Big Water: The Making of the Borderlands Between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. Edited by Jacob Blanc, Frederico Freitas, and Zephyr Frank. University of Arizona Press, 2018. $55. Hardcover. Open Access Ebook. ISBN: 9780816537143.

Several years ago, a student shared his experience of crossing the bridge from Brazil into Paraguay to go "*Shopping China no Paraguai*" (shopping for Chinese goods in Paraguay). I remember his enthusiasm when recounting how he and his companions loved the adventurous outing resulting in fabulous deals on non-taxed imports. I share this anecdote because *Big Water* brought me instantly back to that complex overlap of national borders and supranational systems—nature, travel, and trade.

Although the title of the book led me to think of this collection as more of a strictly environmental history, it is so much more. It is principally borderlands-focused, neither nation-state exclusionary nor obsessed (as Zephyr Frank notes in the Foreword) with motifs of indigenous belonging, colonization, modernization, and subaltern agency. Indeed, the collection's thesis is concerned with the shaping of borders over four centuries by local participants. Contributors with multidisciplinary backgrounds in history, anthropology, and geography examine the Triple Frontier region where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay come together in a profusion of liquid monuments: Iguazú Falls, the Paraná River, and the Itaipu Dam and Reservoir, with the title riffing on the translation of Iguazú (4). And it does not hurt that it adds to the sparse, non-Triple Alliance-centered, Paraguayan history offerings.

The work is organized through four somewhat chronological themes: adaptation, environment, belonging, and development, with "Part I: Adaptation" being colonial-focused. In "Embodied Borderland," University of Arkansas assistant history professor Shawn Michael Austin intriguingly finds colonial definitions of borders rooted in native peoples rather than territory. Reflective of a time when bodies rather than land measured wealth, Guarani *caciques*, indigenous shamans, and kinship practices defined the region. The second contribution in Part I, "Jesuit Missions and the Guarani Ethnogenesis," by Argentinian anthropologist Guillermo Wilde, examines the tension between identities formed through local missions and the broader region.

"Part II: Environment" begins with "Crossing Borders" by Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina professor Eunice Sueli Nodari providing a close look at the landscape, settlement, and productivity of the region. "Argentinizing the Border" by North Carolina State assistant professor and volume co-editor Frederico Freitas is a fascinating account of using parks to protect territory and build national pride. Park creation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries throughout the Americas was contextually unique, and Freitas provides a case study of Argentina and Iguazú Falls.

"Part III: Belonging" contains "A Devilish Prank, A Dodgy Caudillo, and the Tortured Production of Postcolonial Sovereignty in the Borderlands of López-era Paraguay," by Grand Valley State assistant professor of history Michael Kenneth Huner, and "Beyond Historia Patria," by University of Maryland associate professor of history Daryle Williams, and is about the use of

natural history for nation-making then being challenged by trans- and supra-national institutional involvement. In the final contribution of the section, "Walking on the Bad Land," Brazilian anthropologist Evaldo Mendes da Silva presents a captivating account of Guarani embodied cosmology and the challenges to mobility and identity when, as da Silva notes for the Guarani, "[W]alking on this earth is the only way to perpetuate humanity and fulfill their destiny of eternal divinity. But the earth's paths have come to present numerous dangers that can derail their existential project" (201).

Lastly, "Part IV: Development" culminates with "A Turbulent Border," by co-editor and University of Edinburgh lecturer in history Jacob Blanc, which considers the ways in which the creation of the Itaipu Dam restructured regional political relations. In "From *Porteño* to Pontero," Buffalo State history professor Bridget María Chesterton traces the geographic reorientation experienced in Paraguay with the building of the Friendship Bridge which connected Ciudad del Este to Foz de Iguaçu, Brazil. Lastly, "Ciudad del Este and the Common Market" by Duke University assistant professor of anthropology Christine Folch compares the Free Trade Zone with the Common Market, wherein Folch finds that the former "archipelago of spaces" was able to coexist with the latter "homogenizing space" (268). Interestingly, Folch's chapter notes some scalar tensions similar to those in Daryle Williams's contribution where his cultural institutions have been replaced by those of an economic orientation, while in both chapters, lesser players creatively shaped policies to avoid imminent obsolescence. The collection's conclusion entitled, "Space, Nation, and Frontiers in the *Rioplatense* Discourse," by Universidad Nacional de La Plata architecture professor Graciela Silvestri, addresses the historically significant theme of space and analyzes the region's literature through such topics as paradise, nature, void, landscape, and identity.

I envision using selected chapters for undergraduate or advanced history courses as well as the entire book for anyone with a historical or geographical interest in the region. And Daryle Williams and Jacob Blanc whetted my appetite to have heard a bit more about the concurrent military regimes and how they transnationally navigated both the Paraná and their populations while respectively being shaped by them.

Overall, this book is notable for its breadth of scholarship and approaches to the Triple Frontier. Particularly compelling is the contradiction of building infrastructure to bolster national pride with inherently transnational projects. One does not necessarily need to be reminded of the importance of landlocked borders as the momentous War of the Triple Alliance disputed various inland regions. Moreover, the primacy of the Paraná River basin and the ways in which various constituencies were shaped by it and used it for negotiation is what ultimately allows *Big Water* to triumph.

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