Brazilian Railway Culture

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In March 1962, during the post-Carnival weeks of Lent, a Greek-born Prince walked down the steps of a railway station built by British engineers and run by descendants of Italian and Portuguese families. The photograph that captured this moment was published on the cover of a magazine, *Ferrovia*, a railway staff journal (Fig. 1-1). Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, husband of the reigning British monarch Queen Elizabeth II, was on a visit to Brazil. The station building where this occurred had been built in the Victorian gothic style at the turn of the twentieth century: an architectural memorial to the British informal empire constructed by English-speaking railway engineers and funded by shareholders in London and Europe (Fig. 1-2). Just after the end of World War Two the concession had expired and the railway line, the most profitable in Brazil, had reverted to federal government ownership. Behind the scenes, litigation by British shareholders in search of financial compensation was rumbling on in the courts even as Prince Philip embarked on his official visit.

The image on the front cover of this magazine is none-too-well framed, with the viewer initially confused by the crowd of men walking down the steps from the booking hall towards the platforms. *Ferrovia*, founded in 1935 and originally called *Revista SPR*, was the official Portuguese-language magazine of what was, until the 1940s, the British-owned *São Paulo Railway*[1] and was published at intervals ranging from one to three months for distribution to the 13,000 employees of the line.[2] Each edition included articles for the staff, retired workers, members of the railway social club and their families, and usually ran to between thirty-two and forty-four pages with a front cover that featured some architectural or technological aspect of the railway.

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[1] There are several different spellings and naming conventions for this line. For the sake of consistency this study uses *São Paulo Railway* throughout.

[2] "Publisher's Statement", *Revista SPR*, Vol. V (January 1940), p. 3.

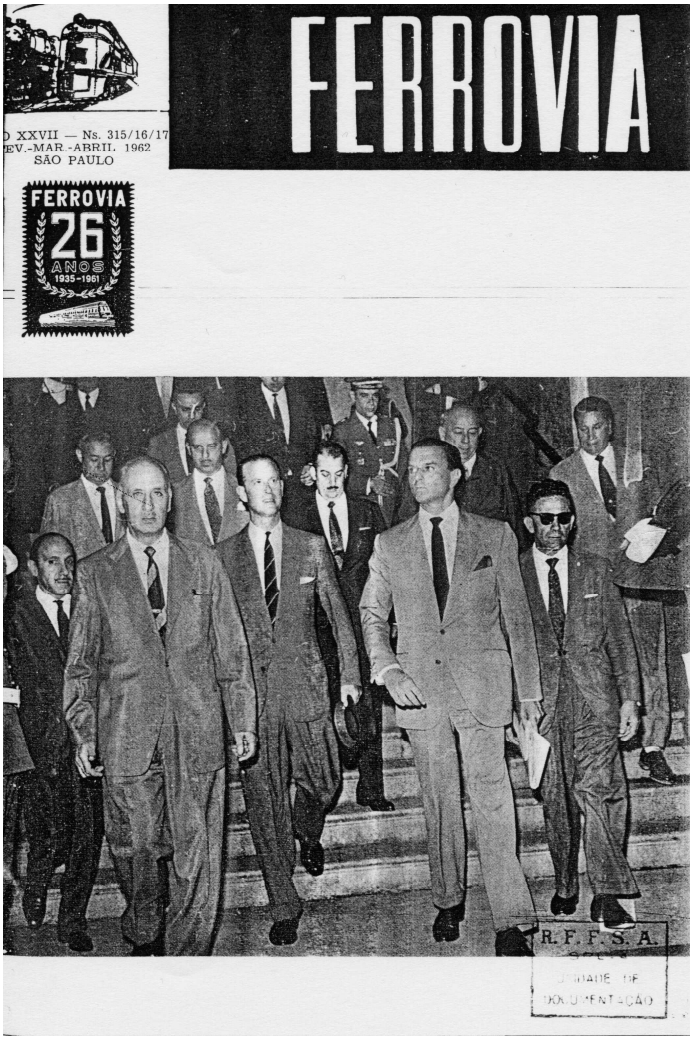

Fig. 1-1 Cover of *Ferrovia* magazine, April 1962.[3] Front left in the photograph is Pedro de Andrade Carvalho, superintendent of the railway line from Santos to São Paulo and Jundiaí. To his left (the viewer's right), and one pace behind, is Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh wearing a thin-striped tie.

[3] RFFSA/SPR Archive, São Paulo, SP, *Ferrovia*, Vol. XXVII (February-April 1962), p. 1.

