

Peripheral eyes: Brazilians and India, 1947–61*

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Abstract

The post-Second World War era witnessed the need for new political forms to accommodate the aspirations for national identity of newly decolonized nations within the hegemonic structure of the Cold War. Although both Cold War historiography and postcolonial studies have analysed these phenomena, the place of Latin America in general and Brazil in particular remains fraught with conceptual difficulties, largely due to the very different (post)colonial experience of this region from the rest of the 'Third World'. This article examines how three Brazilian intellectuals and diplomats observed India from its independence until the annexation of Portuguese India by the Indian Union in 1961. In exploring their peripheral gaze, it shows how Brazilian self-identification with the West, and particularly its complex relationship with the heritage of European colonialism, prevented a truly commensurable experience, despite a sense of commonality with India based on their peripheral position in the global political structure.

Keywords Brazil, Cold War, cultural diplomacy, Goan independence, India, postcolonial theory

The end of the Second World War witnessed a major reshaping of the international political arena. First, the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as an ideological battle between alternative modernities. Secondly, mass decolonization meant that new political forms and calculations were suddenly required to accommodate the aspirations of newly freed nations within the nascent hegemonic structure of the Cold War. While older historiography often replicated the divisions and binary logic of the Cold War itself, an emerging scholarship, influenced by postcolonial studies, has attempted to interrupt these narratives.¹ This literature has not only challenged teleological readings of the triumph of the

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1 Andrew Rotter, 'Saidism without Said: orientalism and U.S. diplomatic history', *American Historical Review*, 105, 4, October 2000, pp. 1205–17; Christina Klein, *Cold War orientalism: Asia in the middlebrow imagination, 1945–1961*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003.

West but has questioned the reduction of the nations of the ‘Third World’ to passive theatres of the battle between the United States and the Soviet Union.²

In this revision, however, the place of Latin America remains fraught with conceptual difficulties. As Tobias Rupperecht put it,

Latin America, once prominent in Marxist, world systems, and dependency theories, has all but disappeared from recent debates. New Cold War historiography has included Central and South America but, even in its new ‘global’ form, it still focuses almost exclusively on diplomatic and military confrontations within a Washington-centred framework ... [and] has ignored any impact from other world regions.³

While Rupperecht addresses this lacuna with a welcome consideration of the Soviet involvement with Brazil, this still leaves open the question of how Latin America engaged with other areas of the global political arena of the Cold War.

To address this question is not merely to plug an empirical hole. Latin America, by virtue of its radically different history of colonialism from much of the ‘Third World’, resists many of the narratives of either Cold War historiography or postcolonial theory that have emerged from considerations of these regions. As José Moya argues:

Colonialism in Latin America was an earlier, longer, and deeper process than in the rest of the so-called Third World. Nowhere else did European culture penetrate so deeply, so broadly, and so early. Nowhere else did the colonizers and their descendants become such a large proportion of the local populations [They] shared a hybrid Hispano-creole culture with the rest of the population – whatever their race – to an extent that was unknown among, say, the English in India ...⁴

Projects of Latin American self-definition, whether national or continental, by dint of geography and historical particularity, begin from the sense of being integrally a part of the West. Indeed, even historical scholarship on Latin America has reflected this notion, focusing on the continent’s relationship with the US, Europe, and (with the recent advent of Atlantic Studies) the west coast of Africa. While an incipient scholarship, primarily on the early modern period, has sought to explore Latin America’s connections with Asia, this is still largely uncharted territory.⁵

Undoubtedly, Latin America’s (post)colonial experiences did not lead to the same sort of anti-colonial nationalisms, often based on a dichotomous if not oppositional stance to the West, that arose in twentieth-century Africa and Asia. Moreover, in the post-war era, these new nations emerged as direct competitors to Latin America, whether economically, as fellow producers focused on primary industry, or politically, as potential client states for the

2 Odd Arne Westad, *The global Cold War: Third World interventions and the making of our times*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 396.

3 Tobias Rupperecht, ‘Socialist high modernity and global stagnation: a shared history of Brazil and the Soviet Union during the Cold War’, *Journal of Global History*, 6, 3, 2011, p. 506.

4 José Moya, ‘A continent of immigrants: postcolonial shifts in the western hemisphere’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 86, 1, 2006, p. 24.

5 For examples of recent work in this field, see Tatiana Seijas, *Asian slaves in colonial Mexico*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014; Philomena Sequeira Antony, *The Goa Babia intra-colonial relations, 1675–1825*, Tellicherry: Institute for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities, 2004.

superpowers. Yet, eroding political autonomy in the face of US interventionism and economic marginalization made Latin American self-identification with the West inherently problematic. As President Juscelino Kubitschek proclaimed in 1958, while Brazil wished to align itself with the West, it did not wish to constitute its proletariat.⁶ For Latin Americans, this sense of being consigned to the lower rungs of Western civilization, of being Western but peripherally so, could thus occasionally allow a rapprochement with the newly decolonized 'Third World', despite their different (post)colonial trajectories.

This article examines how three Brazilians – the poet Cecília Benevides de Carvalho Meireles (1901–64), the sociologist Gilberto de Mello Freyre (1900–87), and the diplomat Ildefonso Falcão (b. 1894; date of death unknown) – observed and engaged with India from its independence until the annexation of Goa by the Indian Union in 1961. Despite their very different personalities, careers, and political and ethical commitments, these three figures shared intriguing commonalities in their relationship as Brazilians to India. Unlike the European 'seeing-man', 'whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess', the protagonists of this history looked askance at India, seeing a troubling mirror-image of their own peripheral position with regard to the West, while simultaneously retaining a sense of irreducible alterity, based on their relationship as Brazilians to the West's colonial past.⁷

Meireles and the Brazilian Society of Friends of India

Cecília Meireles' love for Portuguese cultural patrimony, and her interest in the Orient in general and India in particular, reached back to her childhood.⁸ India haunted her mature poetic production, emerging as a symbolic and thematic motif in her corpus. Indeed, her very first collection, *Espectros*, published in 1919, featured a short poem entitled 'Brâmane'.⁹

As this early poem indicates, Meireles' interest in India centred on its religious traditions. This was partly a result of an affiliation of poetic form and tradition. As a Romantic and Symbolist, who stood somewhat apart from the Brazilian Modernist literary movement, she was influenced by the nineteenth-century French tradition, represented by Mallarmé and others, which drew inspiration from the fruits of orientalism. Brazil felt the currents of orientalism that swept Europe, in part through its widespread consumption of European intellectual and artistic works of this vein.¹⁰ The study of Sanskrit texts and the attendant circulation of ancient Indian thought and literature nourished what might be considered the global forebears of Meireles' particular poetic style. Meireles self-consciously cultivated this

6 Wayne Selcher, *The Afro-Asiatic dimension of Brazilian foreign policy*, Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1974, p. 16.

7 Mary Pratt, *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 7.

8 Ana Maria Lisboa de Mello, 'Reflexos da cultura Indiana na poesia de Cecília Meireles (Reflections of Indian culture in the poetry of Cecília Meireles)', in Ana Maria Lisboa de Mello and Francis Utéza, *Oriente e ocidente na poesia de Cecília Meireles (Orient and Occident in the poetry of Cecília Meireles)*, Porto Alegre: Lobretos, 2006, p. 14.

9 Cecília Meireles, *Poesia completa (Complete poetry)*, ed. Antonio Carlos Secchin, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 2001, vol. 1, p. 15.

10 Mello, 'Reflexos da cultura Indiana', p. 19. On Brazilian orientalism, see Celina Kuniyoshi, *Imagens do Japão: uma utopia de viajantes (Images of Japan: a utopia of travellers)*, São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 1998.

tradition, learning Hindi and Sanskrit and often using ancient Indian literary texts as inspirations or allusive frameworks for her own poetry.¹¹ Nevertheless, while Meireles' more mystical poems configure India in this Romanticist vein, her relationship with India was not confined to orientalist themes. She was 'more interested in "constructing [herself]" inwardly, spiritually, than in writing a poem. It seems that the poems are just the result of a dialogue of the spirit with the world.'¹²

The 'world', from Meireles' writings, is not meant in a vaguely materialist sense. She travelled widely and the *Crônicas de viagem* (travel chronicles) and poetry documenting her journeys are an integral part of her corpus. She was a faithful correspondent and maintained a wide-ranging network of friends, mostly writers, in many countries. India for her was thus not merely an antiquarian object or a symbolic referent in an idiosyncratic metaphysics, nourished in part by Indic religious and literary traditions.

Nonetheless, Meireles' awareness of modern India was primarily mediated by her interest in its two most well-known representatives, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. The latter had been awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1913, partly through the advocacy of his translator, W. B. Yeats. Tagore and Gandhi were the most visible cultural, political, and national ambassadors of *modern* India, unusual non-European figures who commanded the attention of Europe. To Meireles, they functioned as interpreters of an alien history, culture, and political reality, and they were also well versed in the terms of European modernity.

