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Capital wisdom: Nicola Miller on learning and trading in Southern America.

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The latest monograph by Nicola Miller constitutes a masterclass on how to write history with little, or no mainstream politics. Instead, the politics of taste and finesse permeate many pages of Miller's *Republics of Knowledge*. The political economy of wisdom, its realisations, and scope during the period nation- and state-building processes in mainland Latin America inform this compelling and stimulating book. Adding her expertise to a growing field, Miller demonstrates foresight when she frames and reassesses the role played by bookshops, publishers, engineers, and drawing teachers in the history of knowledge in the first century of the of new-born Argentina, Chile and Perú.[i] The author thus persuasively argues that 'travelling shows, agricultural fairs and improvised lectures are the real unexplored hinterland of knowledge circulation' (p. 10). However, some readers would have liked to be taken for a longer stroll to explore those unbeaten tracks. Despite this, the book makes an original contribution to de-Westernising the creation and circulation of modern knowledge too.[ii]

Miller first highlights the stark contrast between the knowledge generation and circulation in the Old Regime's Republic of Letters, on the one hand, and the one that emerged under the modern Republics of Knowledge, on the other. Miller argues that the nature and the institutions of the former are monarchical, centralized, and often sacralised, as exemplified by Royal Academies. At the same time, the latter generated republican, horizontal, and secular bodies; its outcomes must be emancipatory, and they tend to be founded by private individuals, associations, and organizations. That said, Miller implicitly acknowledges the fact that both programmes of enlightening all citizens were marred by sexism, racism, classism, and political elitism. Based on the findings and suggestions put forward by Peter Burke and Geoffrey Lloyd, the monograph clearly distinguishes between two major areas of enquiry that inform how the author approaches the study of knowledge.[iii] Firstly, following sociologists, Miller tackles the role of some institutions and practices of knowledge; but she also deals with ideas, images, and discourses about it, drawing on cultural historians and practitioners of cultural studies. On the other hand, the volume new light on what Miller calls 'Knowledge for nations', and duly focuses on fields such as philosophy of language, geography, political economy, civil engineering, and philosophy of education. It is this second area which takes the upper hand in the book, while the development of specialized state agencies looms on the background.

The creation of specialized institutions to produce, hold, and share knowledge steadily followed national emancipation in Argentina, Chile, and Perú. It showed the liberators' conception of modern

liberty as enlightened autonomy of all citizens, and those bodies worked as an emblem of both national knowledge and the deliverance from obscurantist and despotic Spain. The patrimony of either 'public' (Buenos Aires and Montevideo), or 'national' libraries (Lima and Santiago), came from donations, confiscated convents' libraries, and new purchases, featuring dictionaries and volumes on classical and modern disciplines, including history, the arts and the sciences, commerce, and both civil and canon law. These central libraries also held prints, maps, and leaflets and, in time, they would harbour public debates and presentations. Given the political symbolism of those new establishments, it did not surprise that the Royalist forces closed them down when they managed to briefly restore imperial power in the 1810s. Miller duly notes, however, that the legacy of the Jesuit libraries constituted more than half of the holdings, and that they included modern scientific artefacts. Apart from the lack of resources, the goals, scope, and daily functioning of the national libraries were affected by two clashing conceptions: as 'a resource for public education', on the one hand, and 'a repository of national culture', on the other. The compatibility between national interest and public good was not guaranteed, as noticed in the case of the Biblioteca Nacional Argentina, and the library privileged research over universal access to its ever-increasing holdings. In Chile, the National Library relied on more generous funding, and it was thus able to buy impressive private collections such as Mariano Egaña's personal collection, consisting of more than eight thousand volumes (p. 29). It also benefitted from the confiscation of books from the Peruvian National Library during the War of the Pacific between 1879-1883; although 3.378 books were given back to the Peruvian government by Chilean President Michelle Bachelet in 2007 (p. 30-31).

Miller enters a second level of analysis when she discusses the so-called 'repertoires of knowledge'. She does it in an ingenious manner, adding novelties to the exclusive focus on institutional developments. Firstly, she evaluates the extent to which those new institutions achieved their goals in a more comprehensive way. Their beginnings, however, were rather disappointing because most graduates in the new republics up to 1900 read degrees in Law, while applied sciences were largely taught through apprenticeships (p. 41). At the same time, the expansion of knowledge found sworn enemies in certain conservative Catholic circles, as the trajectory of Argentine Lafinur illustrates (p. 42-43). The role of the clergy was ambivalent, though, as some ecclesiastics preached the virtues of modern science, while lay Catholics condemned anything which could threat divine revelation as the sole source of true knowledge.

