

Meat and Strength: The Moral Economy of a Chilean Food Riot

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The policies of a Latin American government drive food prices up; unions and neighborhood associations in the capital city organize a demonstration; the government calls in the army; many people are killed; an uneasy truce prevails. As area specialists and indeed most newspaper readers and television watchers know, such sequences of events are common in recent Latin American history.¹ Such events seem familiar, not only because they appear regularly in journal articles, in books, in headlines, and on the evening news, but also because they can be easily fitted into plausible narrative frames. The actors (desperately poor masses, unresponsive governing elites) are well known, and they are engaged in a common sort of conflict (debates in public arenas over economic policies). The opening event in the narrative, a sudden rise in food prices, can be understood as one of the natural vicissitudes of an underdeveloped economy. Most readers, accustomed to hearing of such occurrences, would not be likely to question the direct links from the first event to the second, the public expression of political discontent, and then to the third, the repression by the government.

This article examines one such set of events, which took place in Santiago, Chile in 1905, and compares it to food riots in other parts of the world. The analysis draws both on ways in which these events resemble other food riots and on ways in which they differ from them. The claims of the urban poor in this instance to have a right to subsistence and the rejection of these claims by elites are familiar to students of food riots in other parts of the world. The linkages among the three events in Chile in 1905, though, are less typical, for three reasons. First, the rise in food prices is a puzzling trigger of the riot, since the policy that caused the prices to increase took place years before the demonstrations and repression. Second, the foodstuff that was in dispute was not a common grain such as wheat or rice that provides the bulk of subsistence and whose price and availability form the key issues in most food riots, but meat, a luxury item that formed a small portion of the diet of much of the population of Chile at the time. Finally, the link between the protest demonstration and the repression is complex rather

than simple, since the demonstration itself went through several peaceful stages before violence broke out. This sequence of stages is of particular interest because it suggests that the participants were concerned not only with assuring their access to certain foods but also with maintaining certain ritualized forms of public behavior.

In order to examine a case such as this one, in which the price rise, the demonstration, and the repression cannot be located in a tight temporal and causal sequence, this article follows the lead of E. P. Thompson's "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" (1971). In this path-breaking analysis of English food riots, Thompson showed that major public disturbances could be understood less as the direct consequences of objective declines in living standards among the working classes than as responses to violations of deeply held views of proper economic relations. His contribution was to show that issues of food prices were not merely one point of conflict between working and property-owning classes over the material control of an economy, but were linked to class-specific notions of social rights and responsibilities. He emphasized the loyalty of the rioters to "custom" (1991:259), a set of implicit rules governing the exchanges of goods, labor, and money and guaranteeing the "common weal" (1971:79). The rioters, he explained, did not merely seek an adequate food supply; they also defended the customs that guaranteed them their subsistence, and reinforced the notions of justice that underlay these customs.

Though this article is in general accord with Thompson's views, it travels further than he does down the road of offering a cultural account of economic interests. First, I emphasize the importance of culture by expanding the range of cases that are considered. Thompson and his earlier followers concentrated on Europe and drew some additional cases from Asia; since the Latin American cases that I discuss here differ culturally from these Old World societies, they highlight the importance of cultural influences on moral economies and food riots. I raise some questions about the contrasts that distinguish the established agrarian civilizations of Europe and Asia from the newer, conquest-based rule in the Spanish colonies in the Americas and their successor states. In particular, the centrality of the landed estate, or hacienda, makes Chile very different from these other cases in terms of the institutions through which food was distributed and of the forms of social interaction between social classes.

Second, by examining the performative as well as the instrumental aspects of protest, this article expands the treatment of custom beyond Thompson's views. Though he does examine the role of rituals (e.g., in the opening and closing of marketplaces), he usually presents custom as a set of rules that controls the exchanges of goods, money, and labor among social classes. Following the lead of such writers as Scott (1985) and Comaroff (1985), and more recent writings on Latin America such as Alonso 1994 and Edelman 1994, I look not only at the content of the protest—the stated opposition to government food policies—but also at the spatial and temporal patterns of movement of the protesters themselves. I link these patterns to the structured practices of etiquette in every-

of Thompson's work, as may be seen in the contrast between the accounts of certain types of protest offered by Thompson and by later writers. Thompson's *Whigs and Hunters* (1975) explains the protests in the early 18th century by English peasants against the laws that limited their customary access to forest resources such as wood and game. Peter Sahlins's study (1994) examines similar movements of forest villagers in the early 19th century in the French Pyrenees. Though both authors agree on the preconditions of these movements (increasing commercial extraction of timber, growing state control of forests, new laws that undercut customary access to forest resources, and erosion of village economies), Thompson tends to assign practical reasons to certain features of the protests, especially the use of disguises. For Sahlins, these disguises are one of the elements that villagers adopted from the local repertoire of expressive forms, such as carnivals and charivaris, to construct quasi-theatrical performances that provide political commentary. Thompson argues that the villagers blackened their faces to become invisible, or at least to remain anonymous and to stay beyond the reach of the state during their acts of reprisal against landowners, nobles, and officials; Sahlins suggests that the villagers put on costumes to be visible, or at least to be seen by society (other villagers, merchants, landowners, nobles, and officials) as portraying folkloric figures that criticized this reduction in access to resources.

Finally and most important, this article explores, rather than assumes, the links among food, well-being, and value. Though Thompson occasionally discusses culturally-based food preferences (1991:349–350), he usually takes as self-evident the notion that an adequate supply of subsistence foods is a sign of social justice. Following in part Mintz's work on the political dimensions of "sweetness" (1985), this article examines the cultural notions that underlie this idea of justice itself by looking at the connections between the economy and the daily practices of social relations (Orlove and Rutz 1989; Wolf 1990). This genealogy of concepts of justice, in Foucauldian terms, links food and work not only through the marketplace, but also through other realms as well. Two of these realms are particularly important: (1) the everyday social world in which meals can be understood as enactments of social identities, relations, and hierarchies; and (2) the human body itself, in which the relations between eating and working are established culturally as well as physiologically. In its focus on meals, this article follows Douglas's well-known work on the homologies between categorizations of meals and of social events and identities (1971), and Bourdieu's examination of daily life as the site of affirmation and contestation of sets of meanings (1977). In its focus on the human body, it follows Wharton's examination of the cultural history of the links among diet, work, strength, and health (1982) and Rabinbach's discussion of the images of the body at work (1990). This article thus joins with scholarship that has sought to expand the notion of class through an examination of patriarchy, though it emphasizes food (linked to work and strength) rather than sexuality (linked to reproduction and pleasure). Thus it agrees with Thompson that one of the bases of the authority of powerful men—husbands, fathers, landlords, political leaders—can be located

in their ability to control the distribution of food to their dependents, and that one of the points of contention in societies based on such authority is the failure of such men to meet their obligations to their dependents; it differs from Thompson in linking these obligations to notions of the human body.

The Events of Red Week

The events of Red Week can be traced back to a matter of long-standing public debate in Chile: the tariff, established in 1897, on cattle that crossed the high Andean passes from Argentina into Chile. This tariff was first proposed in 1887 by the leading organization of landowners, the Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura (National Agricultural Society), when the construction of railroads from major cattle-producing areas on the Argentine pampas to the Chilean border offered the possibility of reducing meat prices in Chile by facilitating exports of cattle from Argentina to Chile. At first, this tariff was blocked by some free trade interests, including mine owners, as well as by some urban workers. These workers, many of whom were organized in mutual aid societies in Santiago, were encouraged in their opposition by the leading left-wing party, the Partido Demócrata (T. Wright 1975:50–51). However, with continued support from the landowners' association, the tariff passed in 1897, as part of a broader protectionist package—supported in part by the Partido Demócrata, which believed that this package would lead to an expansion of urban industrial employment (Antiguaita 1912–1918:966–972). Opposition to the tariff appeared almost immediately. The Partido Demócrata returned to its earlier position and pressed for the abolition of the tariff in 1898 and 1899. The mutual aid societies took part in a series of rallies in 1902 that also supported this aim (T. Wright 1973: 244–250).

The renewal of opposition to the tariff in 1905, after several years of relative quiescence, had at best an indirect relation with meat prices. It seems to have been set off by an increase, not in the cost of meat, but in the cost of staples. Many poor families apparently were forced to reduce their consumption of meat in order to maintain their consumption of basic foodstuffs. Table 1 shows that meat prices remained fairly stable between 1902 and 1905, while the prices of wheat, beans, and potatoes rose sharply, driven up by the large amounts of paper money that the government had issued in the previous years (T. Wright 1973:251; see Table 1). The first years of the 20th century were otherwise ones of economic prosperity in Chile, as indicated by the increasing volumes and values of Chilean exports, the expanding government budgets, and the stable exchange rates (Hurtado Ruiz-Tagle 1966:150, 157, 160, 165). Employment grew steadily in Santiago between 1899 and 1905 as the Chilean economy, prospering from mineral exports, continued to expand (DeShazo 1983:11). Wages seem to have held steady in this period as well.² In sum, the years before 1905 were marked neither by rising meat prices nor by a general economic downturn.