Publication continued when the Brazilian government took over the ownership of the line in 1946 and from the 1950s onwards it has been published by the *Associação dos Engenheiros da Estrada de Ferro Santos à Jundiaí* (AEEFSJ, the Association of Engineers of the Santos to Jundiaí Railway). Occasionally, posed group photographs of senior management would appear on the cover but this edition of 1962 marked a departure with the printing of a hastily snapped news picture. It takes a moment to realise that the Duke of Edinburgh is walking one step behind the Brazilian in charge of the railway line, and that the Prince is the only one in the photograph looking to his left (to the viewer's right). One wonders why the photograph was not cropped to leave just the left hand side of the image for publication: the manner in which it is presented gives an impression of the large crowd of important people surrounding and controlling the movements of the solitary Prince.

1. Railway transport in Brazil

Why study the railways of Brazil? Two points are offered in answer to this question. Ian Carter, in his study of railway culture in Britain, was thinking of literary output when he wrote that "…disdained genres offer largely unexploited oceans in which to fish".[4] The wealth of material which will be briefly summarised here, and which will be explored in more detail in the chapters that follow, suggests that the subject of the railway in Brazil is one such ocean–not just of literary output but other forms of cultural expression–worth investigating. The second point, linked to the first, is that "the railway" is not necessarily high on a list of ideas which a foreigner would associate with a Brazil popularly seen as a land of football, samba, carnival and beaches.[5] Yet at the same time rail transport has played an important part in the country's history. A brief mention in Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn's book *The Fate of the Forest* which was an account of the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest–a major talking point in the early 1990s–drew attention to the fact that a railway, the *Estrada de Ferro Madeira-Mamoré*, had been built between

[4] Ian Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester, 2001), p. 7.

[5] Piers Armstrong, *Third World Literary Fortunes: Brazilian Culture and its International Reception* (Cranbury, NJ, 1999), pp. 11-12; Roberto DaMatta, *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*, trans. John Drury (Notre Dame, IN, 1991), pp. 239.

1860 and 1914 in the Brazilian Amazon.[6] It was this juxtaposition of ideas–railway technology and environmental issues–that led to a further investigation of railway transport in Brazil.[7] What was found was a country-wide network of railway preservationists and a growing niche tourist industry, prompting further research with a desire to understand firstly how this had developed over the past thirty years and secondly the cultural context of the railway in Brazilian society.

The railway has affected millions of Brazilians between its arrival in the 1850s and the present day. It has been a part of daily life for generations of passengers and rail workers, and more recently for museum visitors. Figures from 2006 (the most recent complete data available) suggest that over 728 million passengers were carried by rail in Brazil, a country with a population of almost 170 million.[8] In contrast, the railway network in Britain carried 1.1 billion passengers in a country with a population of some 60 million.[9] The comparative proportions may be in the range of four to one between the two countries, but the usage of the railways by passengers in Brazil is still significant. This is an aspect of the country that does not reflect the image abroad of a sensual tropical location, and therefore warrants further investigation that challenges the prevailing images of carnival and football.

This present study is an investigation into the place of the railway in Brazilian society and culture, and the photograph in Fig. 1-1 serves to illustrate some of the complex relationships that will be examined and discussed. The first point to make is the nationalities of those in the picture. São Paulo can be regarded as a city of migrants.[10] Its population

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[6] Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn, *The Fate of the Forest: Developers, Destroyers and Defenders of the Amazon* (Revised edn., London, 1990), pp. 77-78, 89-94.

[7] Martin Cooper, "Steam Railways in Brazil: Their Cultural Context and Preservation" (unpublished MA dissertation, University of York, 2002).

[8] Agência Nacional de Transportes Terrestres (ANTT), *Evolução Recente do Transporte Ferroviário* (Brasília, DF, 2007), pp. 8-9; Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), *Brasil em Números/Brazil in Figures*, Vol. 14 (Rio de Janeiro RJ, 2006), p. 68, Table 2.1.

[9] Office of Rail Regulation, *National Rail Trends 2007-2008*, Qtr. Two (London, July-September 2007), p. 11; Office for National Statistics, *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, No. 140 (London, 2004), p. 26, Table 5.1.

[10] From the 1890s onwards the *São Paulo Railway* was one of many companies that were major employers of semi-skilled immigrants from Italy, Spain and

has from its foundation largely been made up of the descendants of southern and middle European immigrants, as well as people from the Middle East and Far East Asia; to these have been added migrants from Brazil's northeast and the rural interior. In this regard it is similar to many other large Brazilian urban centres, where population movement has shaped its formation, growth, history and identity.[11] São Paulo's museum of immigration, the Memorial do Imigrante, is based in a building in the city centre close to the railway line up from Santos that was once a former reception and registration centre: it is Brazil's version of the USA's Ellis Island. Between 1887 and 1978 millions of immigrants disembarked at Santos and many took the *São Paulo Railway* up through the Atlantic forest to the reception centre. This was but one of several ports of entry for settlers, yet by this route alone came the largest ethnic group: up to 1.5 million who travelled from Italy.[12] The railway, a technology implanted and run by British specialists, thus played a vital part in the experience of first arrival on Brazilian soil and later in the daily crush of overcrowded and late-running trains. How this railway ensemble was engaged with by Brazilian culture and society, and the tensions that were played out from the 1860s onwards, is the focus of this study.

