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La antropología en cuestión:
cinco ensayos temáticos
y un estudio de caso

Nueva Antropología

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Abstracts

Anthropology of the City, and the City of Anthropologists

Mónica Lacarrieu

The main purpose of the present article is to carry out a critical reflection on the anthropological area related to urban issues. Rather than a chronological perspective, it is our interest to analyze the problems that underlie once anthropology, as a discipline oriented to the study of distant —in time and space— native "others", penetrates the world of urban issues. The dilemmas and the determining factors that cut across the constitution of "urban anthropology" are evaluated here, considering the objective conditions of production of anthropological knowledge and the role played by the so-called "classic anthropology" in the relevance (or not) of an anthropology of the cities.

Time and Power: The Anthropology of Time

Gabriela Vargas Cetina

We assume that time is an intrinsic dimension to life and that everyone experiences it the same way. However, different notions of time, often contradicting ours, exist in human societies. This article describes how anthropology has approached time-related notions, reviewing some of the main theoretical posi-

tions on the subject and pointing at the power relations implied in the authorial view characterizing the ethnography of time. My main interest is to show that the anthropology of time cannot be conceived outside power relations. In recent decades the anthropology of time has focused on the rhetorical uses of temporal notions and their place in power relations. In the last section I sketch emerging themes in anthropological approaches to time, as they imply our new forms of multi-connectivity and the time-space compression discussed in contemporary theories in sociology and philosophy.

Visual Anthropology: Away or Close to the Anthropological Subject?

Carlos Y. Flores

This article aims to provide a critical analysis of the role that photography and cinema/video have played throughout the development of anthropology as a discipline. Given the origins and practices of anthropology in general, and visual anthropology in particular, it argues that the power relations at play when one social group represents another should be understood within the broader context of colonial and neo-colonial processes, and of internal colonialism. In such settings, representation of the "anthropological Other" has rarely been more than a monologue by dominant social groups, characterised by the absence of voice or self-representation of the anthropological subject.

Nonetheless, the article also considers forms of visual production generated within an anthropological framework, which have managed to escape or at least subvert the logic of the socioeconomic and cultural inequalities generated by colonialism and its consequences. In the post-colonial, globalized world, despite —or perhaps because of— the contradictions this entails, new spaces have been generated which allow peoples and individuals subject to different kinds of cultural domination to reaffirm their power, and articulate their own narratives of identity. In this context, some anthropological practices have engaged in efforts to support and accompany such processes, and more dialogic, horizontal and shared experiences of production and consumption of visual images have been generated.

The Body and the Naturalization of Difference in Contemporary Societies

Steffan Igor Ayora Diaz

This paper argues that anthropologists need to adopt a critical standpoint regarding the human body, taking into account the discursive and practical mechanisms that lead to the naturalization of the body and, at the same time, of difference. The paper reviews the diverse anthropological approaches that have led anthropologists to examine the relationship between society, culture and the body, demonstrating how these approaches included already the basis for the denaturalization of the body. It then examines the ways in which anthropologists have maintained the Cartesian dichotomy subordinating the body to the mind. Individuality and the creation of modern subjectivities demand an instrumental relation to one's own body as while it is recognized as natural and already given, it is also recognized as malleable and subject to individual control over one's body. Obesity is a privileged example in this transition of centuries as its definition as a problem has made converge medical, psychological, sociological, moral, religious and nutritional discourses that demand that individuals harmonize often-contradictory views about the body. These discourses veil the role of corporations and shift the attention toward the individual's responsibility of self-body control. It argues that anthropology can contribute to destabilize these assumptions and lead to a better understanding of the complex issues inscribed in the human body.

The Anthropology of Emerging Religions

Lynne Hume

This paper outlines some of the ways that anthropologists have approached and reported religious beliefs and practices, from armchair theorizing to fieldwork based on long sojourns in the field taking an 'objective' stance, to the current approach that incorporates reflexivity and the questioning of the emic/etic distinction. Various case studies of contemporary religious groups are cited (including those based on works of literary and cinematic fiction, the search for putative ancient pasts, experiences through drugs, and the syncretism of indigenous, Eastern and Western religious beliefs) in order to relay the state of the

art. The smorgasbord of emergent religions and the current theoretical approaches in this area are discussed, and the paper points to the significance of how the researcher engages with beliefs and practices in the research process and how this factor can not only affect the outcome of the research but also subsequent theoretical approaches. Questions that are now being posed by some researchers taking a multi-disciplinary approach to beliefs include: what constitutes a scientifically valid knowledge of reality; is knowledge itself a product of hegemonic adroitness, and how can we report our data in different ways. Anthropology, as a discipline, has maintained a separatist position with regard to religious experiences; this paper suggests that we might look to other disciplines and try a more experimental approach in researching and theorizing about religion.

The Making of Tequila's Geographical Indication: The Struggle for Power and the Construction of agave azul Distinctiveness

Guadalupe Rodríguez Gómez

The Mexican state has granted A*ppellations d´Origine Contrôlée* to *tequila*, *mezcal*, *bacanora*, and *sotol*. These commodities are Mexican alcoholic drinks made from different varieties of *agave*. The formal distinction and protection they share, *Denominación de Origen* (Geographical Indication, GI), is a legal form given by the Mexican state and, then, recognized by multilateral treaties. Granting a product a GI means that only those goods made in a specific geographical region, using particular production methods and raw materials, can carry the name of that region. This discussion is a historical re-construction of the process of making Tequila GI in both Mexico and the international arena. It illustrates the ways in which tequila's distinctiveness materializes the dynamic and conflictive intertwined between historical, sociocultural, and political-economic processes at the regional, national, and transnational levels. It apprehends tequila's GI as a dynamic arena in which different and opposing groups struggle to gain control on the symbolic and material capital that is embedded in GIs. In doing so, they wrestle for access to domestic and worldwide market that such commodities occupy. This is because GI grants to these commodities the right to bear a meaningful and privileged place that carries out added value in the global flow of goods. This paper also demonstrates that GIs are cultural and historical forms of globalization. It shows how their actual specificity em-

bodies and objectifies the re-invention of tradition, the changing meanings attached to authenticity, the complexity of making a "region of origin", the fluid process of products standardization as well as those of making quality and prestige along globalized criteria. It illustrates how GIs become uniformized as symbols constructed based upon their very specificity. This results by "legitimating" the commodity uniqueness by means of a fluid intersection of both historical and cultural processes of reification and social acknowledgement in everyday life and state technologies of power (i.e., norms and regulations). In this way, it argues that GI embodies, while reflecting, the tension between heterogeneity and homogeneity inherent to globalization. By understanding GIs as polyphonic cultural forms of globalization, this discussion links different dimensions of capitalism and state formation with the dynamic intertwined between GIs re-accentuating process, the historical making of regional identity, and the incorporation of GIs to the global arena of market negotiations (i.e., WIPO and WTO). Finally, Tequila GI case shows the different ways in which nation-states and multilateral institutions coincide and/or conflict in legitimizing GIs, while apprehending the struggle for power between different groups (i.e., within a given region and between different regions) and countries for appropriating the right to claim the ownership on the authentic origin of a GI.