

of rapid modernization that came to define what is commonly referred to as the Mexican Miracle. This leads him to conclude, somewhat breezily in my opinion, that the numerous examples of impressive architectural achievements—ranging from the construction of the UNAM to the building of the metro—amounted to little more than “exaggerated and ultimately empty gesture[s] of the state’s magnanimity and enlightened stewardship” (page 197).

If at times Flaherty is a bit too insistent (or repetitive) in his deployment of his “hospitality” framework, this need not, however, overshadow the numerous instances of rich analysis and innovative historical reflection that *Hotel Mexico* otherwise contains. Urban historians will gain much insight from Flaherty’s eclectic methodological approach and keen aesthetic eye. *Hotel Mexico* is a noteworthy achievement that will quickly assume its place within the historiography of the Global Sixties.

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ORI PREUSS: *Transnational South America: Experiences, Ideas, and Identities, 1860s-1900s*. New York and London: Routledge, 2016

In *Transnational South America: Experiences, Ideas, and Identities, 1860s-1900s*, Ori Preuss, a historian of Latin America at Tel Aviv University, traces the intensification of contacts between Latin American public intellectuals, particularly Brazilians and Argentines, during the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the first years of the twentieth. As Preuss notes, historiography on Latin American foreign relations has tended to focus on the “markedly unequal power relations” between Latin America and the “North Atlantic center,” rather than the complex, more horizontal interrelationships between Latin American nations that proliferated during this period (page 1). The tendency to view Latin America as occupying one side of a binary composed of what José Martí termed “our America” and the United States has particularly obscured the extent of Brazilian participation in nineteenth-century Latin American diplomacy and intellectual life, in part by reinforcing the idea that Latin America is an undifferentiated series of Spanish-speaking republics to which Brazil is necessarily an outlier. Across four chapters and a brief conclusion, Preuss forcefully argues for scholars to attend to the complex interactions between *letrados* from the River Plate’s twin powers, and debunks the myth of Brazilian non-participation in “the production of South American knowledge” (page 115).

In his first chapter, “‘Almost the Same Language’: Translation, International Relations, and Identification,” Preuss addresses how Argentine and Brazilian

publications, in reprinting texts from the other nation, dealt with the question of translating between Spanish and Portuguese. Notwithstanding the relative ease with which educated Argentine readers could have read Brazilian articles in the original, and vice versa, Preuss notes the ubiquity of Luso-Hispanic translation, and contends that this arguably superfluous practice “reflect[s] an effort to make the texts more intelligible” and “fed into the construction of supranational identities such as South America or Latin America” (page 42). For example, Preuss cites Vicente G. Quesada and his son Ernesto, who in their *Nueva Revista de Buenos Aires* (1881-85) insisted on translating Brazilian texts into Spanish despite the younger Quesada’s observation in an 1883 speech given in Rio de Janeiro that Spanish Americans and Brazilians speak “with minor differences, the same language” (quoted in Preuss, page 15). If this is the case, why translate? Clearly non-pragmatic considerations were paramount.

Preuss’ second chapter, “‘No Need to Go to Paris Anymore’: South American Experiences of Distance and Proximity” addresses Brazilian travel accounts of Argentina, which proliferated as Argentina rose to economic prosperity during the late nineteenth century. As Preuss notes, these accounts, penned by Francisco Otaviano, Quintino Bocaiúva, Joaquim Nabuco, Eduardo Prado, and the Portuguese writer Ramalho Ortigão, were invested in both “the production of otherness” and “the production of sameness” (page 52). That is, they characterized the relationship between South America’s would-be hegemony in terms of both distance and proximity. This makes sense, given Argentina’s complex role in the Brazilian imagination during these years as both historical “competitor” and potential “model” (page 76).

The book’s third chapter, “‘Everything Unites Us’: Diplomacy, International Visits, and the Periodical Press,” focuses on Latin American public intellectuals who bridged the worlds of journalism and statecraft. While Martí, martyred leader of Cuban independence, is perhaps the best-known example of a politically engaged Latin American journalist, Preuss makes the case that “[w]hat is true for probably the most discussed Latin American intellectual of the period, is even more true for less celebrated figures such as the Brazilians: Francisco Otaviano, Quintino Bocaiúva, Joaquim Nabuco, Rui Barbosa, Oliveira Lima, and the Argentines: Vicente Quesada, Roque Sáenz Peña, and Estanislao Zeballos” (page 99). Writer-diplomats and writer-statesmen were ubiquitous presences at the many regional conferences organized during the *fin de siècle*, which Preuss argues were fundamental in “overcoming old national animosities and competition, all under the ideational umbrella of ‘South America’ as a unique entity with its own particular circumstances” (page 101).

Preuss expands on this discussion in his fourth chapter, “Calibanistic Ariels: An Entangled, Luso-Hispanic History of ‘Latin America’.” He observes that

“the historiography of the concept of ‘Latin America’ is emblematic of wider trends in Latin American studies, tending to ignore the significance of transnational entanglements within the subcontinent, especially in what concerns its giant Portuguese-speaking portion” (pages 126-27). He sets out to recover “the largely forgotten role of key Brazilian intellectuals in the Latins versus Anglo-Saxons debates,” for which José Enrique Rodó’s *Ariel* (1900), which Preuss references in his chapter title, is a key text (page 127). Citing works like Prado’s *A ilusão americana* (1891), Barbosa’s “Duas glórias da humanidade,” and Nabuco’s *Balmaceda* (both 1895) as examples of a “new [...] Latin Americanist discourse in Brazil,” Preuss makes the audacious but well-founded argument that *A ilusão americana*, conventionally viewed through the prism of Prado’s anti-republicanism, “was a Latin American text not only by virtue of its themes and geo-cultural scope, but also by virtue of its explicit reliance on Spanish American sources and bibliography” (pages 131 and 133). The same can be said of *Balmaceda*, which by ostensibly focusing on the presidency of José Manuel Balmaceda in Chile, places Nabuco’s critique of the Brazilian government in a wider Latin American context.

In sum, Preuss has written an important book. *Transnational South America* offers a succinct, well-written overview of Argentine-Brazilian contacts during a crucial period in Latin American history and intellectual life. He recovers a number of fascinating examples of Luso-Hispanic contacts, from the journal *O Americano*, published in Rio de Janeiro at mid-century as a propaganda vehicle for the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas in Argentina to the *Revista Americana*, launched in 1909 by the Brazilian foreign ministry with clear Latin Americanist intent. In arguing for the importance of these contacts, Preuss occasionally overstates his case, as when he argues that Martí and Nabuco “played a major role in the accelerating internationalization of the Latin American press *and the formation of a global media system*” (page 133; my emphasis). Nonetheless, his book represents an important contribution to scholarship, and will interest both historians and scholars of literature and culture.

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