The importance of these figures as a conduit to India is apparent in Meireles' elegy to Gandhi, written in Rio de Janeiro on 30 January 1948.¹³ The poem begins with an evening wind breaking the poet's private reverie, unfurling newspapers to bring her word of Gandhi's assassination. The wind is the main motif of the poem, a refrain that recalls the tenuous but insistent nature of the link that Meireles feels between Brazil and India. Reading the poem selectively, pruning it for just those lines where she meditates on the wind, leaves a remarkably clear backbone. It is a description of the ways in which ideas travel, aided by modern communication, unheeding of the niceties of national boundaries, a profoundly disturbing force:

The evening wind shakes the bitter telegrams ...

The evening wind comes and goes from India to Brazil, without tiring ...

The wind takes your whole life, and the better part of mine.

Without flags. Without uniforms. Only the soul, amidst the collapsed world.

If Meireles is amazed at the affective power of these remote connections, she is equally surprised that these connections can be ignored:

The clouds arrive, clouds, like hurried symbols

The wind gathers the clouds, pushes troops of elephants.

What currents there were between your heart and mine.

11 A striking example is the later poem, 'Shakúntala', in Meireles, *Poesia completa*, vol. 2, p. 1396.

12 Interview in Walmir Ayala, *Solombra: um livro de magia (Shadow: a book of magic)*, Rio de Janeiro: Leitura, 1964, p. 20.

13 *Ibid.*, 1608–1611.

For what does my blood suffer, knowing yours was shed?

The wind carries men through the streets of their businesses, their crimes.
It carries the surprises, the curiosities, the indifference, laughter.
It pushes each to his home, and continues its cavalcade.

The poem is almost a Brazilian iteration of the Sanskrit genre of *sandēśa kāvya* or messenger-poems, as the allusion to Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* (the Cloud Messenger) in the simile comparing clouds to elephants suggests.¹⁴ Inasmuch as it meditates on transnational connections, the history of the poem itself reflects the same process. Meireles sent the elegy to her close friend and translator, Isabel do Prado, stationed in Paris at UNESCO. Prado translated it into English and passed it on to her Indian colleague in the Arts section of UNESCO, Baldoon Dhingra.¹⁵ Dhingra then passed it on to the Indian delegation at UNESCO for publication in India. The poem's wide acclaim led to Meireles' visit to India in 1953, to be awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Delhi, thus completing the circle that began with an evening wind blowing from India to Brazil on the day of Gandhi's death.¹⁶

The nexus between Meireles, Prado, and Dhingra continued after the publication of 'Elegy to Gandhi' in India. Dhingra asked the poet to try publishing Indian writings in Brazil; despite her trepidations regarding an ignorant public and the delicate issue of transnational remuneration, Meireles agreed.¹⁷ The task was meaningful to Meireles: as she wrote to Prado, echoing the ethos of UNESCO, 'perhaps, in this way ... we will reach universal understanding, and the empire of angels will expand'.¹⁸ Accordingly, Meireles approached her agent in São Paulo and the Rio de Janeiro-based paper, *Folha da Manhã*.¹⁹ The former could not find viable options for publishing a volume featuring Indian authors. However, the latter was willing to pay for three pieces: an illustrated exposition on children's art in India, a piece on contemporary painting, and Mulk Raj Anand's short story, 'The lion'.²⁰ The paper was also open to publishing a supplementary issue with Indian writing.²¹

Despite these overtures, for Meireles, the Brazilian ground for Indian literature seemed thorny with the possibilities of misunderstanding:

For now, I would ask Dhingra not to send me things that are very 'oriental', from the philosophical point of view, because the people from here will not understand ... because the public is in decline ... [W]e walk away from 1920, when France gave such exposure to these literatures called 'exotic'! Anybody from the literary circle knew

14 My thanks to Sonam Kachru for pointing out the allusion

15 Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa (henceforth FRB), Arquivos Pessoais de Escritores Brasileiros (henceforth APEB), Arquivo de Isabel do Prado (henceforth AIP), Isabel do Prado to Meireles, Paris, 11 February 1948.

16 *Ibid.*

17 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 8 March and 18 April 1948.

18 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 27 March 1948.

19 *Ibid.*; FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 18 April 1948.

20 FRB, APEB, AIP, Arnaldo Pedrosa d'Horta to Meireles, São Paulo, 20 May 1948.

21 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 28 April 1948.

what a hai-hai was, and even in Brazil they wrote of it! We spoke of the Buddha and Shiva as if they were family members. Woe to us!²²

Although committed to promoting Indian authors in Brazil, Meireles was anxious to ensure that their Indian-ness remained within certain bounds of familiarity, particularly when the heyday of Brazilian consumption of Francophone orientalism was at an ebb. She understood the difficulty of her task, given a reading public oriented squarely towards Europe and with little knowledge of the East. Her distrust of the Brazilian public's familiarity with global cultural trends was not confined to its incomprehension of the Orient. As she wrote in response to an invitation from UNESCO to serve as a judge for an essay competition: 'Great honour, etc., but here neither great nor small knows anything of UNESCO.'²³

Meireles eventually relinquished her role as a literary mediator for Indian authors in Brazil, suggesting to Dhingra the Instituto Brasileiro de Educação, Ciência e Cultura (IBECC), the Brazilian National Commission for UNESCO, as the appropriate institutional channel.²⁴ She continued, however, to serve as a cultural intermediary for India in other capacities. Naturally, these activities were not conducted in an institutional vacuum. If UNESCO and the network of intellectuals whom Meireles knew through its offices in Paris and Rio de Janeiro provided one institutional background, the new Indian legation in Rio was the other. Her connection to Dhingra brought Meireles in contact with his friend Krishna Kripalani, the cultural attaché of the Indian legation.²⁵ Meireles even passed on this word of advice for the Indian diplomat:

I would suggest bringing folkloric things from the East, especially India, because I am here in the full swing of this sector, in the IBECC, and they could soon get an exhibition, some conference etc. – Because this is a novelty, a representative of India in Brazil – and his presence could be signalled with one of these things that would serve to 'represent his people'.²⁶

Although the folklore exhibition that Meireles organized at the behest of the Folklore Commission of the IBECC had only a few items from India, donated by Meireles herself, this early interest in 'the novelty, a representative of India in Brazil' was quickly translated into a concrete relationship.²⁷ Within months of writing her letter, Meireles was invited by Kripalani to a reception honouring Gandhi's anniversary at the Ministry of Education.²⁸

Meireles was impressed by the Indian diplomats, noting with delight that Mrs Kripalani was Tagore's niece.²⁹ To her surprise, the event was extremely well attended, despite the lack

22 *Ibid.*

23 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 23 July 1948.

24 FRB, APEB, AIP, Prado to Dhingra, Paris, 13 June 1948. Meireles also put the literary agent in São Paulo, Arnaldo Pedrosa d'Horta, in contact with M. Roy, the editor of *Visva Bharati*, Shantiniketan, the press associated with Tagore's university. FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 10 October 1948.

25 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 1 January 1949.

26 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 10 May 1949.

27 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 23 July 1948.

28 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 28 September 1949.

29 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 10 October 1948.

of publicity and her fear that Gandhi was already forgotten.³⁰ The opening speech was delivered by Oswaldo Aranha. Since his days as minister of foreign affairs under Getúlio Vargas, Aranha had followed with condescending interest what he had privately called Gandhi's '*programa faquiriano*' a term reflecting Winston Churchill's famous disparagement of Gandhi as a 'seditious *fakir*'.³¹ Meireles recited her elegy, followed by a speech by Pedro Calmon, the rector at the University of Brazil.³² To complete the constellation of Brazilian literati, the final speech was given by Gilberto Freyre, on 'Hindu sociology, from a Gandhian point of view'.³³ The event had been planned with sensitivity and imagination by Kripalani, who had arranged for guests to leave in an appropriately sombre mood, with the smell of incense in their noses and Gandhi's voice, playing on a record, in their ears. To Meireles' half-serious dismay, the atmosphere was diluted by an ill-judged closing remark from Aranha, who recounted a joke from his United Nations stint, where Indians had enjoyed the reputation for speaking better English than the English themselves. As the party broke up in laughter, it seemed, to Meireles, one more instance of Brazil's insensitivity to its Indian guests.³⁴

The event honouring Gandhi was highly productive for the embassy's mission of raising India's profile, a strategy that relied on the assiduous cultivation of elite connections and fitting with the elitist tenor of the Indian Foreign Service. Indeed, it was typical that Masani and Kripalani were heavily connected to India's political, intellectual, and business elite, ranging from Tagore and Nehru to the Tata family. Thus, if Meireles' presence had been mediated by a series of acquaintances routed through UNESCO, Aranha's presence at this function was facilitated by another set of elite transnational connections: the Indian Ambassador Masani had come with a personal letter of introduction from Norbert Bogdan, a high functionary at Ford Motors, who Aranha had known during his days in Washington, DC. Masani's introduction to Bogdan had been effected in turn through Tata Motors, Ford's most obvious counterpart in India, whose owners were close to India's nationalist leadership.³⁵

Soon after this event, Indian diplomats approached Meireles to found the Sociedade Brasileira de Amigos da Índia (Brazilian Society of the Friends of India).³⁶ The society's membership was impressive: Meireles was president, Freyre was to serve as vice-president, and Artur Hehl-Neiva, a prominent politician and policy-maker on immigration and internal colonization during the Vargas years, was the secretary.³⁷ Under Meireles' energetic leadership, the society held its official convocation on 4 May 1949, followed by presentations of various plays by Tagore (translated by Meireles herself) and a miniature

30 *Ibid.*

31 Fundação Getúlio Vargas (henceforth FGV), CPDOC, Arquivo Getúlio Vargas, GV c 1942.08.10, Carlos Martins to Oswaldo Aranha, 10 August 1942, Washington DC.