Miller's exploration of the applicability of Geoffrey Lloyd's argument on the need for a minimal consensus on the ideals of enquiry for grasping the intellectual dynamics within any given society proves fruitful in these sections. The author privileged three crucial factors that permeated cultural life and informed Latin American shared research cultures: 1) the notion of the American continent as a natural laboratory, 2) the Greek and Roman classical framework of reference, and 3) the prominent role

of rhetoric. Miller groups them as 'repertoires of knowledge', while dealing with three distinct analytical, historical, and sociocultural families of concepts and practices.

Business and authors

These repertoires are first explored by the examination of the works and teachings of Argentine medic and philosopher Diego Alcorta, whose *Course of Philosophy* was extraordinarily influential. Even if he was no atheist, Alcorta's work helped steer clear from scholastic wisdom and 'to ground the production of knowledge on human reason instead of faith in God' (p. 45). Drawing heavily on the Classical Greek and Roman forerunners, Alcorta linked epistemology to nature; took a critical distance from the merely metaphysical understanding of the sensible world and highlighted the need for learning through deduction. The second figure examined, Marcos Sastre, was an altogether different specimen. Author of the celebrated book *El Tempe Argentino*, Sastre was one of the first owners of a bookshop in independent Buenos Aires. *El Tempe* offers an accurate examination of the Paraná River, and its surroundings, drawing parallels with Classical literature on the Greek Tempe. Miller highlights the heuristic values of the book and defines it as a 'disquisition on knowledge' (p. 51). Sastre praised the usefulness of scientific progress and deemed it as a prerequisite for national and racial survival.

In chapter 3, Miller underscores the central role that the printed word acquired in modern Latin America. New audiences, avid for information, demanded a change in the tone and the contents of the colonial periodicals. Most new governments founded their own official publications. Once the early printing boom in the 1810s was over, it would only be after the introduction of steamships in the 1840s, and railways from the 1850s, that those high levels of production were equalled. Moreover, given that most constitutions sanctioned the freedom of the press, books and journals became a privileged arena of 'the battles between liberty and morality' (p. 60). However, economic, and technical difficulties were crucial obstacles in the dissemination of both scientific discoveries and news. Literacy rates unevenly grew across the region between 1810 and 1914, reflecting the discreet success of private and public educational bodies. By 1900, however, both Chile and Argentina displayed higher ratios than the former metropolis, with most countries in Central America lagging behind. Still, as it is well-documented, readers were also talkers, and 'illiterate' people have access to information in cafés, athenea, courts, medical rooms, exhibitions, as well as in meetings, rallies and social gatherings, all spaces of knowledge production and sharing where it was common to read out loud.[iv] Periodicals provided the perfect format to spread news in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Journals, newspapers, and gazettes proliferated in the region and most of them were short-lived and closely linked to political factions and personalities.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, publishing houses, bookshops, and translators were kept busy by the increased demand of the ever-growing reading public. The use of the printed image, relying on a long colonial history, was one of the most effective tools to accelerate knowledge circulation. Thanks to technical improvements, like those introduced by the Bacle Company based in

Buenos Aires, lithographic reproductions became cheaper and more accessible. The Bacle would then open their own book-publishing house, revealingly called *Imprenta del Comercio*. Publishing houses also supplied autodidacts, and self-teaching materials such as guidebooks, almanacs, and manuals were widely distributed. The acquisition of 'good manners', and the upper-classes' need for consolidation in the new socio-political regimes determined that any 'decent person' should accumulate a modicum of understanding of scientific and literary novelties. Most autodidacts, at least up to 1900, were mainly upper- and middle-class white men.

The figure of the named author in Latin America, Miller argues, established itself in the 1870s, replacing the traditional use of initials or pseudonyms. Chile became one of the first countries in the America to pass an intellectual property law. On the other hand, Miller unravels the different strategies displayed by novel authors to succeed in these battles for authorship. Support from better known and influential literary godfathers usually consisted of prologue writing. National marketing tours were another means to the same end. At the same time, Latin American authors increased the presence of their books in the booksellers' catalogues and rivalled with increasing success with their European counterparts. Locally produced poetry and history, in cheap paperback editions, became two of the best-selling genres after the 1850s. Chilean Luis Fernando Rojas (1875-1942) best represent the artistic and commercial success of graphic artists who illustrated almanacs, newspapers' covers, and even schoolbooks. Rojas was appointed by the Chilean government as official illustrator of the War of the Pacific, which it fought against Perú and Bolivia over the control of the nitrate-rich region of Atacama.