The immediate antecedents of Red Week can be traced to September 1, 1905, when the mutual aid society of the Santiago retail meat vendors called a meeting of all such mutual aid societies to discuss once again the abolition of the tariff. The meat vendors were concerned that declining consumption of beef

Table 1.
Wholesale Prices of Cattle, Flour, Beans, and Potatoes in Santiago for the Years 1887–1905 (current pesos).

Year	Cow Whole Animal	Flour 46 kg	Beans 100 kg	Potatoes ^a 100 kg
1887	48.00	3.70	5.20	n.a.
1888	51.00	4.18	6.90	n.a.
1889	51.00	5.27	6.95	n.a.
1890	49.00	4.87	6.00	n.a.
1891	52.00	4.69	5.85	n.a.
1892	55.00	4.51	5.70	n.a.
1893	56.00	4.65	7.80	n.a.
1894	56.00	4.82	7.85	n.a.
1895	66.00	4.90	8.00	n.a.
1896	60.00	4.50	8.35	n.a.
1897	63.00	6.30	10.26	5
1898	65.50	7.00	9.75	2
1899	68.00	6.10	6.20	4
1900	68.00	7.07	8.28	6
1901	81.42	7.36	14.00	5
1902	96.76	6.90	11.00	3
1903	103.00	6.44	8.00	4
1904	99.12	5.98	10.00	5
1905	103.84	7.82	18.00	7

Sources: Bauer 1975:233–234; Wright 1973:249.

^aPotato prices are for Santiago and Valparaíso; they are missing for some years (indicated by “n.a.”), and are rounded to the nearest peso.

would force many of them out of business, and they may also have been stirred into action by rumors of a reopening of trade negotiations between Chile and Argentina, which could have led to a further increase in tariffs (T. Wright 1973:250). At that meeting, held later in September, the mutual aid societies and members of the Partido Demócrata formed the Comité Central de Abolición del Impuesto al Ganado (Central Committee to Abolish the Cattle Tariff). This committee, faced with strong support of the tariff from the National Agricultural Society, scheduled a demonstration for Sunday, October 22. It spread the word about the demonstration to the prospective participants. It also sought, and received, official approval of the demonstration and the specific route that the marchers would take. Its support in the press came not from left-wing newspapers, but from the widely read middle-of-the-road Catholic newspaper *El Chileno* (Hernández Cornejo 1958:53).

The demonstration began as planned. A large crowd formed at the pre-arranged spot on the Alameda, the principal artery of downtown Santiago. The

estimates for the number of demonstrators range between 12,000 and 50,000, a sizeable gathering for a city that had about 320,000 inhabitants (Hurtado Ruíz-Tagle 1966:146). One group of demonstrators, composed of representatives of ten neighborhood organizations and 41 mutual aid societies and unions, began their march along the preassigned route to the Casa de Gobierno (Government Building), the largest and most imposing civil structure in the city, where they intended to deliver to the president, Germán Riesco Errázuriz, a petition that requested the repeal of the cattle tariff.³ The scheduled route would then lead the marchers back to the Alameda, where the majority of the demonstrators had remained. A number of the groups carried banners, many of them referring to the tariff:

The streetcar workers, for example, carried three banners: one of them showed the figure of an ox held prisoner by the cattle ranchers and which the common people [el pueblo] were trying to free; on another of the banners a human skeleton appeared representing the common people and by its side, the figure of a fat man smoking a cigar (a landlord [hacendado]); the third one, finally, showed a fat ox above which was written “meat for the rich,” and on its side the sad figure of a thin horse appeared with the words “meat for the common people.” [Izquierdo Fernández 1976:59]

The speeches centered on the themes addressed in these banners: the availability of meat and the disparities between the rich and the poor. Unlike some other cases in which tariffs become the subject of wider debate, the demonstrations during Red Week did not focus on issues of economic patriotism or nationalism. The demonstrators did not address matters of national self-sufficiency or of free trade, but simply spoke of meat.

The demonstrators were greatly surprised to find that the president was not in the Casa de Gobierno. A government representative told a small group of the marchers that the president could be found in his personal residence a few blocks away. Some of them went there; a few were invited into the house, where the president received the petition and spoke with them, in a room whose Venetian blinds were not raised to place the group in public view. However, the vast majority of the demonstrators—left without their leaders, who had remained with the president for lengthy discussions—believed that the president refused to meet with them. A large number were sure that he had left the city of Santiago altogether. At this point, the previously orderly march began to turn hostile. Some demonstrators began to shout angry slogans. More or less simultaneously, two forms of violence broke out: by the demonstrators against buildings and other public structures, and by the police against the demonstrators. The crowd stoned the Casa de Gobierno, tore up the principal public statues and monuments on the Alameda, destroyed telegraph and telephone lines, burned streetcars, and attacked stores and private residences. Many of the rioters looted stores, adopting as principal targets pawnshops and grocery stores. In one instance, the crowd attacked a pharmacy when they heard that its owner had refused to provide first aid to a wounded demonstrator (Vial Correa 1981:892).

The police attacked the crowd but soon lost control of the city. The garrisons ordinarily stationed near the city were away on practice maneuvers. However, the police found reinforcements from several quarters: the volunteer fire brigade, several associations of Europeans who resided in Santiago, and the Club de la Unión, the city's most exclusive social club, all of whom received rifles from the War Ministry. A number of policemen circulated in plain dress, shooting demonstrators without warning. The violence spread throughout Santiago. Some accounts show the broad social character of the disturbances; for example, the tenants of a *conventillo* (a tenement, each of whose rooms was rented out to a poor family) threatened to attack the manager unless he canceled their rents.

The greatest part of the violence occurred during the first days of Red Week, with the bulk of the attacks on buildings and well over half the deaths taking place on Sunday and Monday. Izquierdo Fernández carefully reviewed court records in an effort to obtain a view of the social composition of the rioters. He found detailed data on one set of 31 men who had been wounded and another group of 55 men and 3 women who had been arrested. As is usually the case with participants in riots, these two groups were composed of relatively young individuals (average ages 30 and 23 years, respectively), with high proportions of bachelors among the men (58 percent and 66 percent, respectively; the marital status of the women appears not to have been recorded). Most of the individuals reported a trade (carpenters, tailors, bakers, shoemakers, typesetters, or peddlers). The proportions of *gañanes* (unskilled day laborers) were 35 percent and 17 percent (Izquierdo Fernández 1976:74–77). These samples, small though they are, correspond to the eyewitness accounts that describe the rioters as including some unskilled workers, but as being drawn predominantly from a stratum of the more secure and better-paid artisanal and manufacturing workers. The rioters thus formed a diverse group, including the full range of occupational categories in the city, though the lowest strata of the urban poor were underrepresented.

The government soon began to gain the upper hand, with the declaration of a curfew and the prohibition of public assembly on Monday, and the return of 1,500 army troops from their maneuvers on Tuesday. (Accounts differ on whether the urban police and their impromptu assistants had already come close to establishing order [Vial Correa 1981:894–895], or whether the army's intervention was critical [Izquierdo Fernández 1976:66–73].) Government accounts indicate that 70 people were killed, a very large number for a country unused to such urban political violence, and other estimates are several times that figure; cemetery officials reported burials of over 300 people who were killed in the fighting (Subercaseaux 1936:135). By Friday, the city had returned to a state of calm. Red Week was over, but it continued to make its presence felt, in the visible signs of destruction throughout the city and in discussions of the violence. Newspaper editorials and the records of a special session of the congress record some portions of the debates that took place. One representative described the mob as “a human avalanche . . . a blind and ferocious beast,” and another suggested that the problem came not from the shortage in supply in Chile, but from

the higher wages that led workers to expect foods that they had not eaten in earlier periods (Boletín 1906a); the chastened representatives of the Partido Demócrata supported the tariff as well (Boletín 1906b). The newspapers offered a wider range of opinion. The left-leaning *El Ferrocarril* and the centrist Catholic *El Chileno* suggested that the high price of food was the cause of the rioting, while the more conservative *El Mercurio* condemned the rioters themselves as uncivilized criminals (*El Ferrocarril* 1905a, 1905b, 1905c, 1905d; *El Mercurio* 1905; Hernández Cornejo 1958:53). In these debates, the phrase *cuestión social* (social question) became increasingly important.

This social question, understood as the vast and problematic gap between rich and poor, became a key term in Chilean political discourse, since concern over economic inequality remained at or near the surface in the following decades (Morris 1966). The riot did not lead immediately to the removal of the tariff, though there was some link between protest and tariffs in the following years. Union activity and strikes continued elsewhere in Chile through 1907, declined a bit in the following years, and picked up again, with a major wave of strikes in 1917–1919. The cattle tariff remained in place until 1909; it was then suspended until 1911, and reinstated until 1918.

These dramatic events, then, had many victims, whose blood, issuing from gunshot wounds and staining the streets, was one of the aspects of redness that gave this week its name. The phrase “social question,” with its recognition of working-class organizations such as mutual aid societies and unions, suggests a presence of left-wing parties and movements that may have been a second kind of redness. There is a third sort as well, a focus on red meat, as shown in the term *carne roja*, which Chileans used primarily for beef. It is this interrelation of these three sorts of redness that I seek to explore. Although the first two themes of violence and of class mobilization are strongly represented in the literature on food riots, the additional theme of the cultural understandings of food is not.⁴ This theme, too, helps clarify an unusual aspect of Red Week. What is it that led so many people to pay heed to the call of the retail meat vendors? On the basis of the literature on food riots in other countries, one would presume that such riots would not have occurred until inflation had progressed further: in 1905, inflation had not reached levels that led the urban poor to reduce their consumption of staples, but had only been sufficient to induce them to cut back on the amount of meat they ate.