32 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 10 October 1948.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*

35 FGV, CPDOC, Arquivo Oswaldo Aranha, OA cp 48.07.12, Masani to Oswaldo Aranha, 12 July 1948.

36 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 23 November 1948.

37 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 1 January 1949.

version of the folklore exhibition that Meireles had previously organized for IBEC, focusing solely on India.³⁸ While the events were successful, Meireles recognized their lack of sustainability, based as they largely were on her own indefatigable energy.³⁹

The society was also hampered by inadequate logistical support from Indian diplomats, who were keen to promote the image of the society as a *Brazilian* enterprise, not a semi-official organization working under the auspices of a foreign embassy.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, it represented a concrete achievement in a larger Indian strategy of establishing India in the Brazilian intellectual and cultural imagination. Nor was this effort directed solely at the established elite of Rio de Janeiro: Kripalani was also in contact with Abgar Renault, the poet who translated Tagore's works into Portuguese and the President of the Brazilian Society for English Culture in Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais.⁴¹ Renault delivered an address for Tagore's anniversary celebration organized by the Sociedade Brasileira de Amigos da Índia in Rio de Janeiro, and sponsored an exhibition of Indian films in Belo Horizonte, maintaining a relationship with the embassy into the late 1950s.⁴²

The embassy also published a regular newsletter in Portuguese, *Notícias da Índia* (*News from India*). Articles focused on India's developmentalist programmes or particular foreign policy objectives (anti-Pakistan articles became increasingly common). There were also notices of upcoming cultural events, such as documentary film screenings, often on developmentalist themes, which were sponsored by the embassy. Meireles was a regular contributor to the paper, publishing her 'Brief elegy to Pandit Nehru', as well as her similarly elegiac 'Song to peace-loving India', in the newsletter.⁴³

These activities were part of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)'s efforts to control the image of India abroad. For those Brazilians at all aware of that distant country, India was a land oscillating between the grandeurs of its past and the grinding poverty of its present, an image inherited in part from European orientalist tropes.⁴⁴ The MEA, in keeping with Nehru's brand of nationalism, sought instead to present India as a developmentalist nation, which was ready to take its place among the constellation of modern nation-states.⁴⁵ To this end, by 1956 the MEA had provided its eighty-seven consulates and forty press offices in over eighty countries with publication materials (including its own periodical,

38 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 3 May 1949, 31 May 1949, and 9 June 1949.

39 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 9 June 1949.

40 FRB, APEB, AIP, Meireles to Prado, Rio de Janeiro, 1 January 1949.

41 FRB, Arquivo-Museu da Literatura Brasileira (henceforth AMLB), Arquivo de Abgar Renault (henceforth AAR), Krishna Kripalani to Abgar Renault, President, Rio de Janeiro, 10 May 1949.

42 *Ibid.*; FRB, AMLB, AAR, Ambassador Masani to Abgar Renault, Rio de Janeiro, 21 April 1949.

43 These newsletters can be found in the FGV, CPDOC, Arquivo Gustavo Capanema, R462, as well as in the FRB, APEB, AIP.

44 In the photographic archives of the defunct Rio de Janeiro newspaper *Correio da Manhã*, a survey of photographs from the 1950s filed under the label 'Vistas Índia Geral' reveal a dichotomy of iconographic themes – several images of the Taj Mahal, many images of India's poor. Arquivo Nacional (henceforth AN), Arquivo Correio da Manhã (henceforth ACM), PH/FOT/3076.

45 On Nehru's developmentalist nationalism, see Benjamin Zachariah, 'Anticolonial nationalisms: the case of India', in Magdalena Zolkos and Anna Yeatman, eds., *State security and subject formation*, London: Continuum, 2009, pp. 133–53.

published in eighteen languages), documentary films, photographs, and sound recordings illustrating modern Indian life and the material progress of the country.⁴⁶

Within this image, a place was reserved for a heritage of nationalist leaders who had been hailed globally as ethical visionaries. Tagore and Gandhi were an easily recognizable locus for cultural activities focused on India, while simultaneously reinforcing India's image as a non-European but universally relevant nation. Thus, apart from the fact that the cultural activities of the Indian embassy in Rio were often based on the anniversaries of these leaders, the embassy went to great lengths to dedicate an enormous bronze statue to Gandhi in Rio de Janeiro, donated in 1954 by India but only erected and dedicated in 1965.⁴⁷

As Meireles' story suggests, it was not an ill-conceived strategy. Indeed, even Gilberto Freyre's involvement with the Sociedade Brasileira de Amigos da Índia was a reflection of the enormous appeal of figures such as Gandhi and Tagore. In an essay published in 1976, Freyre reflected upon his first meeting with Tagore as a student at Columbia University in 1922, a meeting in which the two non-European intellectuals had experienced a strange and mutual sense of familiarity:

What was my reaction, as a Latin American, as a Brazilian, as a son of the Tropics, to that, for me, somewhat new poetry coming from a tropical, non-European country? ... I read Tagore's English as if it were a language only technically European ... And suddenly I felt: there is something in the way of this East Indian speaking, as there is something in his written lyrical poetry, that makes a part of his person, and a part of his poetry, strangely familiar to me: to a Latin American. To a Brazilian. To a son of the tropics ... My impression of him was that there was something Brazilian in his appearance just as I had detected in his lyrical poetry, when I had first read it. Something that was, not exactly Brazilian, but that reminded one of Brazilian lyrical tendencies.⁴⁸

Freyre reported that the sense of familiarity had been reciprocal. Yet, what he really responded to was the image of Tagore as his nation's most successful cultural ambassador, who commanded the valorizing attention of a European audience while remaining emphatically non-European:

it is doubtful if any [Indian] has been more revealing of India, to the Indians and to outsiders, than Tagore ... India was always present in what he said to foreign or Western students ... He seems to have been deliberate in this: in being at once characteristically East Indian and universal ... The India that he revealed, both through his literature and through his person, was an India that added to an elegant assimilation of European values an almost mystical preservation of its ancestral characteristics.⁴⁹

46 Arquivo Histórico do Palácio Itamarati (henceforth AHPI), Ofícios (Recebidos) (henceforth O(R)), Estante 35, Prelataria 5 (henceforth E35, P5), vol. 10, no. 104, 6 March 1956. The *Correio da Manhã* archives show that images sourced from India's Press Information Bureau were overwhelmingly on developmentalist themes: AN, ACM, Arquivo Correio da Manhã, PH/FOT/6698/(18), (27), (31), (36), (43).

47 AN, ACM, PH/FOT/23045 (19); (25); (28).

48 Gilberto Freyre, 'Tagore: a Brazilian view of his lyrical poetry', *Mosaic*, no. 15, 1976, pp. 7–11, available at <http://bvfgf.fgf.org.br/frances/obra/artigos/cientificos/tagore.htm> (consulted 25 November 2014).

49 See Freyre's cartoon of this meeting of familiar strangers: Biblioteca Virtual Gilberto Freyre, 'Gilberto Freyre conversando com Rabindranath Tagore (Gilberto Freyre in conversation with Rabindranath

This project of interpreting and transmitting his country to the world, while gaining acceptance as something more than an intellectual from an exotic peripheral nation, must have been close to Freyre's heart. For intellectuals such as Freyre and Meireles, who were attempting to transcend the parochialism concomitant with writing in a marginalized European language in Latin America, Tagore's value lay in the model that he provided of an explicitly non-European writer who had been crowned with that ultimate mark of European valorization: the Nobel prize. As Meireles noted, meditating on the importance of Tagore's Nobel prize:

There were those who wondered how an Indian, a native, without a drop of English blood could have reached such high distinction ... It thus happened that this consecration, more than glorifying a poet, focused the attention of the West on the East. And thus ... the prize was awarded to a people and to its high, though ill-known, civilization.⁵⁰

Tagore thus offered a way to embody a national intellectual culture while refusing to be condemned to the parochialism it entailed when that nation was not part of the European centre of intellectual life.

Nevertheless, figures such as Tagore and Gandhi, despite their deep involvement with the political life of modern India, were ultimately not of great interest to Brazilian intellectuals. Moreover, familiarity with modern Indians did little to dispel the powerful hold of orientalist tropes on their vision of India, which had been inherited from Europe's literary traditions.