However, it would be popular magazines such as *Caras y Caretas* (Buenos Aires), *Variedades* (Lima), and *Zig Zag* (Santiago) which best embodied the technological printing novelties of the early 1900s. These illustrated publications addressed wide audiences using a colloquial tone, and the oft-flamboyant visual display went hand in hand with the poems, songs, and gossip pieces. Their sales numbers were outstanding, and they widely circulated in cafés, hairdressers, bars, and offices.

Drawing the nation

The book turns its attention to drawing in its fourth chapter. The need to 'visualize the nation' in historical paintings, maps, urban plans, or monuments has been recently highlighted by experts in nations and nationalism.[v] The Latin American nation-building processes were no exception, and governments recruited swathes of artists to convey their patriotic identities through images. Drawing schools were created across thanks to public investment and private donations. Its potential virtues beyond art were innumerable: moral, patriotic, economic… The late colonial period and the wars of independence provided excellent historical periods for re-evaluating the role of images in public life. As Miller argues, there was a transition in motion that took drawings from being mere records, to become works of experimentation and exploration. Following the creation of secular drawing workshops in Lima, Santiago, and Buenos Aires following the Bourbon Reforms, the wars of

independence highlighted the need to visualize territories, fortifications, and roads. Moreover, Creole leaders emphasized the usefulness of drawing for the incipient national industries, as well as its potential to enhancing moral virtues. European Neoclassical maestros were recruited in masse to instruct the privileged citizens of the new republics. Even so, the art markets and circuits inherited from the colonial period showed long-lasting resilience, and the protagonist role played by Quito as the most dynamic and prolific hub of drawing masters survived for decades. Pupils learnt the art of copying from reproductions, as it was common practice in Europe, but the method received some stern criticism as contrary to imagination. They were duly encouraged to imitate, rather than just copying, their model images. This technique allowed learners to innovate but, botanists, medics, and architects deemed it as unfit for purpose for it deviated from the main purpose of the drawings.

These debates gave way after 1890 to new discussions around the role of artists in society at large. On the one hand, they were hired, paid, and trained mostly by public institutions, and were expected to contribute to the spread of patriotic feats and messages; on the other, they sought universal recognition of their original work (p. 93). Painters such as Argentine Martin Malharro (1865-1911) popularized the inner qualities of drawings inspired by nature and spearheaded the campaign for protecting drawing as a compulsory subject. On the other hand, the emphasis on the local and traditional can be appreciated in Peruvian Elena Izcué's (1890-1972) work. Well-trained in modern pedagogical theories and methods, her approach to the arts was also heavily influenced by the archaeological discovery of Machu Pichu by Hiram Bingham in July 1911. Izcué led a wider movement to ground the new Peruvian arts on the achievements of the local civilization before the arrival of the Europeans to the Andean region. The international re-evaluation of the primitive and the vernacular conducted in the early twentieth century made her projects more appealing to foreign markets.

Chapter 5 focuses instead on 'touchstones of knowledge', an expression that refer to groups or individuals that acquired prestige and influence in Latin American culture. Miller acknowledges that the chosen term allows her to map the role of those figures, drawing a fine line between the notions of 'pensadores' and 'intellectuals'. She defined both as 'barometers of the epistemic atmosphere of their societies' (p. 101). By engaging with their changing origins and pursuits, the author seeks to transcend the established narratives in the discipline of the history of social and political thought based on the sequence of warring -isms (Liberalism, Positivism, Marxism….). The journey starts with the study of the preliminary stage that took Latin American cultural producers from Enlightenment to Thought (from *Ilustración* to *Pensamiento*, in Spanish). Since the 1700s, the Americas housed institutions and practitioners committed to furthering social and natural knowledge in line with the contributions made by the Scottish, French, Italian, and US enlightened thinkers. The Bourbon reforms helped spur ongoing efforts to improve the agricultural, industrial, and mining profitability in the region. Locals thus engaged in a transatlantic conversation which aim to transform societies following reason and science, on top of tradition and divine revelation. Under Charles III and Charles IV, botanic, zoological, and geographical

expeditions were sent by the Crown to expand their knowledge of its remote dominions, and several scientific networks and communities emerged.[vi]

