

governance that attempt to incorporate this. Her chapter is useful both for its up-to-date analysis and for the focus on concrete mechanisms of governance.

The outstanding chapter for me is José Rabasa's analysis of how indigenous representations – maps feature here, as do murals and photographs – can participate in both dominant, colonial language and concepts, and native ones. This leads neither to hybridity (a novel fusion) nor double consciousness (an alienated internal conflict). There is coexistence without contradiction, an idea that reminded me of Roger Bastide's *principe de coupure* or principle of compartmentalisation, which he argued allowed Afro-Brazilians to participate in 'modern' Brazilian society and 'traditional' African religions with no sense of contradiction. Rabasa does not assume absence of conflict or opposition, however. On the contrary, a radical subalternity is maintained because apparently 'modern' forms have been appropriated and resignified. Most of all, Rabasa has an excellent critique of the teleologies of modernity, which he says inevitably cast indigenous peoples – and indeed 'peripheral' regions in general – as backward, secondary, marginal and perpetually awaiting modernisation. The refusal to see indigenous forms as pre-modern means that the coexistence of indigenous and dominant representations implies the coexistence of different logics or ontologies (although Rabasa does not use the word) that 'remain discreet though never pure in a plural-dwelling world' (p. 126). The fact that 'there are subalterns who do not find a contradiction between desiring, acquiring and mastering modern life forms and continuing to practice forms of life that have nothing to do with modernity' (p. 133) constitutes a radical form of alterity. Rabasa's idea that subalterns do not have a DuBoisean double consciousness may be overly optimistic, but it does open up fresh possibilities for avoiding the insidious colonialism of modernity as a concept and a frame for thinking that tends, for example, to recast 'the global' and 'the local' as instances of modernity and tradition.

University of Manchester

PETER WADE

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Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. xxii + 386, £62.00, £15.99 pb.

A good book is one that makes you think, rather than one that provides you with pat answers. Micol Seigel undertakes a suggestive exercise in looking at transnational relations involving race and nation in Brazil and the United States during the early twentieth century. To achieve this, she seeks out these countries' images from coffee adverts, *maxixe* journeys and the exchange of musical groups that crossed the Atlantic.³ These exchanges enabled the meeting of Pixinguinha, Josephine Baker and North American jazz musicians at the height of black exoticism in Paris during the inter-war period. Musicians, civil rights campaigners and militants from the burgeoning black press cross paths in Seigel's book, contributing to an interesting panorama. The author argues that ahead of 'globalisation' these meetings decisively influenced the course taken by history, especially that of Afro-descendants. She takes as her starting point the sharply contrasting stereotypes of a 'racial democracy'

³ *Maxixe* was a black musical genre and dance developed in the late nineteenth century in Rio de Janeiro. It travelled to Europe and the United States in the early twentieth century.

in a mixed-race and multicultural country on the one hand versus violent segregation on the other, stereotypes that became crystallised in academic analyses and common perceptions and produced diametrically opposite models of race politics in the north and the south of the American continent. The fragile foundations for reductionism of this sort are not only exposed but also convincingly demolished throughout the work.

Attempts to neutralise the effects of nationalism, particularly in cultural history, are welcome. When undertaken in a manner as competent as it is seductive, as they are in Seigel's book, they must be gladly received for their contribution to the expansion of historiographic horizons and political perspectives. Nevertheless, as Seigel herself points out, the book does not aim to exhaust the subject, nor could it, given the dimensions of the task. The reader is encouraged to criticise its declarations and suggest perspectives that may help fill gaps. It is inevitable to note particular absences – for instance, that of Francisco Guimarães, a black Brazilian columnist and journalist better known by his pseudonym Vagalume, under which he wrote political and carnivalesque chronicles for Rio de Janeiro newspapers at the start of the twentieth century. He wrote the classic *Na roda do samba* (1933); its protagonists are Pixinguinha and several musicians with whom the writer was close friends. The book was dedicated to four of the city's black personalities, each highly redolent. One of them, a character strongly linked to the city's African tradition, was the *alufá* Assumano Mina, of whom Vagalume was a follower.⁴ Vagalume started out as a journalist in the 1880s, encouraged by the most combative abolitionist in the country, Luis Gama. He remained close to associative movements that defended his 'brothers of colour' and was among one of Robert Abbott's militant interlocutors when Abbott visited Brazil in 1923 during an anti-segregation campaign discussed by Seigel. Although he admired the founder of the *Chicago Defender*, Vagalume hated jazz bands and foxtrots, turning instead to the samba in his quest for a mark of *brasilidade*; he also loathed the mechanics of mass media, such as the phonograph 'plague'.