Freyre on the Orient Express

In keeping with these orientalist tropes, Freyre and Meireles, when they eventually went to India, sought to cast their experiences in the long tradition of the Western traveller going to the fabled East. Meireles combed the historical canon of Western expeditions to the East, settling upon the loftiest antecedent of them all: Alexander the Great himself, the first Westerner to dream the 'juvenile' dream of uniting the East and the West, carefully sequestered in Meireles' imagination from the idea of conquest and violence.⁵¹ There was no small irony in this, for, as Meireles herself acknowledged, 'For many reasons one may come to India; I came for Gandhi, the Mahatma.'⁵² This was the literal truth: Meireles travelled by invitation to attend an international symposium honouring Gandhi in 1953. For her, Gandhi was essentially a religious figure: in the *crônicas* that she published in Rio de Janeiro's *Diário de Notícias* in 1953–54, recording her travels, and in the poems she penned in India, she

Tagore)', New York, 1922, available at <http://bvgf.fgf.org.br/portugues/colecoes/caricaturas/0001.htm> (consulted 25 November 2014).

50 FRB, APEB, AIB, 'Conferência pronunciada por Cecília Meireles na ABI em 1961 sobre a aproximação Oriente–Ocidente (Speech given by Cecília Meireles at ABI in 1961 on the rapprochement between the West and the East)'.

51 Cecília Meireles, *Crônicas de viagem (Travel chronicles)*, ed. Leodegário A. de Azevedo Filho, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1999, vol. 2, p. 156.

52 *Ibid.* vol. 2, p. 158.

fashioned her travel in another well-worn narrative mould, that of the pilgrimage to the spiritual East.⁵³

In a similar vein, Freyre found that the literariness of travel was most clearly invoked at the beginning of the journey, when the Westerner first sets off for the Orient, a moment belonging almost to the primordial level of a collective fantasy, rehearsed over and over again in travel accounts accumulated over the ages. He described this moment thus:

Thirty years ago I saw, with eyes still that of an adolescent, the departure from Berlin of the Orient Express; and I was seduced by the idea of a trip to the Orient For I had read Burton and other English [writers] and let myself be touched by the admiration of the Romantics for the Portuguese, not only poets but also sometimes simple businessmen ...

[T]he trip of Pero de Covilhã – someone reminded me of it in Lisbon Airport ... the journey I undertake now is, in fact, almost the same as that Pero was obliged to undertake on the order of D. João II. Almost in the same space and almost in the same time: at least the time that Thomas Wolfe, author of *Of Time and the River*, expanding upon Proust, considered ‘immutable time’.... In this sense of time, my journey to Europe and to Africa, stretching to the east, is almost the same as that of Pero da Covilhã. Somewhat like that of Fernão Mendes Pinto.⁵⁴

A multitude of past travellers, like ghostly passengers on the Orient Express, haunted Freyre’s footsteps. The temporality of travel – oscillating between a historicist sense of the tradition of Western exploratory travel and the timelessness of such an endeavour – is structured literarily for Freyre. The huge number of textual references in the short passage invoked different models of the traveller, from diplomat-explorers like Burton and Pero da Covilhã to poets such as Proust, that great time-traveller.

Among these antecedents, Freyre had a clear favourite to model his own experiences: Fernão Mendes Pinto’s *Peregrinação* (*Peregrination*), the great travel account of the Lusophone world.⁵⁵ The choice was significant: Freyre’s journey was indeed part of the long tradition of Portuguese colonial travel to the East. Despite his cordial relations with the Indian embassy through his work for the Sociedade, his visit to India was part of a project funded by António de Oliveira Salazar’s government in order to buttress an embattled Portuguese colonialism, including on the Indian subcontinent.

Freyre’s theory of *lusotropicalismo*, originally conceived as a means to centre an *imaginaire* of the Brazilian nation in the historical roots of its multiracial society, was premised on the idea that the Portuguese have a natural aptitude for cultural and biological miscegenation. This talent for adaptation to the tropics meant that Portugal and

53 See particularly the first poem of the collection that Meireles wrote in India, entitled ‘Lei do passante (Law of the traveller)’, which expresses the pious attitude of the pilgrim. Cecília Meireles, *Poemas escritos na Índia* (*Poems written in India*), Rio de Janeiro: Livraria São José, 1961, p. 5.

54 Gilberto Freyre, *Aventura e rotina: sugestões de uma viagem à procura das constantes portuguesas de carácter e acção* (*Adventure and routine: suggestions for a journey in search of the Portuguese constants of character and action*), Lisbon: Livros do Brasil, 1953, pp. 260–1.

55 Ibid., 261

its colonies formed a cultural complex, bound by the Portuguese language and marked by integration instead of domination. This transcended even the political fact of Brazil's independence:

If politically Portugal is now a separate nation from Brazil, which is its projection on the American tropics, from the cultural point-of-view, the two have been for over a century living equally the same Lusotropical reality ... [We are] at the forefront of a process of forming a third person or a third culture – a man symbiotically Lusotropical, a culture symbiotically Lusotropical ... which has been formed by the Portuguese having gone to the extreme ... as no other European has until today, in having renounced their ethnic or cultural purity in favour of hybrid forms of man and culture, in which tropical races, environments, and cultures, transeuropeanized by the presence among them of the Portuguese, have come to participate.⁵⁶

In this schema, 'The notion that Freyre keeps at bay ... is that Brazil is very much a creation of its own and owes little to Portuguese colonialism. This would indeed make the Portuguese an alterity, the Other', a position not unlike that of the British in the anti-colonial imagination of Indian nationalists.⁵⁷ Originally rejecting the theory because of its valorization of racial miscegenation, Salazar later appropriated it to buttress the quasi-legal idea of the Portuguese empire as a multi-continental nation, in the face of mounting anti-colonial opposition. Indeed, Franco Nogueira, charged with arguing the Portuguese case before the UN, relied on this notion of the multi-continental nature of the Portuguese *nation* and upbraided his peers for failing to consider the scholarship of Gilberto Freyre in seeing the legitimacy of such a geographically strange nation-form.⁵⁸

Accordingly, in 1951 Salazar sponsored Freyre to travel within the Portuguese colonial world.⁵⁹ These travels were, for Freyre, marked by a curious repetitiveness: 'More than once, my impression was that of *déjà vu*, such was the unity in diversity that characterizes the various Portugals spread around the world.'⁶⁰ In this context, '*déjà vu*' is not merely a confirmation of Freyre's thesis that Portugal's diverse and far-flung possessions formed a contiguous cultural whole; rather it attests to the literariness of the experience of travel for him. These foreign lands were rendered familiar and transparent because of the great store of texts through which he framed his vision. It is no accident that much of the short section of *Aventura e rotina* on his travels in Portuguese India is devoted to the discussion of texts about the region, including an extended biographical meditation on Fernão Mendes Pinto,

56 Gilberto Freyre, *O luso e o trópico (The Lusitan and the tropical)*, Lisbon: Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do V Centenário da Morte do Infante D. Henrique, 1961, p. 88.

57 Ulbe Bosma and Fernanda Rosa Ribeira, 'Late colonial estrangement and miscegenation: identity and authenticity in the colonial imagination in the Dutch and Lusophone (post)colonial worlds', *Cultural and Social History*, 4, 1, 2007, p. 46.

58 Franco Nogueira, *As nações unidas e Portugal (The united nations of Portugal)*, Lisbon: Ática, 1962, pp. 219–26. On the Salazarist use of *lusotropicalismo*, see Cláudia Castelo, *O modo português de estar no mundo: o luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933–1961)* (The Portuguese mode of being in the world: Lusotropicalism and Portuguese colonial ideology), Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998.

59 The collaboration resulted in the official bilingual publication Gilberto Freyre, *Integração portuguesa nos trópicos/Portuguese integration in the tropics*, Vila Nova de Famalicão: n.p., 1958.

60 Freyre, *Aventura e rotina*, p. 9.

and a tangential discussion of Charles Boxer's *Fidalgos in the Far East*.⁶¹ Freyre devoted another section to the reading habits of the Indo-Portuguese, citing their enthusiasm for the nineteenth-century Portuguese novelist Eça de Queiroz as evidence of their deep commitment to Lusophone culture. Another chapter is devoted to the Goan Archive, which Freyre judged to be a treasure trove for the Brazilian historian seeking to establish historic linkages between Brazil and India.⁶² It is as if Goa is only knowable through texts: texts about Goa, texts read by Goans, texts yet to be constructed from the raw materials of other (archival) texts. The result, as Teotónio de Souza has shown, was a curiously superficial assessment of Goa, where empirical acuity was subordinated to Lusotropicalist ideology.⁶³

Undoubtedly, Freyre was hampered in his attempt to understand Portuguese India, being restricted to an official Portuguese itinerary designed to convey a very particular impression of Goa. As a visiting dignitary, he had little opportunity to mingle with anyone but the elites of Goan society. Yet he did not register the editorialized nature of his travels, even when purporting to speak about issues affecting the subaltern sections of society, such as caste discrimination.