After independence, the need for enlightening became more pressing when many early constitutions ruled literacy as a sine qua non prerequisite for access to full citizenship. The collective, rather than individual, understanding of rights was very much embedded in Catholic traditions. The initial push for the introduction of instruction for all citizens, however, will shortly be replaced by the acquisition of good habits with basic literacy and numeracy. Chronic civil wars did not help either. These findings somehow go against the documented attempts to build truly democratic republics in the mid-1850s, as shown by James E. Sanders.[vii] However, those young democracies also faced with two threats: "In the mid-nineteenth century, politics in Latin America was essentially about dealing with two novelties: on the one hand, the ruralization of power caused by the independence process […]; on the other, the globalization of free-trade capitalism under the *Pax Britannica*".[viii] When it comes to figures of prestige based on their knowledge, Miller detects that the lettered men (*letrados*) were by then becoming less influential that those thinkers (*publicistas*) that acquired knowledge outside academic institutions. It was newsrooms, printing works, bookshops, libraries, and politico-cultural societies that became the training grounds for the new autodidact trendsetters. These writers constituted the link between the colonial *letrado* and the twentieth century *intelectual*. Moreover, some of them echoed Andrés Bello's call for the questioning of the received European knowledge in his lecture at the opening in 1843 of the National University of Chile. Bello, as shown by Iván Jaksić, knew first-hand the European intellectual feats that he recommended to adapt to American circumstances.[ix] Female writers like Argentine Juana Manso (1819-1875), contributing editor of the illustrated magazine La Ilustración Argentina (1853-1854) reminded her readers of the necessity of educating the masses to guarantee the peaceful development of their country, but also to enhance its potential for the emancipation of women. In 1855, Juan Espinosa (1804-1871) published his *Diccionario para el pueblo* in Lima. A war veteran and a public writer, Espinosa condemned the lack of popular education amongst Peruvians and argued that adhesion to Republican values was more important than acquiring scientific expertise. His goal was to provide citizens with learning tools to counter the obnoxious effects of corruption and caudillismo. It is only at the end of this chapter that the author pays attention to the conflicts between modern Republican ideals of popular emancipation through knowledge, and the pervasiveness of Catholic assumptions of true wisdom stemming exclusively from divine revelation. This aspect could have been worth exploring further for most Latin American leaders of the chosen period assumed that 'religiosity was constitutive of the capacity to move beyond barbarism and create a moral society' (p. 188). Moreover, these tensions gave rise to the quintessentially Latin American *Arielismo*, in reference to Jose Enrique Rodó's essay 'Ariel', published in 1900.[x] The movement is mentioned but unfortunately, not fully explored, and as shown by John Pocock and Miller knows well, ideological contexts are 'unglobal' and its apprehension demands historians' closest attention.[xi]

Paradise lost and retrieved: languages, territories, and nations

The second part of the book is devoted to Knowledge for Nation-Making. Chapter 6 discusses the politics of language. The Spanish Royal Academy opened offices in most Latin American countries between 1880 and 1920, even if by the bicentenaries of the 2010s new dictionaries with 'national' lexical variables were published in Argentina, Chile, and Perú. However, despite the rich variety of local and regional languages in the region, by 1930 the only country that declared official a language other than Castilian was Paraguay, which included Guaraní. However, preserving the colonial tongue in postcolonial times was harder than initially thought. Figures such as Simón Rodríguez, Bolívar's tutor, launched a campaign to make Castilian the official language, but as spoken by the American peoples. Miller argues that the European *Episteme* and enlightened exrchange of ideas badly suffered from the abandonment of Latin as the lingua franca, and its replacement by vernaculars such as French, English, or German. Moreover, Latin Americans felt even more cut off than other previous members of that scholarly international community, as Spanish did not prevail as a predominant language of knowledge transfer.