Ferrovia said in an editorial that the Prince was visiting to "revive and reinforce the ties of friendship that have always linked Brazilians and the English".[13] It remarked that,

> Here… on the *E. F. Santos à Jundiaí* the work of the sons of Glorious Albion was so efficient that for ninety years the Railway maintained a consistent growth and was always one of the shining examples of business–not just in Brazil but in the world as a whole.[14]

Portugal. See: Elizabeth de Fiore and Ottaviano de Fiore (eds.), *A Presença Britânica no Brasil (1808-1914)* (São Paulo, SP, 1987), pp. 117-118.

[11] Ana Teresa Jardim Reynaud, "Migrants' Accounts of Rio: The Contribution of Affect to Remembering Place", *Space & Culture*, 7 (2004), 9-19. See also the collection of essays edited by Francisco Costa in "450 Anos de São Paulo", *Revista USP*, 63 (2004).

[12] "Imigrantes Estrangeiros Entrados no Estado de São Paulo - 1885-1961", *Memorial do Imigrante: Histórico da Hospedaria* (2006), "http://www.memorialdoimigrante.sp.gov.br/historico/e6.htm" (26 May 2008); Boris Fausto, *A Concise History of Brazil*, trans. Arthur Brakel (Cambridge, 1999), p. 166 and p. 234.

[13] *Ferrovia*, Vol. XXVII (February-April 1962), p. 2.

[14] Ibid.

The article then went on to observe that the subsequent transfer to Brazilian government ownership of this and other lines had improved the power of the railways even more. The few railway employees who had a literary background may have noticed the reworking of a turn of phrase attributed to the French revolutionary poet Augustin, who dismissed Britain as "perfidious Albion".[15] The cover photograph depicted bemused British royalty following submissively one pace behind the strident leadership of Brazilian technocrats. Roland Barthes in *Image-Music-Text* observes that an accompanying magazine text serves to reinforce the connotation of the visual image, and here the front cover photograph and text on page two taken together represent over one hundred years of complex diplomatic, technological and business history.[16] The implication was that now, since the railway has been freed of its links to the Old World, it was even more successful and professionally run: Albion's glory had been diminished.

In reading this image in this way the assumption has been made that the presence of a foreign technology such as the railway was problematic in Brazil. That assumption is borne out by the evidence presented during the course of this study. The railways across Brazil were largely built to aid the extraction of natural resources, including initially sugar and coffee and later iron ore and soya beans, for export markets.[17] Such extractive industries and infrastructures created tensions not just in Brazil: elsewhere, Joseph Conrad described in his novel *Nostromo* the fictitious events in a Latin American country during the nineteenth century in which silver from the mines was transported to the docks by a foreign-built railway "…which is to put money into the pockets of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Americans, Germans, and God knows who else".[18] Eugenio Garcia, in his reading of British consular correspondence between Rio de Janeiro and

[15] Augustin, Marquis de Ximénèz, "L'Ère des Français", in *Poésies Révolutionnaires et Contre-révolutionnaires* Vol. 1, (1821 [1793]), p. 160, quoted in Angela Partington (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Revised 4th edn., Oxford, 1996), p. 750.

[16] Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message", in Susan Sontag (ed.), *A Roland Barthes Reader* (London, 1993), pp. 194-210.

[17] William R. Summerhill, *Order against Progress: Government, Foreign Investment and Railroads in Brazil 1854-1913* (Stanford, CA, 2003), pp. 58-105.

[18] Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo* (London, 1994 [1904]), p. 197. The story is regarded as being based on Colombia and Panama. See: Malcolm Deas, "'Weapons of the Weak?' Colombia and Foreign Powers in the Nineteenth Century", in Matthew Brown (ed.), *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital* (Oxford, 2008), p. 173.

London during the early 1920s, notes that the British were aware of frequent public criticism of the British-owned railways, and "consequently, any problem in the service was imputed directly to the British"; the feeling being that such transport operations were by rights something Brazil should be managing for herself.[19]

On Brazilian soil the technology was built, in the main, by British engineers backed by English shareholders trading on Britain's longstanding special relationship with Brazil that remained for much of the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century the USA grew to prominence in the provision of railway technology, and by the end of the twentieth century rolling stock from Japan, China and Spain was appearing on the rails.[20] The term "railway imperialism" has been used to describe conditions such as these where, in the nineteenth century during the growth of the railways in Brazil, they formed part of Britain's informal empire based on trade and financial influence rather than military or political control.[21] The difference in meaning between "railway imperialism" and the railway industry's part in "informal empire" will be discussed in chapter two. As far as Brazil was concerned not all the railway companies were owned by foreign shareholders. Indeed the railway had, from its inception in the 1850s until the present day, been characterised by its complexity of ownership: there never existed one unified railway network either in private, foreign, state or federal hands. At least three different operating gauges also posed problems. The engineers and managers had been initially British, but were soon joined by French and North Americans, and later on engineering and technology colleges began to turn out qualified Brazilian railway engineers. The unskilled workmen who first built them came from dozens of countries across the world.[22] Through this rich and complex tapestry of control and power this study will probe

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[19] Eugenio Vargas Garcia, *Anglo-American Rivalry in Brazil: The Case of the 1920s*, University of Oxford Centre for Brazilian Studies Working Paper CBS-14-00 (P), 2000, pp. 17-18.

