

mechanisation. For Kubitschek, national development remained dependent on a healthy citizenry and the eradication of diseases, but not just to meet the labour needs of the industrial sector, as had been the public health emphasis of a prior generation of Brazilian leaders. The primary document is a proposed health policy, more a statement on health than concrete plan, that Kubitschek produced as a candidate for the presidency in 1955. The proposal reflects the supremacy of the developmentalist project for this would-be president and its relation to human health and productivity.

Finally, Nísia Trindade Lima argues that author Guimarães Rosa drew upon his medical training to create fictitious worlds from which to observe and understand Brazil itself. In his work, Rosa presented the possibility that illness represents a type of revelatory ecstasy, leading the afflicted to astute social observations lost on those viewing the world from a healthy or normative perspective. His characters complicate the prevailing notion of Brazilians as a diseased people by positing that illness opens depths of creativity and self-awareness. In the accompanying excerpt from Rosa's *Grande sertão: veredas*, as the main character Riobaldo is physically overcome by malaria, he achieves a metaphysical transcendence that is 'boa para pensar' ('inspires the mind'), to question and to critique Brazil's social realities (p. 512).

While the editors accurately describe Republican Brazil as an 'eclectic mosaic' and a 'puzzle', they have produced a cohesive and useful collection of essays and primary sources (p. xiv). *Médicos intérpretes do Brasil* is an ambitious and successful volume that will be of interest to scholars and students of intellectual thought, medicine in society, and nation-building in modern Brazil.

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Marius Turda and Aaron Gillette, *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective* (New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), pp. x + 360, \$39.95, pb.

In *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective*, Marius Turda and Aaron Gillette trace the existence of 'Latin' eugenics as a distinct intellectual, social and cultural trend from the late nineteenth century to the 1940s. In what is essentially an intellectual history of the Latin eugenics movement, Turda and Gillette examine the papers and publications of the movement's founders, the way that their ideas were disseminated via conferences, and the formation of organisations dedicated to advancing their ideals. The authors trace this movement through an impressive array of countries spanning both sides of the Atlantic, including Western European countries like France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium and Italy, Eastern European countries like Romania, and Latin America, with a focus on Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Cuba. Their source base also comes from archives in four different countries. The result is a good overview of the formation and evolution of the Latin eugenics movement during the late nineteenth century and twentieth centuries. As the only comprehensive work on Latin eugenics, *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective* is a valuable resource for understanding both individual national eugenic programmes and the international linkages between them. This approach demonstrates the similarities and differences in national eugenic approaches, the ways in which they influenced each other, and how they changed in response to new economic and political conditions in Europe and Latin America.

This book argues that Latin eugenics was a coherent ideology and set of practices identifiable across many individual nations in different parts of the world during

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Latin eugenics was based primarily on neo-Lamarckism, which is sometimes called 'soft' or 'positive' eugenics because it advocated for improving populations through environmental, health and social programmes rather than invasive reproductive controls. It also drew on puericulture (the science of hygienic childrearing), biotypology (the study of hereditary characteristics) and homiculture (the study of the scientific improvement of humanity). These ideas gained popularity during the period of Latin countries' decline; by the end of the nineteenth century, the great Spanish and Portuguese empires had crumbled, and other European powers, namely Britain and the Netherlands, had supplanted Latin nations, including Italy, on the global stage. One of Latin eugenics' defining features was its rejection of the more hard-line approach to eugenics taken by Anglo-Saxon nations, such as Germany, Britain and the United States, which advocated for the sterilisation of supposedly 'unfit' populations, including the mentally and physically disabled, prostitutes and criminals. Indeed, positive eugenics focused on increasing rather than decreasing national populations, which Latin eugenicists argued was the pathway to national prosperity. As Turda and Gillette demonstrate, Latin eugenicists defined themselves and their policies in explicit opposition to Anglo-Saxon eugenics, which they saw as intrusive and coercive.