The study of indigenous languages benefitted from the arrival of US and European archaeologists and ethnographers in the 1910s, but Spanish Americans had started to do it well before then., Latin American scholars re-discovered the works by missionaries and Crown's officers who have explored the lives and cultures of local civilizations in the colonial period. Argentine Samuel Lafone Quevedo (1835-1920) was amongst them. A Cambridge PhD holder, Lafone relied on European comparative linguistics to criticize the ascendency of classical philological canon, and to combat the growing Eurocentrism in his studies of 'all the languages spoken in Argentina' (p. 130). Both factors made it difficult to place the study of non-European languages within their own historical contexts relying on a mix of sociological and ethnographic approaches. Lafone Quevedo concluded that linguistics based on truly spoken languages, and not on the lexical, syntactic, and grammatical analyses favoured by philologists, was useful to better understand the Latin American languages. He, as well as Chilean Daniel Barros Grez (1834-1904), challenged the Darwinist distinction between primitive and advanced languages. Moreover, Barros comparatively studied the most widely spoken non-Castilian languages in the Americas, i.e., "Mexican, Guaraní, Aymara, Quechua, and Araucano" (p. 133), and reached the conclusion that the Quechuan quipus, knot-records, and the hieroglyphs of the Cauquen people helped problematize the very essence of writing, as he could demonstrate that the latter commemorated great past deeds, and were thus comparable to Latin, Babylonic, or Persian inscriptions. In Perú, the Quechuist boom took place in the early 1870s with the publication of a Quechuan grammar, and the cultural appropriation of Quechua as 'national language' under the government of Manuel Pardo (1872-1876). The controversies surrounding the origins, date, and authorship of the play *Ollantay* also signalled this renewed interest in indigenous cultures.

Miller devotes chapter 7 to explore the multifaceted links between nationalizing rhetoric and the American lands. Internationally established as a 'natural laboratory' by renown expeditions led first by Alexander von Humboldt (1799-1804), and then by Charles Darwin (1832-1835), the vast territories of the Americas certainly excited modern Western scientific imagination. The political and emotional relationship between national states and territory has been widely studied whereas, once again, there are Latin American peculiarities. Firstly, most early constitutions failed to mention the physical limits of the state. This should not come as a surprise given the imperial origins of the pre-existing territorial demarcations, as well as their abrupt transition to statehood. Secondly, the region was rife with military conflagrations for decades. Miller, however, focuses on the existing body of evidence that reflects the spread popular interest in the environment. In her view, it demonstrates the success of the nationalization campaigns that came after independence. Women, children, sailors, farmers, and shepherds all contributed to the accumulation of data successively classified and exploited by white male scientists. The author's research aims to de-centralized natural history; to pay attention to 'citizen science' (p. 145); to unravel the functioning of amorphous and porous semi-official institutions; and to provide visibility to subaltern agents in the production of scientific knowledge. National geographies, atlas, and dictionaries were the result of the combined efforts of trained, or autodidact scientists, and local knowledge holders. The Peruvian Mateo and Mariano Paz Soldans, autodidacts of Panamanian origin, travelled far and wide for years before publishing their findings in the 1860s and 70s. Translating historical measurement units; locating places whose names were written in Aymara, Quechua, and other languages; or ascertaining the correct national borders were only some of the challenges facing them.

Moreover, the search for private profit has consistently been an engine for the expansion of knowledge and one of the pioneers of Argentine agronomy, Eduardo Olivera (1826-1910), was no exception. Olivera got involved in scientific activities, travelled extensively, and was educated in Europe. His entrepreneurial activities took him to participate in the campaigns of native land expropriation that Argentine official history labelled as the Battle of the Desert (1878-1884). He argued that his white compatriots were immersed in a 'civilizing mission' of the 'ravaging indians' (p. 154), and his 4-volume book on Argentine agriculture transmitted the values of conservative rural landowners who considered that toiling the land was a source of civic virtue. But Olivera also imported from Europe some novelties of his trade, such as farming fairs, immigrant colonies, and lobbied governments through landowners' corporations.

Meanwhile, the institutionalization of 'territorial nationalism' (p. 155) was best embodied in the creation of geographic institutions. As seen in the case of the Sociedad Geográfica de Lima, these agencies aimed to counter misinformation about their country's state and riches; to provide accurate and scientifically proven data; and to launch scientific expeditions, create observatories, and disseminate their findings in their own publications. In Argentina, between 1870 and 1920, this role would be played not by civilians but by the army, with both the Instituto Geográfico Argentino (1879)

and the Sociedad Geográfica Argentina being the product of the Conquest of the Desert. Both received state funding and were paramount in the military land confiscation of the 'pueblos originarios' (native peoples) who had lived for centuries in Patagonia. An interdisciplinary group of civilian scholars founded in 1922 the Sociedad Argentina de Estudios Geográficos in Buenos Aires University, with the aim of reinforcing a sense of shared national identity by training schoolteachers in Geography. In Chile, with a long tradition of geographical instruction that dated back to the colonial period, public lectures, exhibitions, and publications showcased the new findings of the discipline too.