Even Freyre's focus on caste was not a function of sociological interest; instead it became the linchpin of his argument for the continued Portuguese presence in Goa. Consider his assessment of a prominent Indian functionary:

They presented me ... to the magistrate Nicolau Sobrinho, perhaps pure Brahmin in origin, today a Catholic leader, with broad social prestige in Panjim. He is a perfect Brazilian magistrate who, instead of [being] Indian, might have been of *caboclo* or *tapuia* origin, like more than one distinguished magistrate in the North of Brazil ... Nicolau Sobrinho, in Brazil, would be that which Nicolau Sobrinho is in India: a *caboclo* native to the land aggrandized into a *cacique* [chief], no longer in his village, but in an entire State, almost a Nation. A Nation that, including Europeans, does not possess individuals of greater political sagacity than the indigenous.⁶⁴

This excerpt bears out Homi Bhabha's perspicacious comment regarding the futility of colonial mimicry: a Catholic convert and high court judge is at bottom, nothing more than a *brâmane*, equivalent to an indigenous Brazilian *cacique*, his achievements a result of dubious political instinct, instead of the natural progression of an educated civil servant in the Goan government.⁶⁵ From the example of Nicolau Sobrinho, Freyre concluded:

Portugal should take advantage [of such people] more completely than those of whom it makes use today in the government of Portuguese India ... until today entrusted only to the Portuguese from Europe. I know that this species of home rule is not easy in a community like that of Portuguese India, divided, even today, by survivals of theological hatred of the sort of which we are free in Brazil, to the point where we can

61 *Ibid.*, pp. 302–7, 298–300.

62 *Ibid.*, pp. 282–5.

63 Teotónio R. de Souza, 'Gilberto Freyre na Índia e o "lusotropicalismo transnacional"' (Gilberto Freyre in India and "transnational Lusotropicalism"), *Cadernos*, Lisbon: CEPESA (Centro Português de Estudos do Sudeste Asiático), 2001, pp. 1–18.

64 Freyre, *Aventura e rotina*, p. 267.

65 Homi Bhabha, *The location of culture*, 2nd edn, Routledge: London, 2004, pp. 121–31.

barely understand it. Theological hatred that comes together, disgracefully, in Portuguese India itself, in the survivals of the old Indian spirit of caste With this lamentable *castismo* still alive, Portugal understands how difficult it is to extend to Portuguese India all the advantages of home rule, without slipping into the risk of abandoning non-Hindu minorities to the survival of caste, harmful to all.⁶⁶

In unacknowledged contradiction to his larger thesis that Goa was so well integrated into the Lusotropical cultural complex that to separate her from Portugal would be amputation, Freyre declared that Goan society was still too tainted by precolonial norms to be ‘safely’ allowed home rule. The argument was resonant not merely with British colonial discourse but also with elements within the Indian nationalist movement, where untouchables feared their fate under a future postcolonial government dominated by the upper castes.⁶⁷ Apart from the protection against traditional evils such as caste provided by their rule, the Portuguese, according to Freyre, were also insulating Goa from modern social ills spreading through the Indian Union: the stark extremes of poverty and wealth, the impersonality of governance inherited from British colonial rule, and spreading anti-occidentalism and communism.⁶⁸

Freyre was not blind to the implications of his espousal, as a subject of a post-colony scrutinizing and adjudicating the state of the metropole and its possessions, of such colonialist apologetics. He was aware of the historical precedents, from Pero Vaz de Caminha to Fernão Mendes Pinto, and the allusive burden that they placed on him as a writer and traveller, as well as the ways in which he violated that tradition.⁶⁹ Thus, in accepting Salazar’s invitation, Freyre understood his position as a colonial agent, but he was not interested solely in the promotion of Portugal’s colonial enterprise. For him, the international promotion of *lusotropicalismo* was part of a project of making Brazil a globally relevant and influential nation. It was a goal that he would acknowledge explicitly in a 1958 speech entitled ‘A transnational policy of culture for the Brazil of today’, in which he exhorted the Brazilian state to embrace its natural role as the vanguard of the developing world. Freyre explicitly denied that India could fulfil this role because it did not share Brazil’s unique character of a European civilization hybridized in the tropics.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, *lusotropicalismo* as a theory devised to understand Brazil, part of his national sociology, could within its own terms and with no loss of moral legitimacy be appropriated by Portugal with regard to its colonial possessions. Considering the state of ‘national studies’ in Brazil and elsewhere, Freyre wrote:

But, in the Brazil of today, rare are those who will approach national and regional studies of such seriousness ... preferring to substitute them for a merely rhetorical ‘*nossismo*’ [ours-ism]. A *nossismo* that must be overcome among us by another,

66 Freyre, *Aventura e rotina*, p. 268.

67 B. R. Ambedkar, *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables*, Bombay: Thacker, 1946, pp. 40–102.

68 Freyre, *Aventura e rotina*, pp. 281, 297, 288.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

70 João Alberto da Costa, ‘Gilberto Freyre e a *intelligentsia* salazarista em defesa do Império Colonial Português (1951–1974), (Gilberto Freyre and the Salazarist intelligentsia in defence of the colonial Portuguese empire, (1951–1974))’, *História*, 28, 1, 2008, p. 468.

whereby we consider Brazil ours not only by full economic – and not merely political – dominion over raw lands but by ample and certain scientific knowledge of these lands and their populations. Of this ample knowledge it seems Portugal too is in need with relation to certain areas of its overseas possessions. Some of what is known is almost solely what is in foreign books or of what remains of the pioneers ... of the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. One of these, the Brazilian Lacerda, is linked by his studies to Brazil too.⁷¹

In referring to the eighteenth-century Brazilian-born Francisco José Maria Pereira de Lacerda, who had explored both the western frontier of Brazil and the southern frontier of Portuguese Angola, Freyre again sought historical precedent for his own position. He showed a keen understanding of the link between knowledge and government, of the intimate connection between measuring and knowing alien lands and populations and then claiming them as ‘ours’ in a paradigmatically orientalist mode. Moreover, in comparing Brazil’s efforts to know its own lands with Portugal’s efforts to know its colonies, he judged the two enterprises to be morally equivalent.

Freyre understood both the nationalist and the colonialist implications (and their equivalence therein) of his theories of *lusotropicalismo*. Unlike the following generation of postcolonial scholars, much of whose work began from a critique of Indian nationalism, he was politically conservative enough to exploit this idea to further both nationalist and colonialist aims. Nonetheless, it is striking that, as a postcolonial intellectual himself, he anticipated many of the key insights of later thinkers such as Homi Bhabha, whether in his celebration of hybridity or in his understanding of the equivalent function of civilizing power in national and colonial projects.

A Brazilian diplomat in Nehruvian India

The third subject of this history, Ildefonso Falcão, was born in Rio de Janeiro on 1 May 1894. He first served his government as consular assistant in Barbados in 1918.⁷² In 1919 he moved to Buenos Aires, where, apart from his diplomatic duties, he contributed a weekly column to the Brazilian illustrated comic magazine *Careta*, reporting on Argentinian and Brazilian music and other cultural topics, as well as on events in the city.⁷³

This early interest in promoting cultural exchange continued during his work as consul in Cologne in 1931. Not only did Falcão cultivate visiting Brazilian intellectuals but he also devoted considerable effort to establishing the Portuguese-Brazilian Institute of the University of Cologne, insisting on the explicit inclusion of Brazil, separate from Portugal, in the title and mission of the body.⁷⁴ Falcão was close to and admired Dr Ivo Dane, the prime mover of the project and a member of the National Socialist Party, whom Falcão was

71 Freyre, *Aventura e rotina*, p. 30.

72 Details of Falcão’s career until 1948 are taken from Ronald Hilton, *Who’s who in Latin America*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1948, p. 86.

73 Felipe Botelho Corrêa, ‘The readership of caricatures in the Brazilian *belle époque*: the case of the illustrated magazine *Careta* (1908–1922)’, *Patrimônio e Memória*, 8, 1, 2012, pp. 71–97.

74 Antonio Alexandre Bispo, ‘Voz do Brasil junto ao Instituto Português-Brasileiro de Colonia: Ildefonso Falcão e a propaganda dos estudos lusófonos de inserções políticas em Pernambuco nos anos 30 (The voice of Brazil along with the Portuguese-Brazilian Institute of Cologne: Ildefonso Falcão and the propaganda of Lusophone studies in political interventions in Pernambuco in the ‘30s)’, *Revista Brasil-Europa*, 124/5,

careful to depict as above politics. This suggests that, despite his enthusiasm for the institute as an expression of the ties binding Germany, Portugal, and Brazil, Falcão harboured some reservations regarding Nazi ideology. In 1933, he unsuccessfully tried to broker an agreement to attract to Brazil German Jews who had occupied public positions or liberal professions, a deal sweetened by a special concession from the German government to allow part of their capital to migrate with them. In forwarding this proposal, engineered in part by prominent Jewish businessmen, Falcão was cognizant of the anti-Semitism of Brazil's government, maintaining a careful ambivalence regarding Jewish immigrants.⁷⁵ Certainly, he seems to have been flattered by the honours given to him during the formalization of the institute by the National Socialists.⁷⁶

Falcão was disappointed by the lacklustre Brazilian response to his efforts in Cologne in promoting the institute.⁷⁷ His interest in cultural diplomacy finally found a concrete institutional channel when he became the first director of the Brazilian Service of Intellectual Cooperation in 1935. The service, intended to serve as the national intermediary to the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, was essential, in Falcão's opinion, to correct the fact that Brazil was 'the great unknown of the modern world'.⁷⁸ As he put it, it was time now for Brazil to be known through its achievements, so that it would no longer be considered 'a vast expanse populated by savage Indians and illiterate half-breeds'.

