ABSTRACTS

Díaz Cruz, Rodrigo, *Map Makers: Anthropology and Epistemology. An Introduction.*

This article sustains that in the production of anthropological knowledge, it is not feasible to defend the relativistic positions that repeatedly have appeared in the history of anthropology. However, this has not been enough to reduce the amount of epistemological problems that relativism has exposed: that of inconmensurability, that of crosscultural translation, that of apparently irrational beliefs, and that of rationality among others. In this paper the author tries to elucidate the nature of this problems and the theoretical and practical implications that they pose to this discipline.

Lara Zavala, María Pía, *Rationality and the Interpretation of Cultures.*

This paper deals with the problem of interpretations in social science and, particulary in Anthropology. I analize Habermas theory of a modern horizon in which the subject is already aware of a differentiation of spheres of value and questions reality from a hypothetical point of view. Then the paper deals with MacIntyre conception of interpretation and a special category that is called "the second first language". MacIntyre works show in a very precise manner that translations from one culture to another are only partial because we cannot separate from our own point of view. The third author analized here is a well known antifoundationalist, Richard Rorty's work is against any kind of pressuposition that deals with essence, truth and a privileged place to analyze any other culture. While these three perspectives can have some good groundings for the problems of interpretation alien cultures, the paper tries to show some of the consequences of the main assumptions of the three authors. As a result, we can see how when one questions interpretations of reality we are already engaged in a modern horizon. In the second step, we can see that our interpretations are always partial and they need some way of translation into our culture; and the third step, is to show how our points of view are recognizable as ethnocentric even if we don't intend them to be so.

Menéndez. Eduardo L. *Definitions, Lack of Uncertainties and Petit Knowledge.*

In this article, first I discuss in an epistemological perspective, the difference between Social Anthropology (SA) and other Social and Historical Disciplines. Next, I explore the current "crisis" in SA. I conclude that there's no evidence to support this difference and it is suggested that "crisis" is the "normal" condition of SA since the mid-1960s. This crisis expresses itself in SA's research through issues such as the definition of the object/subject, and its methodological and interpretive approaches.

Falomir Ricardo, *Too Soon or Too Late...? Some Considerations about the Scientific Status of Anthropology.*

The paper looks at different ways in which social and cultural anthropologist consider the scientific status of their discipline. The perspective of Radcliffe-Brown, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Clifford Geertz and Angel Palerm are considered. The selection does not pretend to be representative of schools or traditions within the field, rather it demostrates a) some of the different conceptions of the scientific status of the discipline and b) present problems that refer to the specificity of anthropological knowledge. A perspective that at the same time accounts for the specificity of social sciences vis a vis natural sciences and attemps to achieve formulations of a general theoretical character is proposed.

Nivón, Eduardo y Ana María Rosas, *Interpreting Clifford Geertz. Symbols and Metaphors in Culture Analysis.*

This paper introduces the reader to the epistemological basis of the Clifford Geertz's work and its consequences for anthropological research. The first part explains his basic disagreements with traditional theory and the concepts of culture, as well as the philosophical tools of phenomenology from which his theoretical and methodological proposals are derived. The second section looks at American anthropology in two of the most important areas for the comprehension of his work: the symbolic field —that leads him to the necessity of a semiotic conception of culture—, and the correct methodology for its study —that leads him to a interpretive science.

Krotz, Esteban, *Journey, Field Work and Anthropological Knowledge.*

So-called fieldwork has often been seen as one of the principal distinctive marks of sociocultural anthropology, but its epistemological and methodological status is not clear. This essay refers to the metaphor of a journey in the early writings of the philosopher Ernst Bloch in order to discover some key aspects of the production of anthropological knowledge based on fieldwork that is not limited to positivist empiricism. Instead it is centered on the confrontation of changing alterities and identities, parts of a global sociocultural process, to which the researcher himself belongs.

García Canclini, Néstor, *Construction or Simulacrum of the Object of Study? Field Work and Textual Rethoric.*

What is the importance of the construction of the text in the elaboration of information obtained in fieldwork? The analysis of problems of the epistemological sense of anthropological work has grown during recent years due to questions on the textual strategies and institutional conditions by which knowledge is organized and communicated. This article will complement the discussion and these aspects carried out by posmodern anthropologists of the Unites States with the socio-institutional criticism developed by Pierre Bourdieu and will examine the meaning of such approaches in relation to the conditions of anthropological work in Latin America.

Varela, Roberto, *Reflections about "Is Symbolic Thought Pre-rational?" by Dan Sperber.*

The essay presents with some lenght Sperber's thesis that "symbolic thought is necessarily built after a previous rational treatment". Although in general terms Sperber's position is accepted, a critique is presented concerning three themes: the first deals with the deficient recognition it gives to Turner and Lévi-Strauss; the second, the principle that "all representation can be invoked by any stimulus in determined conditions"; third, the basic epistemological problem: "similarity" and "contiguity", contrary to what Sperber apparently holds, aren't empirical concepts.

Pérez, Sergio. *Spirit in Itself: Claude Lévi-Strauss and Empirical Idealism.*

The series *Mythologicals* by Lévi-Strauss ends with a set of hyphotesis about the structure of the human spirit that holds a clear link with critical idealism. The purpose of this paper is to examine this link with no intention of placing value judgement on the work of the ethnologist, but to reach a close understanding of the role that philosophy plays in the work of a social scientist.