

where Cervone is at her best, and why this book will matter for those interested in indigenous movements and identity politics in Latin America.

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**JEFFREY LESSER: *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.**

This well-crafted study manages to condense a huge body of scholarship into two hundred pages. Italians, Portuguese, and Spaniards made up a majority of the more than five-million immigrants who flowed into Brazil between 1872 and 1972, and Jeffrey Lesser adds new and interesting stories about these immigrant groups. Building on the rich sources that he collected for his previous studies on immigrants from elsewhere, such as Japan, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, the book offers a sophisticated synthesis of Brazilian immigration that is accessible to novices and experts alike.

Lesser moves seamlessly from original anecdotes about European, Asian, and Middle Eastern immigrant lives to their real-life and rhetorical relationships to each other and to Brazilians of African, European, and Indigenous heritage. He integrates an overview of where immigrants came from, summarizing why they left and how they received support from—or were ignored by—their countries of origin before, during, or after migration. Reports from emigration boards and consular agents, along with letters, novels, newspapers, cartoons, advertisements, photographs, and police reports, provide windows into the everyday life and interactions among immigrants and Brazilians that the author paraphrases, cites, or includes as primary documents at the end of each chapter, making the book ideal for classroom use.

French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's ideas provided the scientific scaffolding for Brazilian immigration policy: Elites believed that a single national race could be forged and improved by adding "strong" white immigrants to the pre-existing mix of Portuguese, African, and Indigenous peoples (page 13). Many immigrants capitalized on the malleable perception of whiteness to project themselves into this category, placing themselves above the more than 4.8 million Africans who arrived in Brazil over the course of the Atlantic slave trade years (page 11). Nevertheless, other immigrants "moved in the opposite direction, either by marrying a person of color or not fulfilling certain cultural, social, and occupation expectations" (page 7). Some creative immigrant leaders from Japan and the Middle East posited that the Indians of Brazil were their

forefathers, a “lost tribe” from Eurasia or Israel who had led the way to the Americas (pages 5, 117-118, 161).

Brazil’s search for progress and whiteness trumped any religious or cultural concern for continuity. Some surprising groups ended up in Brazil as a result of this policy. For example, in 1817 Brazil’s Dom João VI imagined the climate in the mountains of Rio de Janeiro to resemble Switzerland’s, and offered logistical support to Swiss immigrants for travel and housing. The settlers did not take well to the tropics so Dom João hired a Protestant minister to rally their spirits: “Dom João and his allies believed that order and progress ... would be implanted in Brazil via Northern European Protestants, whom they saw as uniquely industrious and as indisputably white. ... [His] decision to defy the pope paved the way for streams of newcomers from across the globe in the late nineteenth century” (page 19). Other interesting groups who arrived in Brazil in this era included Chinese immigrants hired to grow tea, Prussian “Muckers” seeking a place to practice their religion, and U.S. Confederates looking to create a “new South” in exile (pages 44-68).

São Paulo state, which grew almost twice as fast as the rest of Brazil, subsidized the passages for more than half of the two million immigrants who entered between 1890 and 1930 (pages 70-72). More immigrants had the will and the way to make it to Brazil because they no longer had to compete with slavery (abolished in 1888) and travel time was down to two weeks (from three months) thanks to steam-powered vessels. Europe’s rapid population growth pushed immigrants out while America’s expanding economies, industrialization and urban development drew them in: Some 2.6 million settled in Brazil between 1880 and 1910, fourth after the U.S., Argentina, and Canada (page 62). Lesser zooms in to the Brazilian countryside and cities to describe living conditions and the dynamics between Brazilians and immigrant groups including Italians, Spaniards, Germans, Chinese, Syrian, and Lebanese. Attention to gender adds fascinating stories including that of the Italian coffee farmer who faced up to powerful Brazilians to protect his sister’s honour (pages 80-81), and the Syrian businessman whose love for a beautiful Italian led him to bankruptcy and insanity (page 83).

Middle Eastern immigrants, predominantly Christian, and Jewish immigrants, predominantly European, also left their homes to seek better fortunes in Brazil, but they were unsubsidized and thus a surprise to the Brazilian elite. Intellectuals struggled to make sense of them, forging a mythical “Arab-Jewish-Portuguese-Mozarab-Tupí-Brazilian link” (page 118). Ethnic categories moved fluidly; for example, “Turcos,” upon gaining steady employment became “Syrians,” then “Lebanese” if they moved up to shop or factory owners (page 125). Middle Eastern immigrants provided important alternate sources of information and

credit as peddlers, unofficial post officers, and shop owners, especially in rural areas. Polish and German Jewish immigrants thrived in urban areas through manufacturing and as tailors, mechanics, and shoemakers.

Many Arab and Jewish immigrants did very well thanks to cooperative ethnic banking schemes that gave them access to loans to establish shops or factories (page 131). These groups, like the Asians whose fascinating stories are discussed in the final chapter, also benefitted from the elite perception that they were above Afro-Brazilians. Some portrayed the Japanese as biologically superior to Brazilians of African or mixed backgrounds, focusing on their high productivity levels (they constituted under 3 percent of Brazil's population in 1933, but grew 46 percent of its cotton, 57 percent of silk, and 75 percent of tea) (page 164). For the most part—excluding the xenophobic eras surrounding world wars or economic downturns—Arabs, Jews, and Asians were considered a contribution to the Brazilian race; this was not the case for U.S. citizens of African descent, whose 1920s colonization project Brazilian policymakers rejected (pages 142-147).

Lesser's masterful study shows us how communities interacted with each other and negotiated the changing elite ideas and state policies regarding race and ethnicity, language and education rights, the press, cinemas, music, food, clubs, and sports. From stories about the Japanese denying the loss of WWII to those of Japanese-Brazilians trying to make their fortunes in contemporary Japan, Lesser efficiently communicates the major changes in immigration patterns from the 1880s to the present.

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**OLIVIER COMPAGNON: *L'adieu à l'Europe: L'Amérique latine et la Grande Guerre (Argentine et Brésil, 1914-1939)*. Paris: Fayard, 2013.**

La Primera Guerra Mundial (1914-1918) significó, sin lugar a dudas, un punto de inflexión en la historia europea y estadounidense. La bibliografía sobre el tema es, en consecuencia, abundante y en constante producción. Sin embargo, poco se ha escrito específicamente sobre el impacto de dicho conflicto en los países latinoamericanos, despreciándose el peso que habría tenido en los procesos internos. La presente obra intenta iluminar ese espacio historiográfico, mediante una historia comparada entre dos grandes países de la región: Argentina y Brasil. Olivier Compagnon, profesor de historia contemporánea de la Universidad Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris III (*Institute des hautes études de l'Amérique latine*),