In this diplomatic, almost 'apostolic', work, Brazil's intellectuals and artists were vital in fashioning an image abroad of modern Brazil.⁷⁹ Despite his experience in Cologne, Falcão wished not for Brazil to continue to look to Europe but rather to orient itself towards the Americas in its foreign policy. Rejecting the condescension of the 'civilized nations' of the Old World, Brazil would come into its own on the international stage by first consolidating its hemispheric ties.⁸⁰

Falcão's views dovetailed with the direction in foreign policy of the post-war government. This direction shared intriguing (and perhaps not coincidental) commonalities with Freyre's views of the unique nature of Brazil's tropical civilization.⁸¹ In a speech given at the opening of the Pan-American conference held in Rio de Janeiro in 1947, just two years before he would attend the fateful reception in Gandhi's honour with Freyre and Meireles, Oswaldo Aranha sketched out this vision of the country:

2010, p. 2, available at http://www.revista.brasil-europa.eu/124/Ildefonso_Falcao.html (consulted 27 November 2014).

75 Jeffrey Lesser, *Welcoming the undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish question*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 63–64. Falcão's letter can be found at <http://www.arqshoah.com.br/arquivo/1227/> (consulted 27 November 2014).

76 Bispo, 'Voz do Brasil'.

77 *Ibid.*

78 Juliette Dumont, *L'Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle et le Brésil (1924–1946): le pari de la diplomatie culturelle*, Paris: IHEAL-CREDAL, 2008, p. 67.

79 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

81 The Brazilian foreign ministry even sought to enlist Freyre's services during his trip on Salazar's behest for its own purposes. Freyre, *Aventura e rotina*, p. 262. Indeed, the Brazilian embassy had followed both his and Meireles' travels in India with interest. See, for example, AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 6, no. 4 (24 January 1953).

We [Brazilians] are a nation located largely in a tropical setting and we are endeavouring to create in these regions a civilization not thought possible by scientists and statesmen ... The tropics are the enemy of man, of culture, and of progress. [I]t is a fact that the Brazilian accomplishment, its capacity to incorporate the tropical zones into the world community, is a great effort Science ... [will] help to create possibilities in many areas of the world hitherto considered unfit for occidental civilization. Tropical areas have been largely disregarded by civilization, and only maintained in a colonial status. They must be incorporated into the human community because they complement the production of the temperate zones.⁸²

Brazil and the Orient were irreducibly different: whereas the latter was still the uncivilized tropics, Brazil was a partner, a ‘complement’ to the temperate Occident, a kernel of occidental civilization embedded in a tropical context, and one which had, through science, tamed this context. Moreover, the West had a greater responsibility towards promoting the conditions of Western civilization in Brazil.⁸³

India, in this scheme, still represented the uncivilized tropics, fit only for colonial exploitation. In 1953, when Ambassador Abelardo Bueno do Prado begged for permission to close the consulate in Calcutta, he argued precisely in these terms:

Calcutta is undoubtedly one of the major Indian cities ... [and] offers the worst conditions of comfort to a foreigner habituated to the amenities of modern life The water, the vegetables, the meat, the air itself, serves as the culture for the most dangerous microbes, obliging the foreigner to resort for his basic food to canned food, from abroad Cholera, malaria, smallpox join the communists to make life even more unbearable for the foreigner. Calcutta is the major Red centre of the country, the workers of its factories, the stevedores and the refugees themselves, starving and disillusioned, see in the ‘white man’ their natural enemy, the reason for all their ills.⁸⁴

Prado’s revulsion is at the unbridled *tropicality* of the city – he harps on about the terrible climate, the humidity, the proximity with swamplands, the profusion of microbial life, like a quasi-colonial explorer of the tropics in the heyday of European voyages of discovery. The Brazilian diplomat experienced life in Calcutta as a state of siege, surrounded by the viruses of disease, poverty, and communism, forced to live on canned foods in the face of the insistent assault of the underclass of the city. Moreover, this siege was part of a racialized war, in which Brazilians, implicitly, were cast as the white enemies of the native Indians.

If one pole of the Brazilian diplomat’s understanding of India was shaped by the Conradian horror at the insalubrious life in the country, the other pole was formed by the calculations of the Cold War. The Brazilian government hoped to parlay its friendship to the Allies during the Second World War into increased status and influence in the new post-war landscape. The Rio Treaty and the open alliance with the US that this entailed, formed the bedrock of foreign policy and the basis on which to assess and understand other nations. Consequently, Brazil adopted both the bipolar view of the Cold War that the US

82 FGV, CPDOC, Arquivo Oswaldo Aranha, OA, pi 427.10.00.

83 *Ibid.*

84 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 6, no. 23 (7 June 1953).

endorsed and the American attitude towards international politics as a zero-sum game. India could thus only be viewed through the lens of competitiveness.

It was in this ideological context that Falcão came as ambassador of Brazil to India, after stints in wartime Boston, and in London as consul-general, where he witnessed the transition to peace and decolonization from the metropole. Unsurprisingly, he viewed Nehruvian India in terms of Cold War competition and distrust of its nationalist leaders. Economically, this was warranted: India, still heavily concentrated in primary production, did pose a threat to Brazil, which was only just entering its developmentalist phase. By 1956, Falcão was requesting another staff member dedicated solely to reporting on India's economy, to track production of raw materials that competed with Brazilian exports, and the country's expansion into various markets.⁸⁵ The interest was not one-way: the Indian minister of finance gave a speech on 'Esquema Oswaldo Aranha' ('Oswald Aranha's scheme'), which Falcão sent to the foreign ministry to be forwarded to Aranha himself.⁸⁶ Falcão advised that Brazil could learn from India's policies, whose success he attributed to the best kind of patriotism.⁸⁷ These reports impressed the Brazilian foreign ministry enough that they requested copies of all of India's work-related legislation, and reports on its Five Year Plans.⁸⁸ As Rupprecht has shown, an ideological commitment against communism did not prevent Brazil from evincing a deep interest in socialist modernity.⁸⁹ Thus, even as the Brazilian embassy tracked with suspicion what they saw as the 'reddening' of Indian politics, Brazil was perfectly willing to consider its developmentalist policies.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Brazil and India's fledgling attempts at developmentalist cooperation remained meagre.⁹¹

If developmentalism created common ground in the economic sphere, politically both countries harboured ambitions of achieving global influence commensurate with their size. Falcão and his predecessors admired India's ability to insert herself into the forefront of the global arena.⁹² Nonetheless, Brazil and India's interaction was largely confined to the

85 In addition to monthly economic reports, special reports on key industrial sectors were also sent: AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 231 (18 November 1954); vol. 8, no. 232 (18 November 1954); vol. 8, no. 234 (20 November 1954); vol. 8, no. 268 (15 December 1954); on raw materials including tea, coffee, and monazite: AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 7, no. 39 (27 February 1954); vol. 7, no. 262 (7 December 1954); vol. 6, no. 9 (27 February 1953); vol. 7, no. 90 (21 May 1954); vol. 7, no. 100 (31 May 1954); and on Indian expansion into other markets: AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 97 (15 April 1955); vol. 9, no. 10 (14 May 1955); vol. 13, no. 346 (19 October 1956).

86 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 129 (25 July 1954).

87 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 10 (18 January 1955); vol. 12, no. 97 (5 March 1956); vol. 9, no. 112 (9 June 1955).

88 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 84 (31 March 1955); vol. 10, no. 112 (9 June 1955); vol. 12, no. 50 (14 February 1956).

89 Rupprecht, 'Socialist high modernity', esp. pp. 510–13.

90 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 7, no. 15 (23 January 1954); vol. 4, no. 36 (4 June 1951); vol. 8, no. 223 (12 November 1954).

91 See, for example, AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 5, no. 19 (18 June 1952); vol. 8, no. 130 (26 July 1954); vol. 7, no. 54 (23 March 1954); vol. 9, no. 86 (31 March 1955); vol. 8, no. 250 (30 November 1954); vol. 6, no. 37 (20 September 1953).

92 See, for example, AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 6, no. 36 (August 1953); vol. 6, no. 38 (3 October 1953); vol. 9, no. 185 (10 June 1955); vol. 12, no. 165 (2 April 1956).

routine solicitation of votes for their candidates in various international fora.⁹³ Even this minor exchange could sour: when Brazil approached India to install Brazil as a permanent member of the governing body of the International Labour Organization, the Indian foreign office replied that, given Brazil's low economic rank, India could not support Brazil over Japan. Moreover, India dismissed Brazil's claim that its presence was necessary to ensure continental representation, since Canada and the US could fully represent the Americas. The acrimonious exchange, highlighting Brazil's peripheral position economically and in the political shadow of the US, left Falcão fuming.⁹⁴

Brazil's marginal place in India's global political calculations was not merely a function of geographical or historical distance; rather, Indian foreign policy was increasingly oriented towards forging an alliance of newly decolonized countries, based on a commitment to neutrality in the Cold War and anti-imperialism.⁹⁵ In this project, Brazil, bound by a bipolar reading of the Cold War dictated by the US, and long independent, was not a natural fit.