In this effort to offer a more cultural account of food riots, I follow suggestions offered in two bodies of literature. The discussions of food riots in Europe and Asia by historians and sociologists, reviewed in the next section, suggest the importance of the notion of a moral economy for understanding the social, cultural, and political role of food, although I suggest differences as well as similarities between postcolonial Latin America and the older, more autonomous societies of Europe and Asia. In a later section, I review a set of recent culturally-oriented studies within Latin America in order to sketch out the broadly-shared cultural themes of food, power, work, well-being, and bodily vitality from which these Latin American moral economies elaborated specific

sets of meanings. I suggest that the social and cultural centrality of the hacienda, greater in Chile than elsewhere in Latin America, gave patron-client relations in Chile an especially personal and patriarchal tone and established the land-owner's house as a key place for the performance of these identities. These qualities and this setting provided the context for turning prestations of raw and cooked meat into highly charged occasions for the affirmation or contestation of social hierarchies.

A Comparative Perspective on the Moral Economy of Food

The comparative literature on food riots offers insights into the issues that mobilized the participants in Red Week and into the forms of action that this mobilization took. Pioneering studies of food riots in England (Thompson 1971) and France (Tilly 1971) focus on the increase in early modern Europe of the number of urban dwellers and others who did not produce their own food, such as rural artisans, and the consequent growth of the market economy in grain (see also Galus 1994; Thompson 1991; Tilly 1975). In earlier periods, local authorities in rural areas regulated the marketing and sale of the grain that was grown there. By the 18th century, national governments often sought to centralize this control to ensure an adequate supply of food to cities and armies. However, opposition to this new control was strong, particularly in periods when grain was scarce and prices high. Riots broke out in small towns and rural areas, where protesters blocked the movement of grain to cities or forced officials to bring prices back to customary levels. Thompson and Tilly argue that these clashes reflected not only a divergence of economic interests between those groups that benefited and those that lost out from the new forms of marketing and control, but also a more profound conflict of cultures or mentalities between a newly emergent market economy and a well-established "moral economy" (Thompson 1971) in which intergroup relations were regulated by a system of customary rights and obligations that assured subsistence to all groups. Thompson's key discussion of this moral economy merits inclusion.

A consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, [and] of the proper functions of several parties within the community . . . taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy. . . . This moral economy . . . supposed definite, and passionately held, notions of the common weal— notions which, indeed, found some support in the paternalist tradition of the authorities; notions which the people re-echoed so loudly in their turn that the authorities were, in some measure, the prisoners of the people. Hence this moral economy impinged very generally upon . . . government and thought, and did not only intrude at moments of disturbance. [1971:79]

As Thompson shows for the case of 18th-century England, the moral economy did not simply consist of regular access to certain foods at certain prices. There also was a high degree of cultural elaboration of food, with different sorts of bread deemed appropriate for different sorts of occasions. Moreover, urban grain, flour, and bread markets were bound up in a complex set of customs that

indicated the times and rituals of opening and closing, the spatial patterning of activity, and the etiquette that participants were to follow.

As Thompson himself has noted (1991:345–349), studies of food riots in Asia show a generally similar pattern of the breakdown of such moral economies. Food riots in imperial China also focused on the scarcity or high price of staple grains, although the specific targets of the riots were somewhat different.⁵ In China, where the long-established bureaucratic state had an obligation to oversee the supply of rice and to maintain state granaries, provincial governors were often blamed (Wong 1982, 1983). Thompson (1991:294–295, 344–349) notes the disputes among South Asian historians, some of whom attribute great passivity to the poor, even in times of famine, while others find grain riots similar to those in Europe and China (Arnold 1979).

These studies offer several useful hints for the study of Red Week. They focus on specific foods, rather than generalizing from them to all foods, or even further to more abstract economic categories such as subsistence or expenditures. They suggest that food has cultural as well as economic importance. This importance can be noted when some people take the scarcity or absence of food not only as a decline of their material well-being but also as a violation of established rules that govern the relations between different social sectors. Moreover, this cultural importance of food can also be noted in the more commonplace situation, in which the availability of food in culturally-established quantities, forms, and contexts is taken as a sign of what Thompson calls the common weal, a healthy state of society.

The Chilean case differs in a key detail: beef, not grain, was the foodstuff whose availability the urban masses sought to maintain.⁶ Rather than proposing a simple opposition between meat riots in Latin America and grain riots in Europe and Asia, I am suggesting that meat offers a view into Latin American moral economies, much as wheat in Western Europe and rice in China permit a closer understanding of their respective moral economies. As will be discussed more fully in a later section, the consumption of meat was unevenly distributed in Chile, in contrast to the European and Asian cases, where virtually everyone ate wheat or rice as a daily staple. Nonetheless, the people who sought to maintain the presence of beef in their diets—a middle stratum located between the elite, who ate large quantities of meat, and the poor, who ate almost none—conceived of this meat as a necessity, as part of their subsistence, rather than as a luxury. This case thus leads in two directions. First, it suggests the importance of examining the historically specific, local meanings of food, of meat, and of the social bonds that linked the suppliers and consumers of meat. Second, it permits a more theoretical reconsideration of the broadly comparative notion of subsistence. The latter aim is accomplished by presenting a case in which basic necessities are taken as varying, rather than uniform, within a given society. These claims for the legitimacy of this uneven distribution of necessities imply a profound hierarchy in the case on hand and suggest, more comparatively, that the linked notions of subsistence and moral economy are less egalitarian than Thompson and others such as Scott (1976) have suggested.

The Moral Economy of Food: Meat in Chilean Diets

In my efforts to reconstruct and to explain the importance that demonstrators in Red Week placed on beef, I turn to several sources, the most immediate of which are the numerous travel accounts that describe many aspects of daily life in Chile in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Before presenting their descriptions of meals, however, I offer a brief summary of Chilean society at the time, in order to indicate the social context of the particular moral economy of food.

Chile in 1905

The economic and political changes that followed independence from Spain in 1821 in some ways had more profound changes on the peripheral regions of Chile than on its core area, the central valley in which Santiago is located. The north, which grew in size after Chile defeated Peru and Bolivia in the War of the Pacific (1879–1883) and incorporated portions of their national territories, was transformed by the growth of the copper and nitrate mining that underwrote much of the expansion of the national state and economy. When the Araucanian Indians were conquered in a series of wars from the 1850s through the 1880s, the Chilean control and settlement of the southern regions also grew, as agricultural colonies and coal mining expanded. The north and south both attracted European migrants.

In the central valley, change was concentrated in Santiago and its port, Valparaíso, which grew as the Chilean state and overseas trade occupied increasingly important roles in the national economy. Many workers found employment in the rapidly expanding transport and construction industries. Manufacturing began to develop in these cities as well, particularly after 1880 and especially in the food sector (baking, brewing, sugar-refining, and vegetable-oil extraction), textiles, apparel and leather-working, and the manufacture of such items as cement, glass, chemicals, and paper. This diverse manufacturing sector included both small artisanal firms and medium-sized factories (Blakemore 1993:60–61). Unlike Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina on the other side of the Andes whose growth was due to large-scale foreign immigration, Santiago and Valparaíso expanded by drawing on populations from rural areas of the country, especially the central valley, which aside from Santiago itself remained heavily rural in the 19th century (Loveman 1979:162). During the period 1885–1907, Santiago's population grew from 177,271 to 322,238, increasing at an annual rate of 2.75 percent, more than twice as fast as the national rate of 1.29 percent. The immigration to the city was even greater than this disparity suggests, since mortality rates were higher in the cities than in rural areas (DeShazo 1983:4, 68). Thus although the working population of the city varied greatly in their forms of employment and length of urban residence, nearly all of them shared strong links to rural areas and employment in small- and medium-sized firms rather than large ones. The labor movement in Chile developed most strongly in the mines and ports, where large enterprises played a more important role, and the major strikes in this period—much more closely tied to unions than

Red Week was—were concentrated outside Santiago.⁷ There was a virtually total absence of a labor movement in the agricultural zones of the country (Zeitlin and Ratcliff 1988).

Chilean Haciendas

The traditional large estates or haciendas, of great importance throughout Chilean history, played a key role in Red Week. Many of the participants in Red Week were raised on such estates, and more generally, these estates were a central context for the development of a Chilean moral economy. The haciendas, which date back to at least the early 18th century, continued to dominate the countryside of the central valley in the 19th and early 20th centuries, making Chile one of the few exceptions to the pattern, common throughout most of Latin America, in which large estates coexisted with small- and medium-sized towns, autonomous peasant villages, or both. The organization of land and labor was fairly uniform throughout these haciendas. The major agricultural activities—the preparation of fields; the planting, harvesting, and threshing of grain; and the annual roundup of the semi-feral cattle that grazed on natural pasture—were performed by human and animal labor, with very little mechanization. The relations of production that had dominated in the colonial period also maintained their basic configuration. The landowners relied on two groups of laborers. The *inquilinos*, or service tenants, provided labor for the landowner in exchange for access to fields that they cultivated on their own and some pasture on which they could raise a horse and a few head of cattle; the *peones*, or casual laborers, were hired seasonally for specific tasks. An *inquilino* family would reside on a hacienda for many years, perhaps generations, while *peones* often traveled from one hacienda to another without settling permanently in any one area.

