



Theater during the Pacific War

From a Chilean perspective, the Pacific War is one of the most important events to occur in the nation's history. Moreover, this war is the subject of numerous studies by historians that, until recently, viewed this event in the light of its epic nature. From a military standpoint, the Pacific War has served to narrate feats of battle and the exploits and deaths of national heroes.

With the rise of new generations of historians, there has been a significant change of focus in studies on the Pacific War. These historians have incorporated into analyses the voices and perspectives of traditionally invisible actors, including eyewitness accounts of women and children, and of the troops that experienced everyday hardships in occupied territories.

One such historian is Dr. Carlos Donoso Rojas, investigator for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Universidad Andrés Bello. Dr. Donoso is using theatrical plays published and acted out during the Pacific War as nontraditional, but relevant, sources for investigating sociocultural processes of the age and for analyzing the transcendence of the so-called "military theater" in the history of national dramaturgy.

"The theater, more than any other activity of the age, was a space for cross-socializing. Studying this particular art form is indispensable for understanding how the conflict was able to unite a society that, at the end of the 1870s, was fragmented and in economic crisis," states Dr. Donoso.

This project is focused on studying dramatic pieces written between 1879 and 1884 that address the Pacific War, an exceptional genre. By satirizing the enemy and representing Chileans as examples of virtue, the military theater was able to bring the conflict to common people and, with this, a taste for the performing arts. Due to this, the military theater has great merit that, according to Dr. Carlos Donoso, "provided unique historical value. By bringing drama to the common urban populace, which was traditionally distanced from this activity, theater became, in following years, a space for channeling viewpoints on current events and for promoting structural changes in the political and social organization of the country."

a Guerra del Pacífico