Sleepless Nights: Traumatic Memory and the Absent Precursor of Augusto Roa Bastos' *El sonámbulo*

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In recent years, the study of writing by Augusto Roa Bastos has been shaped by the polemical set off by his famous assertion that “there is no Paraguayan literature.” Taking that idea too literally, as I have argued previously, has prevented scholars from recognizing Roa Bastos’s dialogue with other Paraguayan writers, and subsequently from exploring his longstanding preoccupation with the collective memory of the catastrophic Triple Alliance War (1864-1870) and its significance as the basis for national identity. This talk digs into these intertwined issues by interpreting the suppressed filiation between Roa Bastos’ novella *El sonámbulo* and the oldest extant Paraguayan novel, Juan Crisóstomo Centurión’s 1877 *Viaje nocturno*. Published exactly a century apart, the two narratives are mirror images of each other; reading them in tandem thus enables us to see more clearly the processes of disavowal and dissociation at work in Paraguay’s discontinuous history.

*Monday, February 3, 2020*  
*5:30PM*  
*Music Room, Rochambeau House | 84 Prospect St.*  
*This event is sponsored by the Department of Hispanic Studies at Brown University*