[20] Renê Fernandes Schoppa, *150 Anos do Trem no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 2004), pp. 188-190.

[21] Ronald E. Robinson, "Introduction: Railway Imperialism", in Clarence B. David and Kenneth E. Wilburn Jr (eds.), *Railway Imperialism* (Westport, CT, 1991), p. 2; Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford, 2001), p. 41.

[22] For example, estimates suggest that more than forty nationalities were working on the construction of the Madeira-Mamoré Railway between 1909 and 1911. See: Manoel Rodrigues Ferreira, *A Ferrovia do Diabo* (3rd edn., São Paulo, SP, 2005), p. 212, 235, 272 and 285.

Fig. 1-2 Estação da Luz, São Paulo, SP, 2004

aspects of the railway ensemble in Brazil to reveal the tensions created by a form of imperialism which involved "the practice of power through facilitating institutions and ideologies".[23]

As already suggested the cover photograph of *Ferrovia* (Fig. 1-1) can be read as a "text" and thus interpreted as a snapshot of the various subaltern and postcolonial positions between Brazil and Britain.[24] Dr. Carvalho, looking directly ahead just over the photographer's head, appears determined and in control. Just behind him the Prince, holding a railwayman's cap, is gazing away to his left and for a moment appears lost in a foreign land. What is assumed to be one of his British aides, holding a newspaper, strides ahead on the Prince's left, looking the opposite way in a preoccupied manner. Behind and around them the cohort of Brazilian railway bosses, politicians and military figures descends the stairs adding, it seems, to the royal visitor's unease as he is taken deeper inside the Estação da Luz (Fig. 1-2).

[23] Young, *Postcolonialism*, p. 27.
[24] Liz Wells (ed.), *Photography: A Critical Introduction* (2nd edn., London, 2000), pp. 17-35, and pp. 102-108; Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (2nd edn., London, 2002), pp. 114-120.

The press photograph, after Roland Barthes, is *of* something, "contrary to the text which, by the sudden action of a single word, can shift a sentence from description to reflection", and here a member of the British royal family is walking down a flight of stone steps surrounded by a group of stern-faced men in suits.[25] In the words of Susan Sontag, "to photograph is to confer importance", and this photograph appears to be a journalistic record of the event, historical "proof" of the visit, taken with a flashbulb in a hurry as the men walk towards the camera without looking directly at it.[26] It is neither a posed nor a formal picture and in this way it brings a sense of immediacy and informality to the unfolding official visit. To the viewer comes the realisation that this is a stolen moment: Prince Philip does not appear to be a willing participant in that, for this snapshot at least, he was not allowed to pose. On page two of the same edition of the magazine is a more relaxed picture of the royal visitor standing in conversation with the head of the railway. It is significant that each of these two photographs has been chosen for its particular location in the pages of this edition of the magazine. Susan Sontag goes on to make the point that a photograph can alter "the meaning of value" that is accorded to the subject.[27] The royal visitor is, by definition, an important person but underneath the events recorded by this photograph is an anti-imperial message which conveys an image of Brazilian railway management regaining control of British technology and business culture. Again, the framing of the photograph is significant in that it scrupulously includes a wide view of the numerous Brazilian dignitaries rather than a tight shot of the railway superintendent and the Prince. It suggests that strength in numbers is the way to reign victorious. It also presents the male body in full length, giving a view of the surrounding open space that is most definitely a public and masculine one, rather than an interior feminine space.[28] I am aware that, as here, the reading of the particular cultural outputs and performances in this study is but one possible interpretation; however a start has to be made somewhere on what has so far been an unexamined aspect of Brazilian culture and society. Further, this study does not make any detailed comparisons between Brazil and other countries, even though for some purposes use is made of work by cultural

[25] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, NY, 1981), p. 28.
[26] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London, 2002 [1977]), p. 28.
[27] Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 28.
[28] Derrick Price and Liz Wells, "Thinking About Photography: Debates, Historically and Now", in Liz Wells, *Photography*, pp. 43-44.

analysts such as Ian Carter.[29] To return to the front cover of *Ferrovia*: reading a photograph, which in itself is, as Roland Barthes suggests, a fleeting testimony of the past, uncovers just one story in the jigsaw of Brazilian culture.[30] This study ranges over a number of media in order to put the railway in Brazil into a wider cultural context. The web of significances is large and complex, as suggested by the following brief example.