The specific details of labor relations varied from hacienda to hacienda, depending on time, place, and scale. For example, some *inquilino* families would have *inquilinos* of their own, or hire *peones*, while others would rely exclusively on family labor. Nonetheless, the basic system of labor relations continued, even though railroads extended throughout the central valley in the 19th century and landowners sought to increase production to meet the demands of the growing populations in Santiago and the mining regions. The changes that did take place (the obligations of each *inquilino* family tended to increase, and the size of the lands allotted to them often decreased) did not reshape the basic patterns.

Although a detailed historical demography of hacienda workers remains to be done, a number of sources offer suggestions about domestic organization—a topic of direct relevance to the moral economy of food, since most meals were served at home. The frequent references to the casual ease with which *peones* shifted partners and bore children out of wedlock suggest that marriages among *inquilinos* were more stable than those among *peones* (Gilliss 1854:344). The housing in which they lived also differed; some sources mention the gardens that *inquilinos* planted, and they often refer to their houses as *casas*, using the more pejorative term *rancho* (shack) for the houses of *peones* (Gilliss 1854:345). The use of the word *casa* also appears in the local term for the long-

lasting ties that *hacendados* established with mistresses, recognizing and supporting their children. Such secondary families were known as *casas chicas* (small houses), which contrasted with the large principal dwelling, or *casa-hacienda*. These patterns suggest the highly patriarchal character of the hacienda as an institution. Patron-client relations tied men to hacendados, closely in the case of *inquilinos*, weakly for the *peones*. The position of a man in rural Chile could be judged by the number of houses, women, children, and livestock he possessed.

Nineteenth-century sources make frequent use of the terms *inquilino* and *peón*, but many of them also apply a second pair of terms, *huaso* and *roto*, to apply to roughly the same sets of individuals. The former terms define social classes, categorizing adult males and their dependents by their economic relations to landlords; the latter denote social types, broader, more diffuse characterizations of individuals, each of which is associated with the use of certain goods, specific activities, and particular demeanors. (Wider-known examples of rural Latin American social types in the 19th century include the Argentine *gaucho*, the Mexican *charro*, and the Brazilian *caboclo*. Poole [1997] provides a fascinating exploration of a female 19th-century Latin American social type, the Peruvian *tapada*, the upper-class woman partly concealed in a shawl, an urban case rather than the rural ones discussed here.) Social types are perhaps more slippery and imprecise than social classes. However, the repeated usage of terms denoting social types in the sources suggests the importance of examining them, despite the lack of consensus over the true nature of the *huaso* and the *roto*. One 19th-century source includes engravings of both, as well as of other social types. A barefoot *roto*, wearing a torn jacket, appears seated by a tree along a road; without any possessions, he is resting on his journey through unpopulated countryside, perhaps in search for work on some hacienda. The *huaso*, galloping on a horse, wears boots and more elegant clothing, and appears to be somewhat taller and a good deal fleshier than the *roto*; he seems associated with the hacienda, whose central buildings are clearly visible in the background (Tornerio 1872:464, 483). These differences in body size, wealth, dress, and association with haciendas appear in many other sources as well.⁸ The terms *roto* and *peón* were used for residents of mining camps and even for urban dwellers. *Huaso* and *inquilino* refer to primarily to rural people, although *huaso* can be used more loosely to refer to unsophisticated plebeian individuals, and the word *inquilino* could be applied to urban dwellers who rent their residences as well as to rural service tenants. The terms *inquilino* and *peón* are widely understood throughout Spanish-speaking Latin America; *huaso* is an exclusively Chilean term, as is *roto* in this usage.⁹

Chilean Meals

My analysis of Chilean meals focuses primarily on the large estates of the central valley, the institutional context from which most of the population of Santiago in 1905 was removed by at most a generation or two. I also include a few sources on urban diet in the 19th and early 20th centuries, which indicate

that the urban diets were quite similar to those in the countryside. The spatial and temporal breadth of this review once again follows Thompson's lead (1971). He examined food riots in 18th-century England as evidence of violations of a moral economy whose restrictions on the distribution and sale of grain he traces from the 16th century, and he drew examples of the moral economy from regions where riots did not take place as well as from those where they did.

To summarize the sources that I have discussed more fully elsewhere (Orlove 1995), food was generally abundant in 19th-century Chile. There was much poverty, but little real starvation. A number of sources point to the abundance of meat among the wealthy, whether in private homes and clubs in Santiago or in the main hacienda houses. The principal dishes around which meals were organized are invariably based on meat (Elliott 1911:255; Hervey 1891-1892:330). Even breakfasts regularly included meat, whether broiled (Graham 1824:197) or prepared in stews (Merwin 1966[1863]:52).

Many sources (Bauer 1975; Merwin 1966[1863]; Villalobos 1972; M. Wright 1904) describe the great hospitality of wealthy Chileans and the abundance of food at their tables, especially on Sundays and on civic, religious, and family celebrations, both in Santiago and on the haciendas. The English traveler Maria Graham provides a particularly full description of a meal in Santiago, as follows:

The dinner was larger than would be thought consistent with good taste; but every thing was well dressed, though with a good deal of oil and garlic. Fish came among the last things. All the dishes were carved on the table, and it is difficult to resist the pressing invitations of every moment to eat of every thing. The greatest kindness is shown by taking things from your own plate and putting it on that of your friend; and no scruple is made of helping any dish before you with the spoon or knife you have been eating with, or even tasting or eating from the general dish without the intervention of a plate. [1824:198-199]

At the other end of the social scale are the rural poor, whose simple diet, centered on grains and beans, lacked meat (Darwin 1900:290; Gilliss 1854:258; Merwin 1966[1863]:68; Smith 1899:37). Lieutenant James Gilliss, who traveled through Chile in the middle of the 19th century as head of an astronomical expedition organized by the U.S. Navy, describes the manner in which a *peón* was paid:

He receives three rations in meals, and from fifteen to eighteen cents per day, paid weekly, in money. A ration for breakfast consists of a pound of bread; for dinner, a pint of beans, mixed with wheat and grease [beef tallow]; and for supper, a peck of corn or wheat each week. [1854:345-346]

Another source describes specific meals among the poor in similar terms:

On the 14th of August, we went by rail a little distance into the country, to . . . a gorge in the coast range of mountains, where the grade is very steep, and where five bridges are required within one mile. A large number of *peones* were at work here, each of whom the contractor paid five reales a day, and furnished with a

sufficiency of bread and beans. They have a brush shanty in which to sleep at night; a stone oven to bake their bread, and a large iron kettle to cook their beans. The bread was leavened with yeast; pieces of the dough were weighed, made into loaves, and covered with a dirty poncho, and then placed in the sun to rise. At noon, old nail kegs, filled with cooked beans, were placed on the ground; three or four laborers squatted around each keg, and with a piece of bread in one hand, and in the other a stick flattened at the end, or mussel shell, with which to scoop up the beans, they ate their dinner. When their hunger was satisfied, they threw themselves on the ground, and drew their hats over their eyes for a few moments' siesta. [Merwin 1966(1863):78-79]

Merwin's description goes beyond a simple iteration of the ingredients that were eaten, indicating on what occasions and in what manner food was served. The peones' meal differs from that of the elites not merely in its concentration on beans and grains and its lack of meat, but in the absence of dignity and sociality. Graham's "pressing invitations of every moment to eat of every thing" contrast with the simple, and presumably abrupt, placement of old nail kegs on the ground, much as the leisurely pace of the meal in the former case differs from the sudden ending in the latter.

Looking toward the middle of the social scale, meals differ not merely in how much meat they contain, but also in the context and manner in which the food is served. Several travelers describe occasions on which they were invited into comfortable rural homes, not hacienda houses but those of *inquilinos*, and were generously fed meals that included meat. The travelers, whether describing hacienda houses or the more modest dwellings of *inquilinos*, note that peones ate separately (Darwin 1900:290-294; Graham 1824:195).

Although these meals appear to have been served with at most a few hours' advanced notice, it may still be questioned how representative they were, since the servers may have wished to offer their foreign guests particularly elaborate meals. Some accounts, however, describe another context, presumably less influenced by the presence of foreigners, in which common people ate: large work parties on haciendas.

