



The Seduction of Brazil: The Americanization of Brazil during World War II (LLILAS Translations from Latin America Series)

Antonio Pedro Tota

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Following completion of the U.S. air base in Natal, Brazil, in 1942, U.S. airmen departing for North Africa during World War II communicated with Brazilian mechanics with a thumbs-up before starting their engines. This sign soon replaced the Brazilian tradition of touching the earlobe to indicate agreement, friendship, and all that was positive and good—yet another indication of the Americanization of Brazil under way during this period.

In this translation of *O Imperialismo Sedutor*, Antonio Pedro Tota considers both the Good Neighbor Policy and broader cultural influences to argue against simplistic theories of U.S. cultural imperialism and exploitation. He shows that Brazilians actively interpreted, negotiated, and reconfigured U.S. culture in a process of cultural recombination. The market, he argues, was far more important in determining the nature of this cultural exchange than state-directed propaganda efforts because Brazil already was primed to adopt and disseminate American culture within the framework of its own rapidly expanding market for mass culture. By examining the motives and strategies behind rising U.S. influence and its relationship to a simultaneous process of cultural and political centralization in Brazil, Tota shows that these processes were not contradictory, but rather mutually reinforcing.

The Seduction of Brazil brings greater sophistication to both Brazilian and American understanding of the forces at play during this period, and should appeal to historians as well as students of Latin America, culture, and communications.

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