

ROBERT D. AGUIRRE. *Mobility and Modernity: Panama in the Nineteenth Century Anglo-American Imagination*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2017. Pp. 232. \$69.95 (cloth).

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He was a heroic postman. Through all types of weather, he walked, rode, and surveyed mail routes for the British Empire. Anthony Trollope (1815–1882), better known as a novelist of his native England, also “traveled by every conceivable modality” as a postal worker (55). In the mid-nineteenth century, when the sun never set on the British Empire, it was essential to create and maintain long-distance communication networks. Efficient transit routes linked the metropole with its colonies; and establishing these routes required an army of sailors and explorers, surveyors, postal workers, authors, and colonial administrators traversing the globe. In 1858, for example, Anthony Trollope, while on an official postal mission, traveled on a Royal Mail ship to the Caribbean and the Isthmus of Panama. Surveying potential carrier routes by day, his notes of “travail” also became a classic travelogue, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*.

Trollope’s journey, among other microhistories of mobility, is excellently chronicled in Robert D. Aguirre’s book, *Mobility and Modernity: Panama in the Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Imagination*. By examining people, ideas, and goods that traveled through Panama in the nineteenth century, Aguirre offers a case study of the modern history of globalization. In the 1840s and 1850s, he writes, the discovery of gold in California inspired both British and American ambitions to develop new and faster transportation networks linking the Atlantic world with the Pacific rim. It was a race westward, dependent on a “global network of ships, ports, coaling stations, and railways, facilitated by arrangements and treaties with other nations” (57).

A key stop on this transnational route was the Isthmus of Panama. Decades before the building of the Panama Canal, the isthmus was an important land bridge between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Between the 1840s and 1860s, Aguirre documents, more people migrated from the US east coast to the Pacific coast by way of Panama than all those who used the overland North American route. Panama was part of westward expansion. The Panama Railroad, for instance, carried more than 400,000 travelers between its opening in 1856 and the year 1865. During that same period, it also transported \$750 million in gold (mostly from California) and approximately 300,000 bags of international mail (8).

All of this movement, Aguirre argues, depended fundamentally on speed. The “annihilation” of space and time, a long running subject of historical and philosophical study, is also a guiding issue in Aguirre’s book. Drawing on contemporary theorists such as David Harvey, Aguirre shows how “time-space compression” sped up the pace of life and intensified social relations. Focusing in time on the mid-nineteenth century and in space on the tropics of Panama, Aguirre chronicles the history of four technologies that contributed to global time-space compression: (1) railroads, (2) mail and communication networks, (3) the camera and photography, and (4) the printing press. These collectively shaped the physical and imaginative journeys of Anglo-American travelers to the isthmus. Aguirre offers an interdisciplinary analysis of each technology, paired with the journey of one historical figure. For instance, when reading about the history of the Panama Railroad, we learn about the tropical travels of the American explorer, writer, and diplomat John Lloyd Stephens (1805–1852). Later in chapter 2, when considering mail routes, we follow the life history of Trollope. This narrative, biographical approach makes for enjoyable reading, while also leaving room for theoretical discussion.

Aguirre’s analysis shows how power and politics shaped experiences of globalization. Whoever controlled the routes and the technology of transnational trade held power. In the early nineteenth century, it was still unclear which nation, if any, would reign in the Americas.

British and American governments competed and sometimes collaborated for influence in the region. By mid-century on the isthmus, however, the United States began to overshadow British control, first with the construction of the Panama Railroad (1850s), then with a series of military interventions (13 in total), and finally with the annexation of the Panama Canal Zone and creation of the new Republic of Panama in 1903. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the Caribbean seemed to look to the United States like the Mediterranean did to the British—a sea of imperial authority.

Imperial geopolitics, Aguirre argues, discursively made Panama into “an in-between zone, the geographical servant of other masters” (5). The isthmus became a place of transit rather than a place of residence within Anglo-American imaginations. Although mostly focusing on the experiences of foreign travelers, Aguirre also juxtaposes these outside views with local perspectives. As Anglo-Americans saw Panama as a “primitive” and historically backward region (allochronic thinking), Panamanians pushed back in numerous ways. They were not mere passive recipients of global forces. Many elites on the isthmus welcomed transnational trade, yet others fought and resisted—sometimes violently—the colossus of the north. “The new world of mobility modernity,” Aguirre concludes, “is double edged, creating on one side unprecedented possibilities for communication and movement, and on the other unhealed wounds that erupt in the fragmented spaces of history, memory, and representation” (164). Globalization on the isthmus, he shows, created both opportunity and destruction.

In this short yet impactful book, Aguirre offers readers a window into globalization’s multipronged history. *Mobility and Modernity* should, if carefully read, also spur many questions. When did Panama really discursively emerge as “an in-between zone”? Was it the product of British and American nineteenth-century ideas, or do we need to travel further back in time to the Spanish colonial era, or perhaps even to the region’s pre-Columbian history to understand this notion of interregional movement? Likewise, with the bigger question of globalization: Does this omnipresent process, as we understand it today, begin in the nineteenth century and its industrial revolution on land and sea? Or must we look to the twentieth century, or in contrast all the way back to the sixteenth century, as scholars such as Immanuel Wallerstein and other world-system thinkers would suggest? Aguirre contributes to these ongoing global debates in a provocative and truly thoughtful way. His book will interest scholars of US and British expansion, of Latin American and Caribbean history, and of global history more broadly.

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AIDAN BEATTY. *Masculinity and Power in Irish Nationalism, 1884–1938*. Gender and Sexualities in History Series. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Pp. 266. \$100 (cloth).  
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Aidan Beatty sets out to pursue two worthwhile goals with his monograph, *Masculinity and Power in Irish Nationalism, 1884–1938*. The first is to draw out Irish notions of masculinity as they relate to the formation of an independent Irish nation from the founding of the Gaelic Athletic Association to Eamon de Valera’s first Fianna Fáil government after the enactment of the 1937 Constitution. The second is to stress continuities from before, during, and after the revolutionary period of 1916 to 1922. Beatty chooses to use a running comparison between Irish nationalists and European Zionists and their respective masculine ideologies,