Several accounts describe the annual *trilla*, or threshing, in which dozens, and in some cases hundreds, of mares ran in circles on enormous heaps of wheat laid out on the threshing floor; others tell of the annual roundups, in which free-ranging cattle were gathered from hill country and slaughtered. One observer notes that "[a] daily feast for the laborers is provided by the patrón as long as the *trilla* lasts" (Merwin 1966[1863]:95-96), while another states:

[i]n addition to the work, everyone took part in the celebrations. The patrón was gratified by the yield, the huasos entertained themselves in the evening . . . and even the dogs received succulent recompense. [Villalobos 1972:92; see also Graham 1824:189-190; Pereira Salas 1977:37-40; Tornero 1872:478]

These sources suggest that the threshing and roundup had a festive element as well as a narrowly agricultural component. In this sense, these events were marked by consumption as well as production. The accounts suggest that par-

ticipation in these events was limited to certain categories of men, at times described as *inquilinos* (suggesting that they were better off than the peones and with more stable ties to the hacendado), and at other times as *huasos* (suggesting that they were more dignified and prosperous than the *rotos*). This involvement followed from the fact that *inquilinos* (or *huasos*) usually owned horses, necessary for taking part in the threshing and the roundup, and peones (or *rotos*) did not. Much as the *inquilinos* had the obligation to participate in these large work parties, they also had the right to participate in the hacienda-sponsored festivities that followed and, in the case of the roundup, to receive meat as well—a privilege that on occasion extended further down the social hierarchy to include peones and even dogs.

Some of these sources offer accounts of urban diets as well. In addition to Graham's description of an upper-class urban dinner in Santiago, with many lavish courses, Gilliss's account of the urban poor in Santiago suggests that their consumption of meat was limited to special occasions, especially Sundays, when they might eat a "*puchero* (composed of meat and all manners of vegetables boiled together)" (1854:219). He also describes the abundance with which meat was served at *fiestas patrias*, the national independence holiday (1854:485).

DeShazo suggests that levels of meat consumption in a later period were higher, at least among the better-off urban workers. In his account of urban working-class politics from 1902 to 1927, he states that the first course of the main midday meal "invariably consisted of a stew of some kind (*cazuela*, *ajiacó*) with meat, potatoes, rice, and vegetables" (1983:64). He notes that meat, the most expensive of the items in the workers' diets, was also the item whose presence was most variable. Many poorer workers ate meat only infrequently, if at all. DeShazo's account of the housing of the urban poor suggests that people often knew how much meat their neighbors were eating. The poor were crowded into *conventillos*, one- or two-story buildings that followed colonial and early republican design: a single passageway connected the street and the interior patio, from which a number of rooms opened (Orlove and Bauer 1997). Most often, a family occupied only one room; with no doors to their rooms other than the one to the patio, and no windows at all in most instances, light and air could enter the rooms only when the patio door was open (DeShazo 1983:59). The rooms would have filled with smoke if the families cooked inside, so they prepared their meals right outside their front doors. Women could see their neighbors as they prepared their stews each morning (1983:56-64). The fact that a number of families, often as many as 20, shared a single water tap, also suggests that people knew a good deal about what their neighbors were eating.

These different sources, then, are consistent in depicting a single pattern of meat consumption in 19th-century Chile. The quantity and frequency of meat consumption corresponded closely with an individual's position in the social hierarchy (see also Douglas 1971). The quantity of meat that was served also corresponded to the scale of the social event; meat was invariably associated with large festive occasions, whether civic or religious holidays or large work parties.

This pattern applies to both rural areas and Santiago. The word *distribution* seems appropriate to describe this pattern, since it can denote not only the varying amounts of meat consumed by different individuals but also the specific acts in which some individuals give meat to others. In the first sense, meat is something that individuals have; in the second sense, it is something that they receive.

This emphasis on distribution may also be noted in the two most frequently-reported names of dishes, both one-pot stews: *cazuela* and *puchero*. These words are much like the English term *casserole* in that they refer both to food prepared for eating in a particular way and to the container (a large pot) in which the food is prepared and served.¹⁰ This metonymic association between stewpots and stews is entirely in keeping with the 19th-century descriptions of Chilean meals: A high-status person (landlord, employer, host, or senior woman of the household) brings (or has a servant bring) a potful of food (*cazuela*, *puchero*, or cooked beans) to the spot (table, floor, or ground) where a circle of people is gathered, they all may serve themselves, and the host may also give out portions of food. This circle of commensality was to some extent egalitarian, in that all the people who gathered for the meal were served from the common pot. However, this circle was also hierarchical. The sources that describe Chilean meals include many instances of exclusions (of peones, of women, of children, of dogs) from the circle of commensality.

Comparative Cases from South America

To understand more fully why meat came to play so important a role in Chilean society and culture, I draw on three recent ethnographic and ethnohistorical studies that examine other cases of meat distribution and consumption in South America. In including these other cases, I am not claiming that I have discovered a unitary Latin America culture that expresses itself identically in Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil as well as in Chile. Nor do I wish to claim that I have found a set of homogeneous national cultures, since each of the three cases is an instance of a specific regional variant within these states. Instead, I am suggesting that these different cultures draw on common themes—meat, bodily vital force, human work, gender, rituals of enactment of hierarchy and equality—and develop them in distinct though related ways, so that an examination of these themes in one setting can illuminate their distinct elaboration in another, much as recent writers on European food riots have emphasized the importance of regional variation within specific countries such as England (Wells 1988), France (Bouton 1993), and Germany (Galius 1994).

In adopting this approach, I am borrowing once again from Thompson and his followers (for example, Tilly 1971). Along with more recent works on food scarcity and political unrest elsewhere in Europe, such as *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914–1921* (Lih 1990), these works suggest that European countries developed distinct but related moral economies, and that each of these moral economies took a variety of forms in different regions, periods, and social settings. Despite their differences in economic organization, forms of government, legal traditions, and religions, as well in the types of grain used for bread, the

cultural systems in each of these countries share common themes about bread, subsistence, and human sociality. These themes are underwritten by the centrality of bread in Christian thought and ritual in its Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox variants.

I am thus challenging arguments for the homogeneity of the human taste for meat. I disagree with the notion that there is a simple biological tendency for humans to prefer animal meat over plant protein (Abrams 1987). I would revise the claim, made in Fischler's *L'omnivore: le goût, la cuisine et le corps* (1990) and Fiddes's *Meat: A Natural Symbol* (1991), that the significance of meat always lies in the association of blood and life. I view meat as a cultural symbol: its meanings are contingent, not universal.

Several books treat the topic of food and identity for other portions of South America since the time of independence. Andrés Guerrero (1990, 1991) examines detailed archival sources from haciendas in highland Ecuador during the first two decades of the 20th century. These haciendas parallel the ones of the Chilean central valley in a number of ways: the rhythms of agricultural and pastoral production were constrained by a highly seasonal climate and a simple technology; the haciendas dominated local society and drew on a work force composed of permanent workers and supplemented by seasonal peones who were hired for tasks that demanded larger work parties.

Guerrero argues for an incorporation of cultural themes of etiquette and ritual into analyses of hacienda society. He recognizes haciendas as units of production in which the permanent workers, known in highland Ecuador as *huasipongos*, performed a certain number of days of labor in exchange for use rights to parcels of land and for permission to graze some animals, often sheep, on hacienda pastures. In addition, individuals from a lower stratum of day laborers—called “peones” in Ecuador as in Chile—were hired seasonally. Guerrero also sees haciendas as enduring communities in which ritualized acts of distribution and consumption had great importance in sustaining social ties. In this way, Guerrero argues for the inseparability of production and consumption, of the material and the symbolic. Drawing on Bourdieu's notions of practice and habitus, Geertz's discussions of the state as theater, and James Scott's writings on moral economy, Guerrero focuses on two sorts of occasions on which hacendados distributed goods. The first are *socorros generales* or *uyanzas* (collective distributions) that the hacendado personally made to a large set of peasants (to the entire set of huasipongos in front of the main hacienda house at specific fiestas; to the huasipongos, and the peones as well, at threshing time in the field). The second are the *suplidos* (donations) that the hacendado or his foremen made near the hacienda storehouses to individual huasipongos, virtually always to male household heads for particular necessities of the domestic group, including the purchase of basic goods (such as food or clothing) during emergencies (such as the illness of a child), and life-cycle rituals (such as the wedding or the funeral of a relative).¹¹ Guerrero shows that these distributions did not merely allocate goods, but were public enactments of social relations with well-defined sequences of movements and gestures. He analyzes the *socorros generales* and

suplidos in terms of "communal reciprocity and domestic reciprocity" (1990:38) respectively, social patterns that he relates to both longstanding Andean traditions and the needs to legitimize paternalistic authority.

