

Preface

After the long and fruitful publication of various monographic issues during the years 2011 and 2012 (*Conmemoración fiestas de la independencia* and *Imagen y ciencias sociales*) of our journal *Revista Memoria y Sociedad*, we are happy to present to the academic and research community our present *Open Matters* issue, which was patiently waiting for its turn to come out after the mentioned monographic issues.

The present *Open Matters* issue includes an interesting selection of papers in the fields of history and the social sciences. They are the result of the thorough research carried out by their authors, who have focused their analyses on a wide range of subjects such as “the role of indigenous people in the production of rubber in the Amazon region in the 19th Century” or “the role of pornographic production in the formation of the notion of ‘reality’”, including the matter of “the self-proclaimed right to a “just war” on the part of certain countries or hegemonic blocs within the modern world-system’.

Furthermore, even though diversity constitutes one of the central themes of the present issue, there are two additional transversal themes that link these papers together, and which are, on the one hand, the problem of the construction of subject and non-subject (individuals, States or blocs) through power, and on the other, the role and function of images and imaginaries in the formation of such subjects.

In this sense, the image heading the Presentation of this issue, *Le grand temple du Mexique* by Jan Karel Donatus Van Beecq¹, constitutes a perfect visual

characterisation of the papers here included, as it illustrates the mechanisms of the hegemonic power in rule in the 17th Century, determined to portray and to define –and thus to objectify– the ritualistic body and soul of *tenochcas*² indigenous people through Old World imagery, with the scope of subduing them to mechanisms of power useful for imperial domination. Thus, as in Donatus’ etching so does Beatriz González-Stephan in her paper ‘In/appropriate Bodies: *Carte-de-viste* and the New Citizenships in Post-Independence Venezuelan Pardocracy’ show the way in which specific subjectivities emerge from ‘technologies and devices related to vision, visualisation and visibilisation’ typical of a network of narratives that conform the field authorised for the construction of subjectivities in post-independence Venezuela and which finally constitute an *episteme*, that is to say a matrix that organises a certain type of relations between the observer and the observed, between what is visible and that which cannot be represented.

Subsequently, in the second paper, ‘Rubber, Exploitation and War: the Configuration of National Boundaries and the Pillaging of Indigenous People in the Amazon’, by Tomás Uribe Mosquera, as in the etching by Jan Karel Donatus, emerges the problem of the relations of indigenous people with mechanisms of power, this time represented by commercial capital and foreign State policy in countries sharing boundaries in the Amazon region. In this formidable paper the author portrays the condition of *uitoto* natives in a region distant from national political centres through the influence exerted by pillaging and exploitation mechanisms on the part of farmers, exporters, private businessmen and particularly the Casa Arana, on the one hand, and on the other,

1 This image was made by the painter Jan Karel Donatus Van Beecq and engraved by the artist Moyse Jean-Baptiste Fouard towards the middle of the 17th Century. The etching first appeared on the first pages of the facsimile edition of *Historia de la Conquista de la Nueva España*, towards the middle of the 17th Century, and was written by the Conquistador Hernán Cortés towards the end of the 16th Century.

2 Inhabitants of Mexico City –Tenochtitlan before they came in contact with Spanish troops in 1521.

the influence of the current hegemonic geopolitical context, determined mainly by the bordering relationships between Peru, Colombia and Brazil. In the final section of the paper the author highlights the need for an agenda for the justice and reparation of indigenous groups that have been victims of such genocide, and recognises the importance of the restoration of historic memory in the process of the reparation from violence.

The following paper, 'Photographers and Photographs in the Study Section of the Indigenous Protection Service (Brazil)' by Lucybeth Camargo de Arruda, resumes the problem of the construction/reconstruction of the image and identity of indigenous groups focused on the participation of photographers in photo-cinematographic expeditions and regarding the creation of the Study Section (SE) of the Indigenous Protection Service (SPI) in 1941. In the final section of the paper it is stated that 'the team, responsible for the recollection of images and sounds of indigenous groups, set a fundamental starting point for identifying the ambiguity in indigenous policy at the time'.

The following papers, titled 'Shared Views. The Anthropological Experience of a Photographic Exhibition' by Amiel Mejía da Costa, 'Twice Dead: the Story of the Life and Image of Celestino Ccente or Edmundo Camana' by María

Ulfe, and 'The Role of Porn in the Construction of Images of the Spectacular' by María Díaz, as in the etching by Donatus and the paper by Beatriz González-Stephan, show in very particular ways the concurrent relationship between the power of the construction of images and the political formation of individuals and of cultural facts.

The last paper on this *Open Matters* issue is 'The "Crusades" of Capital (or How the War Changed Names)' by César Torres del Río. In this excellent research effort the author describes the chameleon-like qualities of an ongoing war masked under the employment of 'ethical practices', 'world-wide humanitarian interventions' or 'peace-keeping missions', which, in the words of Professor Torres, simply intend to perpetuate a 'criminal act of capital against humanity, supported by International Law'. In the end, the conclusions presented in the paper remind us of the ideological framework behind Donatus' etching, that is the so called "just war" civilised countries carried out against the indigenous infidels of the inhospitable America, a war which five hundred years later has turned into a 'crusade for the well-being of markets, democracy, security and freedom' of civilised countries, against terrorist or narco-terrorist States or pseudo-states.

The Editors