The homo economicus in paradise?

The development and impact of 'development economics', pioneered in the USA by Argentine Raúl Prebisch (1901-1986), and the Latin American criticism of classic political economy is examined in chapter 8. The structuralist approach, with its accent on structural inequality grounded on the conflictive relations between the 'centre' and the 'periphery', inspired public policymakers to move away from export dependent economies towards import-substation based on rapid industrialization. The 'dependency' and the 'world system schools' based on this approach would eventually be embraced by the heralds of the New Left in Europe. Miller successfully challenges the assumption that from the Independence period up to the Second World War Latin American governments practiced laissez faire economic policies. The highest tariffs to imports in the world; the emergence of 'technocrats' both in Argentina and Perú (along with the 'científicos' working for Porfirio Díaz in México), and the recurrent state intervention in oil production and distribution during the golden age of free trade in the region cast doubts on that widely held misrepresentation. Miller also demonstrates that basic tenets of political economy resonated across Latin American public life for decades after the end of imperial rule. The teachings by Ricardo, Smith, Malthus, and Say needed local adaptation by governmental officers and civil servants, but practical enforcement and profitability were far more relevant than methodological consistency. Attention to local and social circumstances, as highlighted by John Stuart Mill, was necessary too. However, French critics like Saint-Simon or Charles Gide were also read in Southern America. The works of Argentine Nicolás Avellaneda reflected those adaptations, and incorporated condemnations of the over-reliance on foreign loans by many governments in the region. Early criticism, including Juan Bautista Alberdi´s (1810-1884), condemned that the moral and intellectual dimensions of humankind were absent in modern economic theory.

Protectionist economics in defence of national interest as public policy of choice was introduced in Perú in the 1840s, and in Argentina in the 1870s. Economic nationalism, however, appeared in the 1890s under the guise of 'Fomento' to contain the unintended consequences of the free-market economy. An early quote by Alvear encapsulates the feeling: 'liberty without equality is deceptive, because it tends to disarm and leave some peoples at the will and the rapacity of others' (p. 173). A growing number of Spanish American economists rejected indeed the intrusive influence of foreign capitalists in their

countries. In tandem with economic protectionism, in the three cases industrialists joined forces and created ad hoc societies to protect their interests in the face of national and international governments and corporations. At the same time, 'social economy' established itself as a new sub-discipline by the turn of the twentieth century, and it comprised a more holistic approach to the study of the material life of the nations, including the effects of political and commercial decision making in the local population. As Miller puts it, its practitioners suggested that 'solidarity was a route to prosperity' (P. 177)

Railways and related infrastructures were at the core of the rapid industrialization endorsed by economic nationalists. Miller argues that the first railways in Latin America were not imported by foreign capitalists or set by engineers from abroad. On the contrary, she shows that they were publicly funded and often set out by local technicians. With the role of knowledge in governmental and societal claims to sovereignty and legitimacy in mind, chapter 9 focuses on three areas. It first assesses the hierarchy of knowledges derived from the conflict between the national and international commercial and technical agents. Secondly, it unravels the role of the state in the creation of those infrastructures, and the limits faced by private investors. The third area of concern is the contributions made by Spanish Americans in the establishment of the necessary infrastructures demanded by modern communications, transactions, and industries. These three topics are studied through the close analysis of four encounters. The first two are the ports of Callao and Buenos Aires, whose revamping in the late 1800s proved more than polemical. The fridge ship, and the transandine train, i.e. railway connection across the Andes, are the remaining two.