Drawing on the oral testimonies of former huasipongos of haciendas expropriated by agrarian reform agencies, along with information from hacienda archives, Guerrero shows that the peasants judged the relative generosity of hacendados in terms that reveal their embeddedness in a complex moral economy. Specifically, the peasants evaluated hacendados less in terms of the size of the parcels of land they provided than in terms of their willingness to grant suplidos in times of emergency and at life cycle events, and—striking for the case on hand—in terms of the type and amount of food given at the socorros generales, as well as the manner in which this food was distributed. All four of the former huasipongos whose specific words Guerrero quotes list meat as the first item among the food that was distributed in the prestations known as uyanzas. One former huasipongo stated,

When the harvest was over the Festival of Our Lady of Mercy [the patron of the hacienda] was celebrated [on the hacienda], and that was when there were the uyanzas. [The hacendados] gave each [of the huasipongos] a good piece of meat, a cheese, a bread this big, very big. This is what they gave [to each one]. Fava beans with meat, hominy. [Guerrero 1990:5; bracketed material inserted by Guerrero in his transcription of the interviews]

An inhabitant of a village near the same hacienda concurred:

and after Easter there were the uyanzas. They talk of how it was, killing a cow, giving lots of meat, bread, enormous cheeses. [Guerrero 1990:5]

A recent study of economic discourse in Colombia complements Guerrero's work on the importance of food as an element in the acts of distribution that legitimized the ties between landlords and peasants. In *Conversations in Colombia*, Stephen Gudeman and Alberto Rivera (1990) offer a close textual examination of the metaphors and models around which present-day highland Colombian peasants describe, discuss, and plan their economic activities. The peasants utilize an economic theory that underscores the consumption as well as the production of food. The word *casa* (house) is central to their accounts of household budgets, since they speak of goods entering and leaving the house, of maintaining the base of the house, and so forth. Gudeman and Rivera find the basis of production to be *fuerza* (strength, power), which the peasants conceptualize as coming from the *tierra* (earth, land). The *fuerza* can be transferred from the land to the natural vegetation and to the crops that grow in the land, to the animals that eat the natural vegetation and the crops, and to the people who eat the crops and animals.¹² The *fuerza* that people and animals hold can be used in work.

Gudeman and Rivera use this emphasis on *fuerza* and food to explain the tendency of peasants to repay the other peasants who work for them with food

as well as cash. They add that "the quantity served is always ample" (1990:108). Although the abundance of foodstuffs relative to cash might lead the peasants to substitute food for cash whenever they can, Gudeman and Rivera state that peasants understand this serving of meals to workers in terms of a household economy rather than in terms of an income-maximizing firm: "[A]s one person explained, serving meals is 'as if the worker were from the house'" (1990:106–107).

These relations also apply when two households exchange labor with one another. When individuals go from one household to another to work, they will be provided with all their meals but not given any cash; they in turn will give meals, but not cash, to the members of the household for whom they are working when they come to work in return.

The transaction keeps food and work directly linked. When a man works for another house, it provides him with the force to work; that house's use of labor is also its expenditure of food. In reverse, when that house repays the labor, its workers are fed, because the work is for the recipient house. Work and food are always joined, because the work has come "inside the doors" and is owned. The trade of labor presents an expansion and contraction of domestic boundaries; through the provision of foodstuffs, others are temporarily included within a house's economy. [Gudeman and Rivera 1990:112–113]

The Colombian case differs from the Ecuadoran one because it involves roughly equal freeholding peasants rather than hierarchically opposed landlords and workers. Gudeman and Rivera's analysis also differs from Guerrero's, since they focus on discourse and images such as *fuerza* and houses, rather than on rituals and practices. Nonetheless, the Ecuadoran and Colombian cases both point to the importance of the cultural as well as the economic dimensions of work. They emphasize the enduring languages of exchange that establish legitimate social ties between work givers and work receivers. They show the cultural importance of serving abundant meals to workers, treated as subordinate members of a household under the leadership of a senior male head. Moreover, in their discussions of the distribution of food in the patio of the main *casa-hacienda* in Ecuador and the incorporation of the worker into the peasant house in Colombia, they show that the house is a key spatial image, though it is figured quite differently in each case.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1988, 1991) describes poverty, hunger, and illness in a shantytown on the edge of a small market center in northeastern Brazil, an area she has visited and studied since the mid-1960s. This region, like 19th-century central Chile and early 20th-century highland Ecuador, is dominated by large private landholdings, in this instance sugar-cane plantations. This material offers a disturbing counterpoint to the Chilean, Ecuadoran, and Colombian cases: the poverty is more extreme, the employment (principally in domestic labor and in seasonal agricultural day labor on the plantations) more unstable, the paternalistic moral economy that linked *patroões* (bosses) with workers greatly eroded, and the dense social fabric that connects peasants with one another replaced by flimsier networks among a proletariat on the edge of utter desperation.

Scheper-Hughes shows the connections these semi-urban poor make between food and well-being. She has focused her research on the cultural patterns through which these people understand their own experiences: their almost casual acceptance of the deaths of their infant sons and daughters, their conceptualization of hunger as linked to *delirio de fome* (madness). Scheper-Hughes analyzes "the frequent juxtaposition of the idioms of hunger and of nervousness in the everyday discourse of the poor residents of [a] hillside slum" (1988:439). She discusses the ways in which

a unifying metaphor . . . gives shape and meaning to peoples' day-to-day realities. It is the driving and compelling image of "life as a *luta* [struggle]." [It] portrays life as a . . . battleground between strong and weak, powerful and powerless, young and old, male and female, and above all, between rich and poor. . . . Above all, it is *força* [cognate with Spanish *fuerza*], an elusive, almost animistic constellation of strength, grace, beauty, and power, that triumphs. [1991:188–189]

The poor, frequently unable to obtain adequate food, are often literally smaller, thinner, and weaker than the wealthy (much as 19th-century Chilean *rotos* were depicted as smaller than the *huasos*), and they describe themselves as "little people" in contrast to the wealthy elite, whom they term "big people." Their own *fraqueza* (thinness or weakness) contrasts with the latter's *força*. This hunger can lead to riots: Scheper-Hughes describes "the frequent sackings of public markets, train stations, and warehouses for food" (1988:438). Rather than examining such public acts of political opposition, however, Scheper-Hughes focuses on the ways dispossessed persons understand their everyday lives. To take one example, she describes "the folk pediatric disorder *gasto*" from which many infants die: already showing signs of extreme malnourishment, these infants are considered too weak to eat, and are often fed relatively little, hastening their nearly-inevitable deaths (1991:189). This use of *gasto* by Brazilians to refer to infants suffering from an illness may seem very different from the Colombian usage, in which *gasto* refers to expenditures of goods in contrast to cash outlays; the link between these two cases is in the conceptualization of *gasto* as both a loss of energy and a potential incapacity to restore this energy.

Making Meat Ends: Meat as the Focus of Red Week

We may now return to one of the puzzling features of Red Week: why did a large group of people riot over meat in Santiago, when other studies in Europe and Asia have shown staple grains to be the focus of food riots? Despite the caution that must be exercised in the examination of single cases, this riot does seem to constitute a discrepancy, especially granted the overall similarity between food consumption in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Diets in Chile, as in Europe and Asia, were centered on a few staples; in Chile as in Europe and Asia, meat consumption was stratified, with the rich eating much more of it than the poor (Goody 1982). It thus seems difficult to extend to Red Week the claim that riots occurred when subsistence foods became unavailable in a degree and man-

ner that challenged widely-held expectations of a moral economy. The principal difficulty with the direct application of this claim to Red Week lies in the fact that meat, despite its central importance in the diet and its association with *fuerza*, would not seem to be a basic staple in Chile since large portions of the population ate it only infrequently. Granted the increase in the prices of wheat, beans, and potatoes between 1903 and 1905, riots over these foodstuffs might have been expected, but not a meat riot.

The basic explanation that I suggest rests on a comparison between different moral economies. The implicit social contract between masses and elites in the more established agrarian states in Europe and Asia guarantees subsistence foods to the masses; in this Chilean case, the contract may be seen as providing different strata with different levels of subsistence (offering more to a privileged fraction, less to disfavored groups).¹³ One may speculate on the factors that could account for these differences in moral economies of food. The greater historical depth of the agrarian civilizations in Europe and Asia may have supported a stronger cultural consensus on peasant subsistence than the conquest-based rule in the Spanish colonies in the Americas and their successor states. The particular nature of Spanish imperial rule in colonial Latin America and the specific sorts of elite hegemony in the first century of postcolonial rule may have also sharpened the distinctions among caste-like status groups and rendered patron-client ties more personalistic. Moreover, the centrality of the hacienda led Chile to be different from most European and Asian societies, and most other Latin American societies as well, since elsewhere in Latin America small towns and freeholding peasant villages coexisted with large estates. Whatever the specific sources of these differences, the accounts of 19th-century Chile suggest a focus on meat as a subsistence good for certain social sectors.

The evidence from 19th-century Chilean haciendas and from early 20th-century Ecuadoran haciendas shows that meat was a crucial marker of social position on these rural estates. One of the clearest distinctions that separated Chilean *inquilinos* (or *huasos*) from *peones* (or *rotos*) was that the former ate meat regularly and the latter did not; the situation on Ecuadoran haciendas was very similar, with the *huasipongos* having some access to meat and the *peones* very little. To draw a parallel with Santiago in 1905, the demonstrations that preceded the riot were organized by members of workers' guilds and neighborhood associations. These individuals could have understood themselves much as the *inquilinos* did, in that their identities were based on permanent employment and secure, though rented, residences. By contrast, the more mobile day-laborers, or *gañanes*, all of whom shifted jobs regularly and some of whom migrated from Santiago to find employment as road construction workers, miners, or even hacienda day-laborers, resembled the rootlessness of the rural *peones*. (The presence in Santiago of many brothels and of beds in conventillo rooms sublet to single men by families might also suggest that like the *peones*, the *gañanes* may have been more likely to be single or to have unstable unions [DeShazo 1983:59–73].) The term *bajo pueblo* (low people, or poorest poor), which appears in Chilean newspapers and books of the period, also suggests a conceptual

division of pueblo (common people) into a main group and a lower marginalized fragment. For example, one account states,

the high price of meat—it was not that that could move the poorest people [el bajo pueblo] that rose up in an insurrection, since they have never eaten meat, and meat, with a tariff or without a tariff, will always have a price that will not place it within the reach of the most needy. Moreover . . . the poorest people, accustomed to a vegetable diet, do not feel the need to change this dietary regimen. [*El Ferrocarril* 1905d]

This view is probably overstated, since the quantitative data that are available, Izquierdo Fernández's figures, indicate the presence of a significant minority of such casual laborers among those who were wounded or arrested in the riot. These persons ate some meat, though very little, most likely consuming it only on special occasions such as a wedding or on the Chilean independence day. Their participation in the events organized by others suggests that they were unwilling to give up what were quite literally the scraps of meat in their diet.