Turda and Gillette also show that Latin eugenics, while a homogeneous intellectual movement, evolved along with changing political conditions in Europe. As the German doctrine of racial hygiene – based on scientific racism and feelings of Western European cultural superiority – grew in popularity during the 1930s, some eugenicists in Latin Europe found themselves promoting hard-line eugenic positions, including advocating for sterilisation programmes. The growing influence of German racial hygiene policies caused considerable debate within the Latin eugenics movement; the looming war and fears of national decline caused eugenicists in many Latin countries, most notably Fascist Italy, to embrace racial engineering programmes, while others continued to reject any hard eugenic approaches. Turda and Gillette use these examples to show that Latin eugenics had become more 'conceptually versatile' (p. 235) in the interwar period (1919–38). The concept of conceptual versatility is useful for understanding how eugenicists pitched their programmes to political leaders in different national contexts and historical time periods. Therefore, while Turda and Gillette do show that Latin eugenics was a coherent transnational discourse, they also demonstrate that homogeneity did not mean universal agreement amongst all Latin eugenicists at all times.

Despite the fact that Turda and Gillette include Latin America in their definition and discussion of Latin eugenics, this book really focuses on 'Latin' Europe. It appears that all archival work undertaken for this book took place in Europe and the United States. For this reason, Turda and Gillette rely on secondary sources for their chapter on Latin America. While there are no inherent problems with this approach, as both authors are trained as modern European historians, it does mean that one should cautiously accept some of their points about Latin America. Some of the broad conclusions they make about Latin eugenics do not adequately explain the Latin American context. For example, their point about how Latin eugenicists relied less on racialised understandings of their populations than did their German or Anglo counterparts (p. 239) does not necessarily ring true for Latin America. Indeed, the literature on Latin American eugenics movements, including work cited in this book, stresses the importance of race for understanding how Latin American doctors and politicians embraced and manipulated neo-Lamarckian eugenics for their own national purposes.

As a primarily intellectual history, Turda and Gillette focus on the leading Latin eugenic thinkers and their interactions at conferences and within societies and organisations. One is left to wonder what specific impact these Latin eugenic programmes had on ordinary people within the different countries examined. Since the analysis is mostly at the level of discourse and policy, there are few examples of how eugenic ideas affected various populations. As an addition to current national and regional studies of eugenic programmes, unpacking this transnational movement's impact on national populations would be a worthy future project. Another area that Turda and Gillette open for further research is the connection between these Latin eugenic programmes and the formation of the post-1945 welfare state in Europe (p. 240). In the conclusion, Turda and Gillette claim that Latin eugenics dissolved into a series of national programmes that became the basis for the modern European welfare state, although this point is not developed throughout the book.

Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective is a laudatory effort that shows that Latin eugenics was a distinct intellectual and transnational movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This book should be of interest to intellectual historians, scholars of science, medicine and public health, and anyone interested in the mobility of ideas across world regions.

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Sandra Kuntz Ficker (coord.), *Historia mínima de la expansión ferroviaria en América Latina* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2015), pp. 361, pb.

The literature on the economic history of railways in Latin America has usually been confined to national boundaries. As so often happens in Latin American historiography, most works have focused on the largest and richest economies, and some excellent books have been published over the last few decades on the history of railways in Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Cuba. This volume edited by Sandra Kuntz is exceptional in that context, since it adopts a regional approach and brings together eight national studies with a similar structure, with the explicit objective of offering a general picture of railway expansion in the region.

As is pointed out in the introduction, the most direct precedent of this book is the volume edited by Jesús Sanz in 1998 with the title *Historia de los ferrocarriles de Iberoamérica (1837–1995)*. The *Historia mínima de la expansión ferroviaria en América Latina* represents a clear step forward over that previous book, benefitting from the accumulation of high-quality research during the last twenty years. The new book (unlike Jesús Sanz's edited volume) is not exhaustive, but covers just seven country cases and a study of the Caribbean, in which a detailed analysis of Cuban railways is completed with information about the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Jamaica and a few references to the Lesser Antilles. However, the chosen countries have historically accounted for at least 95 per cent of the railway mileage of the whole region and, thus, the book provides a rather complete picture of the main features of Latin American railway expansion. On the other hand, the lack of exhaustiveness and the absence of an extensive dataset (like that included in Jesús Sanz's book) is actually consistent with the fact that this volume belongs to the series of 'minimum histories' published by El Colegio de México. It is therefore designed to provide an accessible introduction to the topic, which also explains the