2. The *São Paulo Railway*

The idea for this particular railway line was conceived in the 1850s, set down on paper in the form of a concession published as an Imperial decree, and granted to a Brazilian consortium in 1856.[31] One member of that group was the Baron and Viscount Mauá, described by Gilberto Freyre as an anglophile, who received his business training as a young man during an extended working visit to London.[32] The concession was then lost, by what some Brazilian historians say were underhand methods, after the British construction firm became insolvent and the Baron of Mauá, unable to fund the losses, was forced into bankruptcy.[33] The railway passed fully into British control and services were inaugurated and operated from the port of Santos through São Paulo to Jundiaí by British senior and middle management in a foreign land from 1867 to 1946. A foreign business organisation and its technology now controlled the transport of passengers and freight across the landscape. It was a transport monopoly that linked Jundaí and São Paulo with the port of Santos for the export of coffee and the "import" of hundreds of thousands of European immigrants destined to work on the plantations.[34] In this respect the

[29] Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain.*
[30] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 87-89.
[31] Moysés Lavander Jr and Paulo Augusto Mendes, *SPR: Memórias de uma Inglesa* (São Paulo, SP, 2005), p. 16.
[32] Gilberto Freyre, *Ingleses no Brasil:Aspectos da Influência Britânica sobre a Vida, a Paisagem e a Cultura do Brasil* (3rd edn., Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 2000 [1948]), p. 78.
[33] Compare, for example, Lavander Jr. and Mendes, *SPR*, pp.19-23; Antonio Soukef Junior and Maria Inês Dias Mazzoco, *Cem Anos Luz: A Hundred Light Years* (São Paulo, SP, 2000), pp. 27-28; Jorge Caldeira, *Mauá: Empresário do Império* (São Paulo, SP, 1995), pp. 413-423; and Visconde de Mauá, *Autobiografia (Exposição aos Credores)* (3rd edn., Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 1998 [1878]), pp. 150-163.
[34] Odilon Nogueira de Matos, *Café e Ferrovias: A Evolução Ferroviária de São Paulo e o Desenvolvimento da Cultura Cafeeira* (4th edn., Campinas, SP, 1990).

railway was a catalyst for the growth of Italian, Japanese and German cultural influences within a significant area of Brazil.

Foreign-owned utility companies were subjected to scrutiny by the national and provincial governments who had given the original concessions, as well as by the press.[35] The British-owned railway company was often publicly criticised, particularly after rail accidents and resulting court cases. Local expatriate managers were aware of the sensitivities of their passengers and the legislators, and realised that even the company's very identity was being challenged. Linguistically the British had a struggle on their hands to maintain their chosen name for the railway. In June 1871 the railway superintendent, D. M. Fox, wrote to a colleague, "Our company's title in the 'Publica Forma' should be *São Paulo Brazilian Railway Company (Limited)*".[36] In fact the company was registered in England as the *San Paulo (Brazilian) Railway Company Limited*; it was known to readers of Portuguese language newspapers in Brazil as the *S. P. Railway*, and colloquially as the *Inglesa*–a name that persists today. Gilberto Freyre has noted that Brazil has a well-established tendency to "receive, assimilate, adopt, develop, recreate, and brazilianise foreign ideas",[37] and certainly the British company was unable to properly establish its desired name in either Brazilian governmental documents or the press.

The familiar name, *Inglesa*, survived the official name-change to *Estrada de Ferro Santos à Jundiaí* (*EFS-J*) which happened in 1946 when the foreign concession ended and the railway was taken over by the Brazilian authorities. In 1957, upon the advice of a team of USA and Brazilian consultants, a significant part of the country's railway system was incorporated into the *Rede Ferroviária Federal S/A* (*RFFSA*) and the *EFS-J* became part of Region Four of this large organisation. Passenger services came under the control of the *Companhia Paulista de Trens Metropolitano* (*CPTM*) in 1992, when the railway became "Linha A" and "Linha D" of the suburban São Paulo network.[38] Its visitors' book, started in 1927 and closed in 2003, has the unadorned signature "Philip, 18 March

[35] Colin M. Lewis, *Public Policy and Private Initiative: Railway Building in São Paulo, 1860-1889* (London, 1991), pp. 27-40; Summerhill, *Order against Progress*, pp. 34-57.
[36] Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, *E. F. Santos à Jundiaí 1871-1872*, E00656, p. 41, D. M. Fox to Murray, 28 June 1871.
[37] Freyre, *Ingleses no Brasil*, p. 28.
[38] Schoppa, *150 Anos do Trem*, pp. 92-97.