The modernization of Lima Port, Callao, initially started in 1865 and it soon became a landmark of the country's modernization project. The completion works started in 1869 and were commissioned by the Peruvian parliament to the French engineering company Templeman and Bergmann. The decision stirred bitter polemics, mainly due to the rejection of local alternative projects and the controversially high price agreed on the concession. The construction of a new port in Buenos Aires did not prove easier. Funding, political turmoil, administrative uncertainty, and lack of consensus on technical developments were the main obstacles facing the project in the 1870s. The affair was very much aired by the press, and the constant conflicting coverage by *La Nación* and *La Prensa* made the port's debate 'the first [proper] national controversy' (p. 187). Engineer Luis Huergo (1837-1913) and businessman Eduardo Madero (1823-1894) led the warring factions in this case. Huergo completed his higher education in Maryland and was elected to Parliament when back to Buenos Aires; whereas Madero was a successful building promotor but lacked training in engineering. Madero's close collaboration with English engineering companies became the focus of the polemic. However, Huergo's project received public support in 1876, and its execution became a resounding technical and PR success by 1883. Nonetheless, the government trusted Madero's plan for the northern extension of the dock that would be built by the British company Hawkshaw, Son and Hayter. The decision, along with the questionable management of the concession's approval by President Julio Argentino Roca (1843-1914), 'unleashed

a storm of criticism' (p. 189). The Argentine Assembly of Engineers published a report in 1886 revealing the exorbitant costs of Hawkshaw's project, as well as confirming that Huergo's was not only more beneficial to the city and technically superior, but also that its price would be two thirds lower. However, it would only be constructed in 1909, because what is now known as Puerto Madero was congested by 1902, only five after its completion.

The fridge ship was the outcome of collaboration of French scientist (1828-1913) Charles Tellier, the Uruguayan magnate Francisco Lecocq (1790-1882), and the latter's compatriot and politician Federico Nin Reyes (1819-1890). They all met in 1866 in Paris, where the Uruguayans' gave support to Tellier's designs for a vessel that, using dry refrigeration, would safely and hygienically transport meat across the Atlantic. The frozen-meat industry instantly received funding by both the Argentine state and landowners. Miller's conclusion is that the most successful agrarian activity in Argentine's financial history was the result of private-public partnerships, and civic involvement rather the sole product of free-market's dynamics. On the other hand, the railway connection between Chile and Argentina across the Andes also required private and public efforts before its opening in 1910. Technical, financial, and political hurdles hampered and delayed the enterprise. Juan and Mateo Clark requested permission to open the line to the Chilean and Argentine Congresses in 1872. One year later the latter granted it. However, the Chilean authorities were not initially so keen, and it would be only in 1903 that it accepted the Clarks' petition. In the Chilean congressional debates, it emerges that the opposition to the plan was mostly based on the rejection of state intervention in building infrastructure, but they ultimately acknowledged the potential profitability of the transandean train and supported it. In the light of her detailed discussion of these four projects, the conclusions drawn by Miller are that there was enough expertise in Latin America to successfully undertake them, and that the wariness in the face of the overreaching power of foreign corporations in South America had been aired since well before they were developed. Moreover, local plans were cheaper, more practical, and less grandiose than the foreign ones.

The last chapter of the book evaluates the goals, reach, and achievements of popular education. As shown by Andrés Baeza in his recent monograph, the Lancasterian system based on monitorial instruction by pupils was singularly popular and spread in Chile.[xii] Miller focuses on the radical agendas, initiatives, and institutions that from the 1870s to the 1920s saw in education the perfect means to emancipate citizens from ignorance, make them economically active, and civically and politically equal. The chosen period coincided with a slightly more proactive approach to expand universal education amongst their populations in the three countries, as well as a myriad of other religious, workers', and private initiatives. Political instability and lack of funding were the adduced reasons to justify the unimpressive literacy rates and the heavily conservative messages and methods used in the state schools. The so-called 'teaching state' started first in Chile, where an 1860 law decreed opening a school for each two thousand people. The goal was achieved by 1915. Argentina started its school-building

programme in 1884, but it shortly caught up, provided for 75% of children, and literacy levels by 1900 were higher than in most Spanish America. Perú did not follow suit and the implementation of the national plans was patchy, particularly in the Andean regions, and it would take up to the 1940s to establish a working state school network. To many pupils and parents, the emphasis on patriotic, and militaristic values made state schools feel more like indoctrinating machines than centres for the acquisition of practical skills and useful knowledge. In fact, army officers and even Prussian military instructors (in Chilean 'schools of the people') were deeply involved in children state education. Meanwhile, higher education kept on being the protected domain of the privileged classes. The arrival of women and unionised teachers to classrooms would gradually alter the ideological landscape. Relying on libraries, night schools, public talks, and popular universities, a wide range of educational agents democratized education in the late nineteenth century. Those platforms allowed unions and educators to share the news of working-class struggles beyond the national borders too.