If meat prices moved even higher, the permanent workers would have suffered the embarrassment of having their neighbors in their *conventillos* notice that they prepared their noonday stews with less meat. The importance of meat in these dishes suggests that its absence might have sparked domestic arguments as well (Weismantel 1989). The absence of meat would not only have carried a general social stigma. It also might have been taken as a sign of slipping down into a world of casual employment in which the permanent workers would have been seen as living like the people who moved from one place to another in search of work. The threat that meat would be removed from their diet undercut a deeply held sense of social position. This view suggests a difference from the European and Asian cases. In the Chilean case, an upper group within the pueblo sought to maintain its position above a lower group within the same mass; the analysts of the European and Asian cases follow Thompson in locating the social boundary differently, between a local society that seeks to maintain its subsistence on the one hand and a small elite of merchants or officials concerned with profit on the other. Whereas others have claimed that the prestige of meat is universal (Abrams 1987; Fiddes 1991; Fischler 1990), I would stress that the meaning of meat in this case depends upon some features, more specific to Latin America, which allow the consumption of meat to serve as a marker of such distinctions: ownership of animals is associated with the powerful and prestigious figure of the hacendado; the animals that are eaten, and cattle in particular, are linked with Europe and Europeans, rather than with America and Indians; control over animals is an everyday form of mastery for many sectors of Chilean society; and the manner of distribution of meat at the dinner table is an important point of etiquette.

Moreover, meat was not merely a symbolic marker of status but a constitutive element of certain types of persons. In particular, there appears to have been an association between meat and *fuerza*, possibly mediated by the importance of tallow as a fat. As has already been mentioned, some sources suggest that the

different levels of subsistence in Chilean society were justified by reference to bodily differences among the strata, that is, that the *huasos* were not merely entitled to eat more meat than the *rotos*, but that they actually needed it more, because they were larger and fleshier, and because they performed more strenuous labor, such as riding horses and rounding up cattle in scrub wildlands. As Colombian peasants explicitly recognize (Gudeman and Rivera 1990:86–88), animals may be seen as storing *fuerza*, understood as a kind of natural force and as an attribute of the earth. This association might have been established by the regularity with which hacendados gave meat to participants in large work parties, or simply by the presence of meat in the major dishes around which daily meals were structured; in this view, meat did not merely serve as a marker of social status, but also played a key role in cultural understandings of the ways in which adult bodies perform work. This view suggests a difference from the European and Asian cases, where meat is a luxury, in that the basic subsistence diet of some social sectors in Chile ideally includes not only staple grains but also meat.

Newspaper accounts of Red Week explicitly link these concepts of meat, strength, and work:

These days the families of the poor have to make immense sacrifices in order to be able to obtain the piece of meat which is indispensable for the *puchero*, that piece of meat which restores the strength which is used up in daily work [*ese pedazo de carne reparador de las fuerzas gastadas en el trabajo diario*]. [*El Ferrocarril* 1905b]

The last phrase—"ese pedazo de carne reparador de las fuerzas gastadas en el trabajo diario"—links *carne* (meat) and *trabajo* (work) with *fuerza* and *gasto* in a fashion reminiscent of the language of present-day Colombian peasants recorded by Gudeman and Rivera. One of Scheper-Hughes's Brazilian informants, a factory worker whose sister cooked for him, used similar language. She quotes his description of his return from the factory for his main meal, as follows:

By 11:30 A.M. I am already home and bugging my sister to see if lunch is ready. Then I eat a huge mound of beans, rice, noodles, and as much meat as possible. My sister knows that I need the *força de carne* [strength from meat] to work hard. [1991:158]

Another newspaper account links the consumption of meat to notions of gender and race and to a concept of the role of the working class in the destiny of Chile:

the sons of work [*los hijos del trabajo*, presumably the young men of the working class] . . . need virility to push the chariot of progress vigorously. . . . We are convinced that true patriotism lies in maintaining the virility of our race with a nutritious and abundant diet. [*El Ferrocarril* 1905a]

The patriotism to which this article refers resembles the paternalism of the *patrón* or landlord: they both indicate a responsibility to feed male workers well so that they can work hard for the prosperity of all—for the common weal, in Thompson's terms.

In addition to demonstrating the centrality of meat as a marker of status and the importance of the body as the site where work and strength are connected through eating, the events of Red Week also indicate the cultural salience for the participants in the riot of other social practices rooted in hacienda life. A key instance of the performativity of social life can be found in the temporal and spatial patterning of requests made by inferiors to superiors. Guerrero's insight in applying Bourdieu's heavily spatialized notion of *habitus* can be extended to the Chilean case. The key transition from peaceful assembly to violent sacking and rioting took place when the leaders of the petitioners reached the presidential palace and were told that the president was not there. A few found out that he was at his private residence instead and went there to visit him. The bulk of the demonstrators believed that the president had refused to meet with the petitioners (and many thought that he had left Santiago). It was at this point that they began to riot. Other accounts of political protest in Latin America suggest the significance of this kind of moment: Edelman's discussion of accounts by peasants, officials, and other parties of a set of demonstrations in Costa Rica, for example, shows that despite the differences in detail, all participants agreed on the vital importance of the immediate reception that the highest government officials gave to the protesters who came to the major government building in the district (1990).

Guerrero's accounts offer striking similarities to this Chilean case and may help clarify this sudden transformation from orderly demonstration to violent riot. The petitioners in Santiago, requesting the abolition of the tariff on imported meat, resemble the *huasipongos* who made *suplidos* (requests) to the *hacendados*. In both the Chilean and the Ecuadoran cases, the requests were made in a ritualized, formal manner at the principal residences of a maximal authority (a president or a *hacendado*, or his direct representative). Phrased in terms of the needs of a domestic group rather than in terms of luxury goods or personal wishes, the requests affirmed the paternalistic nature of authority, the generosity of the authority, and the longstanding nature of the ties between the authority and the people he ruled.¹⁴ Guerrero suggests that the *huasipongos* did not return empty-handed when they made requests, although they may not always have received as much as they wanted or precisely the goods or money that they requested. He does not explicitly state the most basic obligations of the *hacendado*, perhaps because they seemed self-evident to him: to receive the *huasipongos* and to hear their *suplidos*. It was at the time when the president failed to meet analogous obligations, by apparently not even receiving the petitioners, that the orderly demonstration turned into a riot.

There are several possible lines of explanation for this failure of the president to receive the petitioners in the form they expected. Following Thompson's views of food riots in England, one could argue that the expansion of capitalism

in Chile led the elites to become hungry for profits and to abandon their former sense of customary obligations to the poor. This view would draw support from the speeches made in the Chilean congress which claimed that the tariff was necessary to improve the national economy (Boletín 1906a, 1906b); the president's apparent preference for smaller meetings with a few delegates, rather than mass assemblies, might also be taken as a political style consonant with a rupturing of personal moral obligations. An alternative view would follow the claim of Coronil and Skurski (1991) that violence had always been one element, or pole, within the forms of power exercised by Latin American elites. In this view, Red Week would recall the longstanding tradition in Latin America of the *saqueo*, the sacking of warehouses in towns or haciendas by rural masses and the urban poor. These *saqueos* were greatly feared by Ecuadoran *hacendados*, aware of the long history of Indian rebellions in their country (Moreno Yáñez 1976); they continue to the present in Brazil (Scheper-Hughes 1991:438), Venezuela (Coronil and Skurski 1991), Argentina (Serulnikov 1994), and other Latin American countries (Walton and Seddon 1994). This view would draw some support from the apparent readiness of the members of the city's most elite social club to abandon their comfortable salons and take up rifles, and from the general elite acceptance of the numerous killings. This view would not, however, explain why the president did not arrange to have the army return to its garrison just outside Santiago before the day on which the demonstration was scheduled. Whatever the full explanation of the mentalities of the governing elites, they clearly rejected the right of the thousands of people gathered outside the Casa de Gobierno to be heard.