1962" tucked away in between over one hundred and fifty pages of gracious comments and thanks.[39]

Even as Prince Philip was making his tour of the railway, the remnant of the British company, by then part of an investment portfolio held by a porcelain maker, was continuing to press its claim for compensation in the Brazilian courts, complaining that between 1961 and 1963 it had lost out on the latest round of appeals because of the poor postal service which had delayed the publishing of lower court judgements by many months.[40] The company was slowly dying with ill-grace as the Brazilians were in the limelight taking control of British royalty. On the pages of *Ferrovia* history was being altered, with no direct mention of any of the names for the British company which had previously run the line. The reader is left with the impression that, even if it was built by foreign engineers, it had for ever been the *EFS-J*. Its leading managers had now become Brazilian as the English names were erased from the written histories; the transport experience had become Brazilian. Records of correspondence from the British Embassy in Rio de Janeiro suggest that the Prince's trip from São Paulo city by rail to a private weekend retreat near the city of Campinas in 1962 was laid on at the initiative of the Brazilian authorities and had never been in the original plans of the British organisers of the Royal tour.[41] This can be interpreted as an indication that control of events and the railway itself had been taken away from the British and were now fully under the organisational capabilities of the Brazilians. It was the office of the governor of the State of São Paulo that had raised the idea of using the railway, and not the British officials organising the royal tour.[42] In effect Brazil was offering back to the service of Britain what had once been its own; an act that can be read as a challenge to the earlier informal railway imperialism.

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[39] RFFSA/SPR Archive, São Paulo, SP, *São Paulo Railway Co., Visitantes 1927-*, p. 55.

[40] Wedgwood Museum and Archives, Stoke-on-Trent, *S.P.R. Investments Ltd: Shareholders Minutes to May 1977*, San Paulo (Brazilian) Railway Company Limited, Statement to Shareholders, 31 December 1964, p. 10

[41] The National Archives, London, FO 372/7607, Item TR027/14, Caryl Ramsden to Dugald Malcolm, 17 November 1961.

[42] Orthographic note: Where State is capitalised in this study it refers to a specific legal entity for example the State of São Paulo, or São Paulo State. Where it is not capitalised it refers to a geographic area, for example, the state of São Paulo or São Paulo state.

Other changes were happening: The São Paulo Railway Athletic Club (SPRAC), founded in 1903 as a football and sports club for employees when the railway was in British hands, changed its name after the concession ended in 1946 to Nacional A.C.[43] Indirectly the *São Paulo Railway* had helped to bring football from England to Brazil: Charles Miller, born in Brazil of British parents and for a time an employee in the stores department of the railway, is credited with bringing the sport to Brazil in 1895.[44] Yet here also, recent accounts have Miller as a "jovem paulistano" (young person of São Paulo) to stress that his place of birth made him Brazilian despite the nationality of his parents.[45] Elsewhere songwriters were using the railway as inspiration for carnival themes, poets and writers were creating an image of a transport technology that was bringing conflict between tradition and modernity and between urban and rural, and painters were capturing on canvas the process of transculturation of this large technical cultural system. Later, museums would be created from closed branch lines and redundant rolling stock.

For the passengers the experience of travelling on Brazil's railways was becoming an enduring misery. By 1983 a survey of 2,400 passengers conducted in Rio de Janeiro (a figure that represented 2.3% of the city's daily total of rail passengers) by the national rail authority, the *RFFSA*, found that 45% of passengers arrived at their destination more than five minutes late, 66% had to wait more than ten minutes for a train home after work and just under half of all respondents said there was a lack of both seats and standing room on rush-hour trains. The carriages were dirty, full of hawkers selling biscuits and chewing gum, and a worrying 77% of those questioned said they travelled in fear of being assaulted.[46] Civil unrest and rioting at railway stations, sometimes in protest at travel conditions and at other times as a manifestation of a general disquiet at political events, had occurred sporadically throughout the twentieth century.[47]

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[43] Lavander Jr and Mendes, *SPR*, pp, 291-292.
[44] Ibid; Josh Lacey, *God is Brazilian: Charles Miller, the Man who Brought Football to Brazil* (Stroud, Glos., 2005), pp. 99-102.
[45] Hilário Franco Júnior, *A Dança dos Deuses: Futebol, Sociedade, Cultura* (São Paulo, SP, 2007), pp. 60-61.
[46] RFFSA–Diretoria de Transporte Metropolitano, *Pesquisa de Opinão Pública: Rio de Janeiro*, (Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 1983).
[47] José Alvaro Moisés and Verena Martinez-Alier, "Urban Transport and Popular Violence: The Case of Brazil", *Past and Present*, 86 (1980), 174-192.

So the cover of *Ferrovia* magazine from 1962 is part of a connected web of cultural representations of the railway in Brazil. It reveals a range of meanings, a host of connections and stories from international diplomacy and business across almost one hundred years. It also suggests that what was once British technology had now been Brazilianised in its business and political control and, I would suggest, in its cultural identity. This particular aspect, the transculturation of the railway, will be discussed further in chapter two.

