J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **41**, 577–630 © Cambridge University Press 2009
Printed in the United Kingdom

Reviews

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **41** (2009). doi:10.1017/S0022216X09990198

Helen Delpar, *Looking South: The Evolution of Latin Americanist Scholarship in the United States, 1850–1975* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), pp. xi + 241, $25.60, pb.

'Since the seventeenth century', Helen Delpar writes in *Looking South*, 'Americans have turned their gaze toward the lands to the south, seeing in them fields for religious proselytisation, economic enterprise, and military conquest' (p. ix). In this well-conceptualised and well-executed book, Delpar extends that gaze to the cultural realm by tracing the evolution of Latin Americanist scholarship in the United States from 1850 to 1975. This is the first book to undertake this valuable exercise and will, therefore, find a welcome audience in the field of Latin American studies.

With the skilful touch of an experienced historian, Delpar describes and analyses the salient and seminal works on Latin America by North Americans that emerged during this period. After disposing of 'precursors' such as Irving and Prescott, she provides excellent short, concise thumbnail sketches on each generation of scholars, categorising them by discipline, as they emerged in the late nineteenth century. The author is particularly adept at situating each of these authors and their work in the cultural milieu and political context from which they emerged and were shaped. Similarly, Delpar evaluates each new generation of scholars as it was influenced by changes in the scholarly norms and political developments affecting the training of students. For example, on the generally negative attitude of early historians on women in the profession, she quotes Arthur Aiton at Michigan referring 'to the intrusion of female personages in a history department … the supremacy of man should be pronounced and enunciated on all possible occasions' (p. 49).

The author concludes that US scholarship on Latin America was always shaped by domestic concerns. The first generation was influenced by borderland issues. It was followed by what she calls a 'boomlet' of scholarly interest in the period of the rise of US imperialism, which focused public attention on the Caribbean Basin in the early twentieth century. After another period of quiescence, a second 'boomlet' developed 'in the context of the deteriorating international system of the 1930s and the need [for the United States] to encourage hemispheric solidarity with … Latin America before and after WW II' (p. 184). After yet another hiatus between 1945 and 1958 in which US interest in Latin America waned, a 'staggering' expansion of US scholarly activity on the region was triggered with the rise of Fidel Castro, the Cuban Revolution and subsequent era of the Cold War. This period from 1958 to 1975 and beyond resulted in the creation of the area studies concept, not only for Latin America, but globally. Both the 'booms' of the 'Good Neighbour' and Second World War era and the Cold War of the 1960s and 1970s were propelled by US government and private foundation funding devoted to expanding research, training and teaching about the region. During the 1960s, for example, federally funded Title VI centres proliferated at large and influential US universities, the government created National Defense Foreign Language fellowships to expand the

number of specialists in the field, and the Ford Foundation expanded funding for graduate training on Latin America and, through the Social Science Research Council, faculty interchanges with Latin American and US universities.

Readers will be particularly interested, as I was, in Delpar's account of the conflicts that emerged in Latin American studies in the 1960s and 1970s with the radicalisation of younger members as the Cold War intensified. This produced serious internal tensions in the field over such questions as the probity of government and foundation funding of Latin American studies, which some saw as antithetical to the essence of impartiality of the academic enterprise. An example was Project Camelot in 1964–65 at American University, underwritten by the US Army's Special Operations Research Office to employ researchers to undertake the study of Latin American countries with the expressed aim of finding the potential for, and ways to curb, revolt and revolution in the region. To many young scholars as well as their Latin American counterparts this 'smacked of US academic imperialism and interventionism in the internal affairs' of Latin America (p. 168). Delpar goes on to recount the rise of dependency theory and the founding of NACLA (1966) and *Latin American Perspectives* (1974), as the profession shifted to the left. This leads her also to recount the politicisation of the Latin American Studies Association and its policy of making declarations critical of US policies towards the region, a policy that continues to roil the profession even today. On these issues and throughout the book Delpar stands scrupulously above the fray, endeavouring to be 'objective' and non-partial, perhaps to a fault.

What one comes away with from this excellent survey of the ups and downs of Latin American studies in the United States is the inevitable coincidence of US domestic concerns and interests in the region with the rise and fall of dollars flowing into the production of area specialists and knowledge creation. To revive the enterprise during down periods, one often hears the refrain among practitioners that what is bad for Latin America (revolutions, civil war, natural disasters etc.) is good for the profession. Lamentably, this sad truism governs the general health of Latin American studies, now once more being subject to an upsurge and reshaping by the forces of globalisation and the aforementioned dollar flows (see, for example, LASA President Eric Hershberg's 'President's Report' in the *Forum* (autumn 2008), pp. 1–2).

George Washington University PETER F. KLAREN

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **41** (2009). doi:10.1017/S0022216X09990204

Thomas O'Brien, *Making the Americas: The United States and Latin America from the Age of Revolutions to the Era of Globalization* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), pp. 390, £15.95, pb.

This splendid new survey incorporates and distils more than a decade of a new generation of scholarship that understands the relations between the United States and Latin America as a two-way street, sensitive to cultural, social and economic dynamics, and not limited to the activities of state actors. The book achieves the difficult goal of bringing together many strands of new research (including the author's own work on US corporations) into a satisfactory and coherent whole. The narrative of the book pays due attention to treaties, doctrines, and corollaries to doctrines, but its main innovation comes from showing with telling examples how