The riot broke out precisely at the point when the president refused, or failed, to come out of the Casa de Gobierno to meet the leaders of the demonstration. As the official residence of the president, rather than his private home, it was the place where the masses expected to meet their leader. I have sought to connect this Casa de Gobierno with other casas, such as the estate houses into which hacienda families invited foreign travelers on any occasion, from which they served meals to the *inquilinos* on the occasion of the owner's birthday; the houses of the Colombian peasants into which hired or exchange laborers are temporarily incorporated through serving abundant meals; and the *casas-hacienda* of the Ecuadoran estates, which *huasipongos* recall decades later as the site of generous distributions of meat and other foods. The route of the march, leading to the Casa de Gobierno, makes it seem as if the demonstrators were following the reversal of a common English proverb: every castle is a man's home. In this choice of the location of the presentation of the petition, and in the contents of the petition itself, I have sought to find a kind of moral economy, less egalitarian than the European and Asian ones but a moral economy nonetheless, in the patriarchal links that connect the heads of the houses to those whom they feed, and whose work they receive. I have also sought to show that this moral economy—this language of mobilization, in other terms—rested not only on a rather intellectual acceptance of the exchange of certain goods and services, but also on more deeply held understandings of the human body and the natural

world, and that these understandings were rendered palpable in certain public encounters.

This analysis of the Chilean instance of a more general set of Latin American moral economies fits in with the efforts of Thompson and of recent anthropologists to incorporate culture into analyses of class and political action, to understand the links that connect the public world of work and market exchange with the more personal world of home and meals. Several recent trends in anthropology—the closer attention to systems of discourse and practice, the interest in the human body, and the return to the study of the role of objects in culture—have supported this expanded view of class relations. Work and food can be seen as two of the many elements that enter into the balance of forces within the human body, much as the workplace and the market become two of the many contexts in which powerful and weak individuals encounter each other, either to establish and maintain their identities or to contest and reformulate them. It is these elements and contexts that comprise particular moral economies. It is the distinctiveness of a specific moral economy that allows a piece of beef to make the difference between an acceptable and an unacceptable noonday pot of stew, rather than merely being one expenditure in a working-class household budget. It is this distinctiveness that allows us to connect the demonstrators in the streets of Santiago to the Ecuadoran huasipongos who express nostalgia for their former lords, to the Brazilian city dwellers who despair of their hunger. It is this distinctiveness that helps us link demonstrations at the beginning of this century with demonstrations at its close, by showing that people struggle, not only for wealth and for power, but also for dignity.

Notes

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1. Most recently, a wave of food riots in the late 1980s accompanied economic austerity measures associated with neoliberal policies in Argentina (Serulnikov 1994), the Dominican Republic (Walton 1989), and Venezuela (Coronil and Skurski 1991). Portes and Johns (1989) and Walton and Seddon (1994) offer overviews of these riots. These are among the most recent instances of a long history of food riots, dating back to the colonial period in Mexico (T. Wright 1985). In the first decades of this century,

riots occurred in Brazil (Meade 1989; Scheper-Hughes 1991) and Ecuador (Moreno Yáñez 1976), and popular demonstrations opposed threatened increases of bread prices in Peru (Stein 1980:33) following a tradition of riots in that country in the 19th century (Peloso 1985).

2. It is more difficult to determine economic trends regarding wages than for price levels or employment, since earnings varied greatly according to occupation, hourly or daily wage rates do not necessarily correlate precisely with total household income, and fewer statistical sources are available (DeShazo 1983:29–35).

3. This building is also widely known as La Moneda, from its earlier name, Casa de la Moneda, “house of the coin” or “mint,” because it served as the royal mint in the colonial period. I use Casa de Gobierno because this name also appears in the documents of the period, and because I wish to examine its connections with other casas.

4. Other accounts of Red Week have largely ignored its cultural roots. Izquierdo Fernández (1976) explains the violence through a discussion of the economic, political, and intellectual underdevelopment of the urban poor. According to Izquierdo Fernández, the poor, living at a minimum level of subsistence, lacking political experience, and preoccupied with their economic needs, were rendered vulnerable to the manipulation of anarchists and other individuals “interested in causing chaos” (1976:92). Izquierdo Fernández emphasizes the “spontaneous” character of the action of this *turba* (mob), implicitly contrasting such behavior with the more mature and reasoned political activity that characterized later decades of the century. Thomas Wright discusses the causes and consequences of Red Week in detail, but summarizes its first days in a single sentence: “an orderly protest . . . degenerated into two days of violence, in which proletarian mobs roamed the city at will” (1973:252). He argues that outbreaks of violence over issues of inflation declined as the 20th century progressed, because the pluralist democratic state became the arena in which interest groups voiced and resolved their opposing concerns (1973:257–259; 1975:55–58). More explicitly, Marxist historians (Barria 1971; Monteón 1982) claim that such spontaneous disturbances declined as organized labor unions and proletarian parties grew and became able to present working-class demands more effectively. Barria offers an explicit theory of stages of workers’ movements, with Red Week falling into the first “heroic” stage; Monteón, whose periodization is more modest, describes Red Week in a section titled “Portrait of the Early Left.” DeShazo eschews these rigid periodizations, but still claims that “[h]igh food costs, while driving down real wages, also provided workers with a common grievance which . . . helped mobilize them. Unions offering the opportunity to better wages through collective action appealed to workers with rising but frustrated expectations” (1983:87). Others, even further removed from an orthodox Marxist framework, still place Red Week squarely in the framework of labor movements and strikes (Collier and Collier 1991:73). These authors all present the issue of the price and availability of meat as merely being the surface manifestation of what they claim to be the more fundamental issues of wages and inflation. They present the demonstrators as salaried workers who were concerned with the purchasing power of their earnings; meat merely happened to be the specific commodity that caught their attention. Barria does not even mention meat, but talks only of *la carestía de la vida*, a phrase that denotes both a high cost of living and the scarcity of basic goods.

5. In Sri Lanka, the urban poor also thought that the state, in this case British colonial rulers, was responsible for assuring the availability of basic staples at low, stable prices (Rogers 1987).

6. Other food riots in Latin America have centered on meat, such as the disturbances in Rio de Janeiro in May and June 1902 (Meade 1989:244–245); however, a number of urban riots in Latin America have focused on other foods, on nonfood goods (Nash 1992), and even on services, such as the cost of urban transport (Walton 1989) and the cost of credit (Edelman 1990).

7. There was some union activity in Santiago, especially among the railroad workers. On the basis of this activity DeShazo (1983) offers a revisionist position, claiming that small-scale manufacturing and transport workers in Santiago and Valparaíso, under the influence of Anarcho-Syndicalists, gave major impetus to Chilean unionism and left-wing politics generally in the early decades of the 20th century. Vial Correa (1987:895–896) addresses this question for the case of Red Week, noting the direct presence of railroad workers in the riots and the possible influence of anarchist union organizers among typesetters and bakers, but remains generally skeptical of this left-wing influence in this instance.

8. In particular, Echaiz emphasizes that the typical huasos is “fleshy, of a ruddy complexion, sturdy” (1955:57–58), qualities that he attributes to the consumption of great quantities of meat (1955:59).

9. On occasion, the word *roto*, perhaps because of its pejorative connotations, is omitted altogether, and the term *huaso* covers all rural people, as in Darwin (1900). The Chileans who read earlier drafts of this article all objected strongly to my detailed attention to the term *roto*, telling me that it was nothing more than an insult used by snobbish members of the bourgeoisie and did not merit such consideration. A few suggested that it was not *progresista* (progressive) to honor such reactionary prejudices by including them in a scholarly context. I explained to them that I decided to include the term because of its centrality to my argument. In our conversations, we discussed the absence of class-related terms in the current American discourse over “hate speech.” Even terms such as *Okie* and *cracker* have an overtly racial connotation, and it is hard to imagine terms like *bum* having as much impact as words about our body-centered categories of race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. The etymological origins of the term *huaso* are quite obscure; the word *roto* is the past participle of *romper*, to break, although the word *roto* can also mean “torn” or “worn out.”

10. This linkage brings to mind the *marchas de cacerolas vacías*, antigovernment demonstrations protesting the scarcity of foodstuffs in 1972 during the Unidad Popular government, in which women marched down major avenues in Santiago, banging empty pots together.

11. Bauer notes a pattern of distribution very similar to the *suplidos* on 19th-century haciendas in the central valley of Chile: “gifts at weddings and births, handouts during times of food shortage . . . and even a watermelon for ‘the grateful workers’” (1975:166).

12. This emphasis on fuerza suggests a possible reason for the importance of tallow in 19th-century Chilean diets, as some of the more acute observers of Chile such as Graham and Gilliss noted. Tallow has a number of important material attributes: it is easily transportable, stores well, is strongly flavored, and contains important nutrients, particularly calories and fats. However, its use may reflect cultural attributes as well. Chileans may have considered this fat to concentrate fuerza and to give fuerza to people who eat it.

13. An interesting parallel may be drawn with the broad-based discontent over meat scarcity in Eastern Europe during the final years of Soviet domination. As detailed studies have shown, such opposition was fueled by the sense that nominally autonomous

national governments in such countries as Poland (Chase 1983) and Romania (Verdery 1992) were mere extensions of Soviet domination, a kind of neocolonial rule. In Eastern Europe, however, most individuals had access to at least small amounts of meat within the state-managed distribution systems.

14. There may even be a connection in the day of the week, since over half (13 out of 23) of the *suplidos* for which Guerrero (1990) included the date took place on Sundays and Mondays.

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