Even though Brazil had hosted an anti-colonial congress of writers in 1954, a year before the Bandung conference of African and Asian nations, Brazil's reaction to the movement was marked by ideological confusion, veering between sympathy and suspicion.⁹⁶ Thus, the announcement of the Bandung conference was understood by Falcão to be

designed to enhance the leadership of India among other countries in this region of the world ... It will be necessary for the civilization of the West to flourish in Africa and in Asia to first teach the majority of its peoples how to read and write. Second, for all to have of modern life and its exigencies, notions less vague. [Nehru] knows this, however, and thoroughly, because it was in the West, whose politics he criticizes at every turn, that he was educated.⁹⁷

If Nehru had adhered to his Western education, Falcão implied, he would know that India first needed to educate its populace, literally and in the terms of modernity, in order to turn them into a worthy *demos* with the right to political participation, a recurring trope in his critique of Indian democracy.⁹⁸ In this light, the political ambitions of developing nations such as India could only be seen as the upstart pretensions of a distinctly lesser class of nations, who should be confined 'to the waiting room of history'.⁹⁹ Falcão's espousal of such an imperialist view was not merely a reflection of his own elite status in a country equally marked by general poverty and illiteracy, and which also sought global prominence.

93 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 154 (30 August 1954); vol. 12, no. 164 (2 April 1956).

94 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 26 (26 June 1954); vol. 8, no. 116 (4 July 1954); vol. 8, no. 160 (30 August 1954).

95 On the challenge to bipolarity presented by India's neutralism, see Jacqueline Dix, 'The United States and India: the challenge of neutralism to bipolarity', in Alan P. Dobson, Shahin Malik, and Graham Evans, eds., *Deconstructing and reconstructing the Cold War*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999, pp. 152–77.

96 Rupperecht, 'Socialist high modernity', pp. 508–9.

97 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 165 (13 September 1954).

98 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 5, no. 7 (30 January 1952); vol. 8, no. 131 (27 July 1954). Significantly, the trope is most explicitly stated in Falcão's scathing attack on the Indian populace's support of annexing Goa: AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 240 (26 July 1955).

99 Dipesh Chakrabarti, *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 8.

Implicitly, Brazil was exempt from postponing its own international political ambitions because it was endowed with the gift of Western civilization and entrusted with the responsibility of shielding its fragile flame from the dark winds of the tropics.

Falcão consistently failed to appreciate the importance of the anti-imperial impulse driving the Bandung movement, reading it as a dangerous fantasy that ignored the realities of the Cold War.¹⁰⁰ Thus, he was confident that the first South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) conference, composed of nations explicitly allied to the US, had succeeded in undermining the upcoming conference in Bandung.¹⁰¹ Falcão was therefore taken aback and genuinely impressed by the achievements of the Bandung conference once it unfolded, which he judged to be ‘a milestone in the evolution of newly independent countries, some of which were present for the first time in an international assembly’.¹⁰²

When the conference eventually dissolved into disunity, Falcão’s reaction was one of relief:

Analysed from the Western point of view, the Conference brought a sense of relief ... A united front of Africans and Asians – 61% of the world’s populations – could only be directed against Western civilization and, in the final analysis, against the white race. [The Conference] revealed the existence of a continuity of thought that the West should not underestimate And it is not impossible that with time the spirit of clan and race will override their own political interests.¹⁰³

The lack of empathy with the anti-colonialist impulse underlying the movement led Falcão to translate the goals of the conference into familiar, less positive terms. Afro-Asiatic unity became anti-occidentalism, and anti-colonialism became racism. The world returned to a comfortably bipolar order, and this time it was blacks against whites. Like Prado before him, Falcão implicitly cast Brazil in the latter camp, with Indians decisively on the other side of the racial divide.

Interestingly, the first major Brazilian study of Brazil’s relationship with the Afro-Asiatic world had a similarly racialist reading of the Bandung conference. Adolpho Justo Bezerra de Menezes (1910–2006) was an observer at Bandung, a successor of Falcão’s at the embassy in Pakistan, and eventual head of the Department of Commercial Promotion in the foreign ministry. He identified a coming racial war, in a world of white colonial masters and dark subjects, as a greater threat than the confrontation of the Cold War. Unlike Falcão, and in an echo of Freyre’s ideas, Menezes advocated that Brazil should capitalize upon its mixed racial heritage and lead the West by example in setting policy towards the Afro-Asiatic world.¹⁰⁴ The differences and similarities between Falcão’s and Menezes’ readings of the conference again highlighted the inherently problematic nature of Brazil’s self-identification with the (white) West. Thus, despite Brazil’s own multiracial character, Falcão could read Nehru’s

100 AHPI, O(R), E35, P 5, vol. 7, no. 2 (5 January 1954).

101 AHPI, O(R), E35, P 5, vol. 9, no. 50 (28 February 1955).

102 AHPI, O(R), E35, P 5, vol. 9, no. 112 (26 April 1955).

103 *Ibid.*

104 Adolpho Justo Bezerra de Menezes, *O Brasil e o mundo ázio-africano (Brazil and the Afro-Asiatic world)*, Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editora, 1956. His prescriptions foreshadowed the foreign policy shifts under Kubitschek, Quadros, and Goulart, until the 1964 military putsch ended these experiments.

condemnation of what he termed the criminal indifference of the Western world to apartheid as a worrying sign of the ‘anti-occidentalism’ of India’s foreign policies.¹⁰⁵

For Falcão, India’s neutralist foreign policy was at best a strategically superior model with little ethical content. When the US gave India US\$500 million in aid, following Bulganin and Khrushchev’s visit to India in November 1955, smarting from the knowledge that the US had recently rejected a Brazilian request for a loan, Falcão wrote: ‘It seems unnecessary ... to establish any parallels between this information and the assistance that has been granted to Brazil, if not all South America ... From us, Latin Americans, they are tired of hearing enthusiastic eulogies From the Indians, they receive being stoned as an expression of affection.’¹⁰⁶ Falcão’s assessment dovetailed with an emerging nationalist orientation in foreign policy being promoted by the increasingly influential Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies), which advocated greater independence from the US.¹⁰⁷

Even during this incipient flirtation with neutralism, however, the crucial anti-colonialism of the Bandung movement did not strike a chord, a fact that became explicit over the question of Portugal’s continuing colonial enterprise. When the Indian Union demanded that Portugal cede its territories in the subcontinent, Brazil vociferously supported Portugal.¹⁰⁸ This partly continued Brazil’s antipathetic stance to the Indian Union’s process of territorial consolidation: Falcão’s predecessors had extended sympathy to dispossessed princes, especially the maharaja of Baroda, who had appealed for help from the Brazilian embassy, as well as opposing India’s claims to Kashmir.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Ambassador Franco argued that if Nehru could claim Kashmir under the Indian constitution, then Portugal could equally claim Goa under its own constitution.¹¹⁰

Brazil’s loyalty to Portugal would prove costly, both at the bilateral and at the international level. In 1954, the honorary consul of Brazil in Bombay, the Goan J. N. Herédia, was discovered hosting meetings of anti-Portuguese Goan activists in his residence. When Falcão sacked him for his ‘traitorous’ activities, the Indian media hailed Herédia as a national hero.¹¹¹ After this, a disconcerted Falcão informed the foreign ministry that Portugal had rejected his request to revisit the question of its colonies in India ‘in harmony with the determinations of the Treaty of San Francisco’ and the precepts of the United Nations charter.¹¹²

Falcão’s support for the Portuguese was galvanized, however, by the occupation of Nagar Haveli, a Portuguese enclave in Gujarat close to Daman, by volunteers from Azad Gomantak

105 Falcão sent a confidential report to Itamarati entitled ‘Política anti-ocidentalista do Senhor Nehru (Mr Nehru’s anti-Western policies)’, triggered by Nehru’s speech on apartheid: AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 94 (31 March 1955).

106 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 12, no. 23 (18 January 1956).

107 Selcher, *Afro-Asiatic dimension*, p. 11.

108 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 4, no. 23 (24 April 1951).

109 *Ibid.*; AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 4, no. 24 (4 May 1951); vol. 4, no. 33 (22 May 1951); vol. 4, no. 37 (5 June 1951).

110 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 4, no. 43 (12 July 1951).

111 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 75 (29 April 1954).

112 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 7, no. 89 (18 May 1954).