3. Structure

This study is not an economic or political history of the railway in Brazil. The complexity of ownership of each of the lines over the course of the past 160 years, ranging from private-foreign, to private-domestic, state and federal, followed by an incomplete nationalisation in the 1950s and a subsequent privatisation in the 1990s means that the subject is beyond the scope of a single volume. In 1888 there were some sixty-five companies, and in 1954 there remained forty-four separate lines in operation.[48] Today there are twenty-three rail operators, including freight, suburban and tourist passenger companies.[49] A number of works of economic history have been published in English covering case studies and specific time periods, and in Brazil there is a steady stream of books recounting the stories of individual lines and companies. A range of these latter works will be discussed in chapter three.

This study, in analysing Brazilian railway culture, will examine a number of aspects of the railway as experienced across the country. The chapters that follow are grouped into two sections. Part I, "The Railway and Culture in Brazil", examines the interpretations of the railway experience in Brazil from 1865 to 2003. These representations range from the daily ride to work on a late-running overcrowded suburban train to childhood memories of rural trips to see uncles and aunts; from the inclusion as a narrative linkage in a TV soap opera about Italian immigrants to the evocative smells of burning coal and wood in a locomotive's firebox. Sources considered will include railway autobiographies and the manner in which they seek to insert their authors' names into history, and how artists, poets and musicians have found inspiration from travel by train and the presence of the tracks in the landscape. What will emerge is

[48] Schoppa, *150 Anos do Trem*, pp. 33-34, p. 156.
[49] ANTT, *Evolução Recente do Transporte Ferroviário*, p. 2.

evidence of a duality of views about the railway in Brazil: the tensions between urban and rural, between tradition and modernity, and between national and foreign. Part II, "The Past into the Present", uses this historical context to investigate the meanings in museums of railway heritage and the way visitors are engaging with the displays.

The chapters that follow in part I examine the emergence of meanings over time and demonstrate that there is no single identifiable metaphor created by the railway in Brazil, but rather a series of interpretations which reveal the feelings of tension inherent in this large system. The changes in the railway's significance from 1860 to the beginning of the twenty-first century reflect its function, place within, and effect upon Brazilian society and at the same time the influence of that society upon the transport system. This struggle for meaning is most evident in fiction, television, cinema, poetry and popular music: all cultural engagements carried out during the railway's existence in Brazil. Dualities of meaning of the railway ensemble have been (and still are being) negotiated in these media forms.

Chapter two begins by outlining the key concepts used in this study of the railway in Brazil. By critiquing Wolfgang Schivelbusch's notion of the "railway ensemble", and developing Thomas Hughes' method of studying industrial-scale networks, the idea of a "large technical cultural system" is introduced. [50] Schivelbusch says that with the advent of the railway "route and vehicle became technically conjoined…" which allowed this mode of transport to be thought of as a system or ensemble of machine, track, and landscape.[51] Meanwhile Hughes, concerned as he is with the generation and supply of electricity, notes that,

> those who seek to control and direct them must acknowledge the fact that systems are evolving cultural artefacts rather than isolated technologies.[52]

This systems analysis encourages a broader understanding of the railway ensemble in terms of both geographical spread and artistic medium than Schivelbusch's more limited focus of analysis. This means, for instance, that film studies, literary and art criticism, postcolonial critique and

[50] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, CA, 1986); Thomas Hughes, *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930* (Baltimore, MD, 1983).
[51] Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, p. 16.
[52] Hughes, *Networks of Power*, p. 465.

museum studies are variously employed in approaching Brazilian railway culture. My approach seeks to put cultural aspects centre stage within the ensemble of the railway. The "technology" of the railway is understood to be both the machines themselves and the regular activity of building, owning, and operating such a system. "Culture" is considered in more detail in chapter two but in brief it is taken as both a product–the effect such a system or ensemble has on the meanings as shared in a particular society, for example, as the inspiration for paintings, songs, film and television–and as a process experienced when the railway is travelled on, written about, and visited in a museum. The previous discussion about the front cover of the *Ferrovia* magazine introduced two other terms which will be developed in chapter two, the concepts of "transculturation" and "hybridity" as understood in the context of the railway system in Brazil.

