areas. This, consequently, would allow for more effective political and religious control while avoiding the transformation of Isla Mocha into a sanctuary for enemy powers.

Professors Nacuzzi and Lucaioli, both from the Institute for Anthropological Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires compare peace initiatives and negotiations conducted in the Argentine Chaco region and Pampa areas in the mid-XVIII century. The article looks for an effective understanding of the exchanges between colonial authorities and native groupings above and beyond drawing merely upon the contractual arrangements found in documents. The authors, to this effect, draw upon an ample array of contextual documentation. What is highlighted, in light of long-term agreements, is the value placed on contextual immediacy as in the creation of mechanisms tending toward the preservation of peace accords (e.g. rituals, the exchange of prisoners). Both sides attempted to maximize their particular interests, and neither could indigenous attitudes be interpreted as mere subordination, nor colonial policy as a mere mechanical application of general policies in the absence of broader local contexts.

The article by Professor De Jong, from CONICET and the University of Buenos Aires, brings into focus a question that is essential to understanding the interaction dynamic in “middle ground” areas: the “friendly Indians” near the Southern border of Buenos Aires at mid-XIX century. De Jong begins by describing the policies of Governor Manuel de Rosas which affected later practices (1856-1866) that De Jong also addresses. Within the context of a nation-state under construction, and thanks to military archives of the period, the author, with great attention to detail, carefully studies the interrelations established, by way of clientelistic links, between functionaries and “friendly” *caciques*. While the latter were seen as objects of incorporation, it would be by these very means that they were able to create their own instances of power.

Isabel Missagia de Mattos, Professor at the Federal University of Goiás, introduces us to the unknown world (at least for Pacific coast areas of the Americas) of the civilizing and evangelical processes experienced by the indigenous population of Minas Gerais during the close of the XIX century. The author describes the context within which Italian missionaries administrated the settlements at Botocudos, and the reactions of the local

indigenous population. In particular, Missagia de Mattos examines the indigenous revolts at the Itambacuri mission in 1893, and underscores the significance of Shamanism in the re-articulation of identity on the part of the communities subjected to intense processes of acculturation. In this manner, the author describes those spaces, frequently unexpected, within which the construction of indigenous alterity took place, even under extreme circumstances.

Lucybeth Camargo de Arruda, doctoral candidate at the Universidad Estadual de Campinas, presents an ethnographic history of the *Puestos Indígenas* of Matto Grosso created by the Indian Protection Service, a state institution in charge of Brazilian indigenous policy as of 1910. This is a work in progress, based on a detailed analysis of administrative archive sources that furnishes insight into colonial policy in the Matto Grosso area in the XX century, into its ideological underpinnings and the corresponding consequences for the indigenous world, and into the nature of local reactions and identity re-adaptation. Camargo de Arruda also outlines the theoretical and methodological foundations necessary for constructing an ethnographic history.

Finally, Raúl Ortiz Conteras, also a doctoral candidate at the Universidad Estadual de Campinas, closes this issue with a comparative study on the processes of state occupation a re-territorialization undergone from the mid-XIX century until the early XX century in Brazil

and Chile in the Guaraní-Kaiowá and Mapuche territories. A noteworthy study, on the one hand, because it manages to conduct a long-awaited comparative analysis in border contexts and in parallel processes of colonization. Such studies open an opportunity for creating new historic-anthropological perspectives. On the other hand, Ortiz Conteras underscores the importance and complex nature of the territorial re-configurations generated during the processes of incorporation that had been experienced territorially and by the peoples of the Americas, while also stressing the possibilities for re-adaptation, inventiveness and action on the part of those against whom colonization and domination were so brutally directed.

In all these interesting contributions we come across the ideal of interdisciplinary analysis which constitutes a chief academic aim of the Catholic University of Temuco. In this respect, we wish to especially thank Dr. Zavala and Dr. Obregón who have considered the space offered by the journal as an occasion for encouraging ethno-historical research in an interdisciplinary context. As of the current issue the journal will direct attention to important subjects through an up-to-date critical social and human science perspective. We bid you to suggest relevant topics for upcoming specialized issues.

Dr. Ricardo Salas Astrain
Director