Dal and the Goan People's Party in July 1954.¹¹³ The reasons that Falcão invoked for his support of Portugal over Goa were based on Portugal's position, in turn gleaned from Freyre's *lusotropicalismo*. There was no question of an anti-colonial movement in Goa, since Goa was not a colony at all. It was the equivalent of Brazil in India, an outpost of Lusitanian culture with no connection to its subcontinental environment beyond geographical contiguity. Brazil's independence from Portugal was tactfully elided. Falcão thus intimated that the 'volunteers' were Indian intruders rather than Goan activists, and noted that several Portuguese policemen had been killed in Dadra.¹¹⁴ Again, he followed precedent: Ambassador Prado had similarly dismissed a prominent Goan activist as a communist, with Cold War fears providing a convenient means to discredit anti-colonial sentiments.¹¹⁵

The violence of the volunteers' campaign proved to be particularly inflammatory and affirmed Falcão's judgement that Nehru's India had veered far from Gandhian precepts.¹¹⁶ Indeed, the unsuccessful attempt of the Nehruvian government to benefit almost hereditarily from the moral authority that Gandhi undoubtedly commanded fatally undermined the Goan campaign for Falcão.¹¹⁷ When Goan activists launched a mass *satyagraha* campaign on India's independence day in 1954, Falcão was deeply cynical of its fidelity to Gandhian principles, and generally aligned himself with the Portuguese view of the *satyagrahis* as 'invaders', a consciously martial term.¹¹⁸

Brazil's stance soured its relations with India and began to isolate it from mainstream international opinion.¹¹⁹ Perhaps the most significant diplomatic coup for India was its early enlistment of Vatican support, which considerably softened antipathy in Latin America towards India's Goan campaign.¹²⁰ After this, even Brazilian public opinion was divided, as the Indian press was quick to report.¹²¹ The Bandung conference further broadened India's support. When Peter Alvarez, leader of the Congresso Nacional de Goa, called for an economic blockade of Goa, Daman, and Diu in October 1954, Portugal initially circumvented the blockade through bases in Pakistan and Ceylon.¹²² After Bandung, however, Ceylon stopped helping the Portuguese, and Japan even blockaded Goa.¹²³

When Portugal's violent actions led to a well-publicized hunger strike by Goan women prisoners in 1956, Falcão turned the incident to Brazil's diplomatic advantage by appealing for their release on behalf of the Indian government, deliberately sending the telegram to the

113 P. P. Shirodkar, *Goa's struggle for freedom*, New Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1988, p. 95.

114 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 121 (27 July 1954).

115 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 5, no. 50 (24 December 1952).

116 *Ibid.* See also AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 80 (28 March 1955).

117 Falcão often compared Nehru unfavourably to Vinobha Bhave, who was widely perceived as Gandhi's true heir. AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 249 (1 August 1955).

118 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 20 (27 January 1955); vol. 9, no. 207 (1 July 1955).

119 See copies of letters annexed to AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 145 (24 August 1954).

120 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 145 (24 August 1954); vol. 9, no. 251 (2 August 1955); vol. 8, no. 260 (6 December 1954); vol. 8, no. 265 (10 December 1954).

121 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 9, no. 20 (27 January 1955).

122 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 8, no. 205 (22 October 1954); vol. 8, no. 280 (19 December 1954).

123 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 12, no. 105 (7 March 1956); vol. 9, no. 348 (10 November 1955).

Portuguese in English to ensure wide reception in the Anglophone Indian media.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, privately, he continued to evince support for Portugal.

The new ambivalence during Falcão's last gasp of his tenure in India, before his appointment in February 1958 as ambassador to Pakistan, reflected Brazil's new nationalist foreign policy direction, which sought greater independence from the US.¹²⁵ Kubitschek's Operação Brasil-Ásia replaced divisive political issues such as support for Portuguese colonialism with economic diplomacy, in which the 'developing world' was viewed as an ally in setting the terms of economic interchange with the West.¹²⁶ This new pragmatism would take an even more radical turn under Jânio Quadros, who introduced the idea of affective solidarity with the 'developing world', mobilizing the same language of kinship in promoting its ties to the new nations of Africa that had previously been used to describe Brazil's relationship with Portugal.¹²⁷

When Nehru finally annexed Goa in 1961 through military force, the Brazilian representative declared the issue a bilateral one between Portugal and India, although only a year before, when the UN General Assembly voted to condemn Portugal's continued colonial policy in Africa and elsewhere, Brazil's support of Portugal left it in the dubious company of only five other countries, including the Union of South Africa.¹²⁸ Brazil's abandonment of Portugal was not a sign of new-found anti-colonial sympathy: although Brazil sent an observer to the first Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting in Belgrade, it was primarily a nationalistic response to Washington's heavy-handed attempt to quell Brazil's tentative exploration of neutralism.¹²⁹ It was not a recognition of the continuum between European colonialism and the incipient American imperialism of the Cold War era that NAM critiqued, nor did Brazil share in the anti-colonialism of its recently decolonized members. While American interventionism could occasionally shake Brazil's fundamental self-identification with the West, as Brazil's stance in the Goan question revealed, the heritage of European colonialism was not consigned to a clear-cut position of alterity in Brazil's self-definition.

Conclusion

Despite their differences in personality, career, and ethical and political commitments, our three Brazilian protagonists demonstrated, in their complex relationships with India, a shared starting point of a self-identification with the West, including its imperial heritage, complicated by their own position as postcolonial figures from the global periphery. Meireles not only drew upon but also participated in a long tradition of the orientalist representation

124 AHPI, O(R), E35, P5, vol. 13, no. 211 (3 May 1956).

125 Selcher, *Afro-Asiatic dimension*, p. 16.

126 *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 116.

127 *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 181. On this orientation towards Africa, see José Honório Rodrigues, *Brasil e África: outro horizonte (Brazil and Africa: another horizon)*, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1964.

128 Rodrigues, *Brasil*, p. 156; Shirodkar, *Goa's struggle*, p. 243.

129 James G Hershberg, "High-spirited confusion": Brazil, the 1961 Belgrade Non-Aligned Conference, and the limits of an "independent" foreign policy during the high Cold War', *Cold War History*, 7, 3, August 2007, pp. 373–88.

of India, with the self-confidence of a writer with a European mother tongue. Yet, as the many difficulties she encountered in promoting the UNESCO mission of peace through cultural understanding in Brazil had demonstrated to her, Brazil was undeniably peripheral in the Western (and by extension global) cultural sphere. In her desire to transcend her peripheral location to participate in global cultural life, Meireles found in modern Indians such as Gandhi and Tagore a model of cosmopolitan thinkers from outside Europe with global appeal. Nonetheless, her image of these figures largely ignored their nationalist and political commitments.

Similarly, Freyre felt a genuine sense of kinship with Tagore in their shared mission of revealing the universal relevance of their respective nations, despite their location on the periphery of the West. However, Freyre's profound self-identification with the Portuguese colonial heritage that had wrought Brazil could also allow him, with no sense of contradiction, to cast upon India not merely an orientalist but also an explicitly colonialist gaze. For Brazilian intellectuals such as Meireles and Freyre, India and Indians were both objects of profound alterity but also ones in which they could recognize their own condition of being from a peripheral nation.

Falcão's tenure coincided with some important changes in Brazil's foreign policy, reflected in his own lurches in attitude towards India. Despite the constraints of his office, however, it is telling that in India he devoted almost no energy to cultural diplomacy, a hallmark of his career in the West. In Argentina, Germany, Britain, and America, even during the Second World War, Falcão cultivated, promoted, and socialized with Brazilian artists and intellectuals, and sought to create links with the local cultural establishment.¹³⁰ In India, it seems, he saw no reason for this 'apostolic' work. His grudging admiration for Nehruvian India's developmentalist energy, or the strategic windfalls of its neutralism, did not dispel his basic sense of the civilizational distance between Brazil and India. Brazil was Western, white, and in the American penumbra, in the Manichaeic world of the Cold War. India, in his estimation, was the opposite. Though he was acutely aware of their shared status as peripheral nations in the global order, at no point did he recognize common ground in their (post)colonial histories.

The reactions of these Brazilian figures to India revealed the depth of their self-identification with the West. For all the ways in which Brazilian observers saw a reflection of their own peripheral situation in India, this self-identification, particularly with regard to Brazil's relationship with the West's imperial heritage, prevented a truly commensurable experience. Indeed, this may explain how, even under the radical shifts in foreign policy attitudes under Presidents Quadros and Goulart, Brazil's support for the nations of the 'developing world' rarely transcended the level of rhetoric. In this light, one can perhaps recast Moya's reservations regarding 'the wisdom of blindly applying Indian-derived postcolonial theories to the dramatically different colonial and post-colonial experiences of "the Indies"'.¹³¹ Instead, the question worth exploring is why Latin Americans could be

130 Museum of Modern Art Archives, Lincoln Kirstein Papers, correspondence from January 1943 regarding the Brazilian composer Camargo Guarnieri. See Jussilene Santa, 'Martim Gonçalves: uma escola de teatro contra a província (Martim Gonçalves: a school of theatre against province)', PhD thesis, Universidade Federal de Bahia, 2011, p. 61.

131 Moya, 'Continent of immigrants', p. 24.

drawn to these Indian-derived postcolonial theories and whether these theories can be cross-fertilized by their very different (post)colonial histories.

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