It is thus regrettable that Seigel ignores Vagalume, for his trajectory could shine light upon matters only touched upon in the book. Firstly, much of the information Vagalume provides directly and indirectly demonstrates the existence of marked heterogeneity among black *cariocas*, something also expressed through different musical strains.⁵ Seigel's analysis neglects the importance of these differences, however. The frequent disputes between musicians masked religious frontiers, professional or neighbourhood rivalries and much else. Here as well as there, if reduced to colour, black men and women may seem devoid of historicity: to use the prism of racial identity risks obscuring more than is revealed. It is not by chance that the inscription at the beginning of the book dedicates it to carioca Sinhô and *baiano* Hilário Jovino: notwithstanding their differences, they appear side by side in homage to the black militant Vagalume.⁶

Further examination of Vagalume would also help elucidate another debate marginalised in Seigel's excellent work. A declared enemy of the cultural industry, which he condemned for transforming 'authentic' traditions into cheap merchandise, Vagalume pointed to a decisive phenomenon occurring in transnational

⁴ An *alufá* was an African Muslim theologian or scholar.

⁵ A *carioca* is a person from the city of Rio de Janeiro.

⁶ A *baiano* is someone who comes from the state of Bahia.

cultural circuits. One reason for his displeasure was that, once recorded and sold, samba became disconnected not only from racial but also from class identities. Its appropriation by strangers meant that this national symbol was taken away from its origins and legitimate owners. This may sound naive nowadays, but as another *sambista* declared at the time, ‘talking pictures’ could be ‘the main culprit for the transformation’. This is a classic theme and a complex discussion that is far from resolved, above all in the context analysed by Seigel. Incidentally, it is good to remember that massification processes, whose transnational dimension was decisive, began much earlier: straight from Paris to Rio de Janeiro, the ‘reunions’ took place throughout the nineteenth century. On this side of the Atlantic, *chansonniers* and black singers created *lundus* and maxixes but also performed various forms of music in cabarets for the entertainment of white masters alongside *cocottes* and blonde singers. Some of them achieved great popularity, such as Eduardo das Neves, also mentioned in the significant dedication in which Vagalume pays homage to samba’s multiple roots.

Finally, one is left a touch disquieted by the perhaps excessive enthusiasm that Seigel displays for the transnational perspective. Are we effectively able to abandon the concept of nation? After all, we are looking at politics, which structures domination beyond borders. We often need the concept to understand forms of resistance. On defining samba, Vagalume relates the terms ‘black’ and ‘Brazilian’ to express belonging to a community that, in his view, gave the music meaning and perspective. In that context samba gave weight to the claims for rights made by descendants of slaves. Therefore, although a powerful tool, the ‘transnational’ category is not a ‘historical method’ as Seigel advocates. Although its limits are now more apparent, the national path imposes itself precisely because it made a lot of sense to those subjects, for better or worse.

Be that as it may, *Uneven Encounters* offers an intelligent and sensitive interpretation, overcoming the classic frontier created by the lack of familiarity with manifestations of the ‘other’. On the dawn of bossa nova, a stubborn *sambista* insisted on denying this possibility: ‘I’ll only have a bebop in my samba’, he sang, ‘when Uncle Sam takes hold of a tambourine’, and when at long last [he] understands that samba is not rumba’.⁷ Micol Seigel takes hold of the tambourine and easily transits between North and South in search of connections concealed by nationalist blinkers.

University of Campinas, São Paulo

MARIA CLEMENTINA PEREIRA CUNHA

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Darlene J. Sadlier, *Brazil Imagined: 1500 to the Present* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2008), pp. x + 380, £56, hb; \$65.00, \$24.95 pb.

With *Brazil Imagined*, Darlene Sadlier has produced a comprehensive review of the cultural themes shaping Brazilian identity from its ‘discovery’ by Europeans through to the present day. Acknowledging the varied methods utilised by scholars who locate identity as a central question in Brazilian society, the author diverges from traditional anthropological, historical, economic, political or legal approaches and

⁷ ‘Só ponho *be-bop* no meu samba/Quando Tio Sam pegar no tamborim/E entender que samba não é rumba.’