Acquiring capital wisdom

Miller's three main conclusions are solid and persuasively reached. Firstly, she argues that the recognition of knowledge must be studied along its production and dissemination. The assumption was that the emancipation from Spain would imply access to modern knowledge by previously dominated Crown's subjects was tantamount to their becoming full republican citizens. The production of 'local knowledge', however, was hampered by material inadequacies, lack of resources, as well as the spread acceptance of the established hierarchy of global knowledge, i.e. the Northern European and US scientific producers were the best equipped to accessing true knowledge. Alternative and 'indigenous' ways of thinking and producing wisdom would consequently be dismissed as unfit for purpose for the following century. Second, the nation-state should be best understood as a community of shared knowledge, instead that a purely 'imagined community' (Benedict Anderson dixit). Finally, national integration, constitutional legitimacy, and political participation are determined by knowledge order. Despite its many and unparalleled achievements, perhaps this learning journey could have gone beyond and approach life beyond the capital cities and the interaction between sex, race, and knowledge creation.[xiii] Or maybe even more across the Atlantic to highlight that it was the Argentine student Felix Weil, member of a landowning family, who donated the funds to the University of Frankfurt to create the Institute for Social Research.[xiv] Miller, though, opens more than one new route in this new book and deserves due credit and congratulations for it.

Notes

[i] See Martin Muslow, 'History of Knowledge' and the comment by Lorraine Daston in Mark Tamm and Peter Burke, *Debating new approaches to History.* London, Bloomsbury, 2019, pp. 159-187. New trends in the field

are also reflected in the articles published in journals such as *Global Intellectual History* or *The Journal of Mediterranean Knowledge* https://www.mediterraneanknowledge.org/publications/index.php/journal/index

[ii] Maya Lorena Pérez Ruiz and Arturo Argueta Villamar 'Saberes indígenas y dialogo intercultural', *Cultura y representaciones sociales* [online]. 2011, vol.5, n.10, pp. 31-56, available at http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2007-81102011000100002&lng=es&nrm=iso and Oludamini Ogunnaike, *Deep Knowledge. Way of Knowing in Sufism and Ifa. Two West African Intellectual Traditions*. Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pa. 2020.

[iii] Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*, Cambridge: Polity, 2000 and id., *A Social History of Knowledge Vol. II: From the Encyclopaedia to Wikipedia*, Cambridge: Polity, 2012; and Geoffrey Lloyd. The Ideals of Enquiry. An Ancient History. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

[iv] Apart from the works by Robert Darnton, see Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading*. Toronto, Vintage, 1996, and Steven Roger Fischer, *A History of Reading*, London, Reaktion Books, 2003.

[v] From the perspective of gender history, see Joan B. Landes. *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 2001, and Alison Fraunhar, *Mulata Nation: Visualizing Race and Gender in Cuba*, Jackson MS, University Press of Mississippi, 2018.

[vi] Mauricio Nieto Olarte, *Remedios para el imperio: historia natural y la apropiación del Nuevo Mundo*. Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, Bogotá, 2000.

[vii] *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World. Creating Modernity, Nation, and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America.* Durham, Duke University Press, 2014.

[viii] Sebastián Mazzuca, *Latecomer State Formation. Political Geography and Capacity Failure in Latin America.* Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2021, p 399. See also Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and Nation-State in Latin America*. Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pa., 2002.

[ix] Iván Jaksić, Andrés Bello. *Scholarship and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[x] Hans Schelkshorn, 'José Enrique Rodó: The Birth of Latin America Out of Spiritual Revolt', In*terdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 5, 2020, pp. 182-200, and Edmundo O'Gorman, *La invención de América: Investigación acerca de la estructura histórica del Nuevo Mundo y del sentido de su devenir*. México DF, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995 [1958].

[xi] John G. A. Pocock, 'On the unglobality of contexts: Cambridge methods and the history of political thought', Global Intellectual History, 4:1, 2019, pp. 1-14. See also Sandra Jovchelovitch, *Knowledge in Context: Representations, Community and Culture*. Basingstoke, Psychology Press & Routledge Classic Editions, 2019.

[xii] *Contacts, Collisions and Relationships. Britons and Chileans in the Independence Era, 1806-1831.* Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2019.

[xiii] Ashley Elizabeth Kerr, *Sex, Skulls, and Citizens: Gender and Racial Science in Argentina (1860-1910).* Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

[xiv] Enzo Traverso, *Revolution: An intellectual history*. Verso, London and New York, 2021, p. 256.