Armed with this heuristic of the railway ensemble in Brazil the chapters that follow each identify and analyse an aspect of cultural production, starting in chapter three with an examination of the writing of railway history by Brazilian authors. Ian Carter, considering comparisons between Britain, France and the USA, observes that the railway ensemble changed its character as the technology spread across the world:

> Born in Britain, the modern railway's machine ensemble bundled together many different technical, economic and social novelties in that place. But the modern railway picked up subtly different inflections as export trades developed, coloured by local meanings in other national jurisdictions.[53]

Hence, a search will be made for evidence in published histories and autobiographies of narratives which suggest this transculturation. Chapter three identifies two tendencies in this process: firstly, the "othering" of the foreign (i.e. British) engineers who were active in the technology transfer, often by writing them out of history or emphasising the work of their Brazilian colleagues instead; and secondly, the attempts by former railway workers to write themselves into the history of the railway through their autobiographical writings. These are interpreted as anti-informal empire stances, taken up by a group of male authors which has been producing histories and autobiographies, in some cases with limited print runs, but achieving an influence that was far greater and long-lasting. These authors have been the Brazilian engineers and administrators, publishing works that appear to be intended for consumption by colleagues. Yet their output has had implications elsewhere as this genre has been discovered and quoted

[53] Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain*, p. 12.

by historians in the academy. This particular anti-imperial discourse has thus persisted until the early twenty-first century when a new wave of social historians began to write alternative histories and accounts, for example, of women at work in the railway ensemble, which challenged the prevailing view of the railway.[54]

Chapter four, which investigates the railway in fictional novel-length writing from the 1880s to the 1980s, uncovers an active and continual discussion about the railway in Brazil during this period. This dialogue stretches across literary genres ranging from Naturalism, Realist, and Magic Realism to a work in the canon of the New Historical Novel of Latin America. Brazilian fiction has a tendency to draw on dualities, the attraction of opposites, and conflicts born out of difference for its plotlines; as Paul Dixon notes, one of the most popular authors who uses this device to reflect upon the inequalities and divisions in Brazilian society has been Jorge Amado.[55] Certainly, this technique is used for the railway in the novels considered in this chapter, and taken together they build towards a continued discussion in Brazil of the meaning of this transport technology. The railway ensemble is variously presented as a masculine technology in opposition to feminine instability, as a bringer of conflict between rural and urban in the duality of the dangers of modern city life and the stultifying conservatism of country living, and as a pivotal technology that represents a link between civilisation and barbarity. These writers from both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries show how the cultural significance of the railway in Brazil has been the subject of continual negotiation and transculturation.

The relatively small size of the book publishing industry in Brazil, historically low literacy levels, and a resulting lack of a tradition for reading the printed word mean that apart from television adaptations these novels have had a relatively small circulation in society. That does not, however, imply that they have been without influence. Chapter five thus moves from the reading matter of the elites towards mass media forms; from poetry and thence to popular music in search of further railway influences. Here the duality and the basis for negotiation are much clearer: each of the examples from a span of over one hundred years returns to the

[54] Lidia Maria Vianna Possas, *Mulheres, Trens e Trilhos: Modernidade no Sertão Paulista* (Bauru, SP, 2001).
[55] Paul B. Dixon, "*Malandro* Heaven: Amado's Utopian Vision" in Keith H. Brower, Earl E. Fitz and Enrique Martínez-Vidal, *Jorge Amado: New Critical Essays* (New York, NY, 2001), p. 61.

axis of rural innocence versus urban roguishness; tradition against modernity–the essential elements of the transculturation of the large technical cultural system.

Chapter six examines the railway as reflected in its portrayal in cinema and television drama. Here the dualities of this technology are revealed, conflicts which have endured through the previous chapters and the transculturation process. It is significant that the moving image, and in particular television, marked Brazil's entry into the global cultural community of the mid to late twentieth century, albeit as Tânia Pellegrini remarks, on the periphery.[56] The railway ensemble in cinema and television is portrayed as an object to be questioned: does it represent modernity and if so, what about the traditions and the old ways of life that it may be obliterating in its tracks? How can the railway be reconciled with its inclusion in both the rural and urban landscapes, bearing in mind that for many it was the means of migration to the metropolis? Once the technology has been implanted and regular passenger and freight services introduced where does this leave the natural environment through which the tracks run? These dualities of modern/tradition, urban/rural and nature/technology appear to be interlinked in the examples of television and film production discussed in chapter six.

The issue of modernity is central to the railway in Brazil as a large technical cultural system, and it is picked up again in chapter seven, in particular through one possible reading of the manner in which Brazil's artists painting with oil on canvas have depicted the technology in the landscape. From the work of Tarsila do Amaral in the 1920s, a major figure of the Brazilian Modernist movement, through to the works of Glauco Pinto de Moraes in the 1970s, an uneasy relationship is revealed between art and the railway. Indeed, it is plausible to suggest that the interrogation of the railway ensemble by these artists has been pointed and critical at times. The duality here is between technology as an icon of modernity and the train as a destroyer of tradition without the locomotive itself ever becoming a sublime object at the hands of the artists discussed here. A pattern emerges in part I of this study (chapters three to seven) where both high and popular/mass cultural media productions highlight these dualities. In working through the tensions in these conflicting

[56] Tânia Pellegrini, "Aspects of Contemporary Production of Brazilian Culture", trans. Laurence Hallewell, *Latin American Perspectives*, 27 (2000), 122-143.