Mestizo International Law

The development of international law is conventionally understood as a history in which the main characters (states and international lawyers) and events (wars and peace conferences) are European. Arnulf Becker Lorca demonstrates how non-Western states and lawyers appropriated nineteenth-century classical thinking in order to defend new and better rules governing non-Western states’ international relations. By internalizing the standard of civilization, for example, they argued for the abrogation of unequal treaties. These appropriations contributed to the globalization of international law. With the rise of modern legal thinking and a stronger international community governed by law, peripheral lawyers seized the opportunity and used the new discourse and institutions, such as the League of Nations, to dissolve the standard of civilization and codify non-intervention and self-determination. These stories suggest that the history of our contemporary international legal order is not purely European; instead they suggest a history of a mestizo international law.

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Mestizo International Law
A Global Intellectual History 1842–1933

Arnulf Becker Lorca
para mis mestizos Milo, Benno y Melchor
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