

way to deliver and consume social assistance. Contrary to the federal government's efforts to target assistance at working men, Bahia primarily supported women, since the male-dominated industrial workforce was small and many women were critical wage earners in their households, where fathers were often absent or relegated to irrelevance. Bahian physicians and family advocates presented this peculiarity as a local expression of federal mandates. On the supply side, Vargas's Estado Novo's paternalism also made concessions to Bahian maternalism, by relying on existing private organisations to administer public programmes. The dynamism of these philanthropies, in which women from wealthy sugar families played a prominent role, highlights the versatility of the rich, whose established patronage networks and traditional notions of the deserving poor were reproduced within Vargas's new nation-building project.

Otovo concludes with a provocative epilogue about the birthing experiences of contemporary Afro-Brazilian women, disproportionately mistreated within the Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS). Health activists for the 'humanização do parto' point to a number of egregious conditions, including medical professionals' penchant for pushing caesarean operations on parturient women, and their labelling of vaginal births as appropriate only for the impoverished. The instances of morose disrespect that activists have documented evince a widespread deficit of professional compassion that especially affects women of colour, with none of the benign, if autonomy-negating, paternalism of older institutional arrangements. This, and the relative novelty of the SUS – which took shape in the late 1980s, many years after Otovo's historical sources end – might suggest the contours of a new project on the history of birthing. On the other hand, the central theme of Otovo's book about the devaluation of Afro-Brazilian women's experiences within the national context will provide a striking continuity for those concerned with present-day inequalities within the SUS.

In addition to its substantial historical contributions, *Progressive Mothers, Better Babies* reminds us that the national level is but one possible level of analysis in scholarly research. This journal's readers, attuned to the stark geographical, cultural and political variations of Latin America, will find much to like in a book that uncovers the consequence and novelty of a specific region in the history of maternalism, and that opens up the possibility of making comparisons between different Afro-American health worlds.

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Gilberto Hochman and Nísia Trindade Lima (orgs.), *Médicos intérpretes do Brasil* (São Paulo: Hucitec Editora, 2015), pp. xxv + 640, £61.50, pb.

Gilberto Hochman and Nísia Trindade Lima's collection *Médicos intérpretes do Brasil* reflects on the role of physicians as social theorists and critics, imagining and interpreting the nation over the course of the twentieth century. The multi-authored, 29-chapter volume brings together original texts written by some of Brazil's better- and lesser-known physicians with argumentative, interpretative essays that contextualise the sources and provide insight into the challenges, contradictions and potential of nation-building as read through the medical gaze. As the editors make clear in their introduction, the historians focus their chapters on Brazilian physicians' conceptualisations of their nation at critical moments as well as their contributions to political debates that went beyond the world of the clinic. In excerpts from their original

texts, authored for specialist or popular audiences, these physicians drew from current biomedical knowledge and from their vantage point as an aspirant professional class to comment on the major political and intellectual problem of the era – the state of Brazil as a nation and a society. In doing so, these physicians explored the quintessentially modern conundrum of ‘What makes Brazil Brazil?’ (p. xvii), helping to frame both the terms of the question and the terms of the answer.

As the editors explain in their introduction, medical imagery and bodily metaphors became a dominant language used to express hopes and fears for the twentieth-century nation and to diagnose whether modern ‘civilisation’ would survive, thrive, or decline in the ‘tropics’. They intentionally selected a broad range of both prominent and little-known physicians to feature in the volume – some physicians whose clinical or scientific work is rarely studied as socially relevant and some whose prominence in other careers such as politics or literature eclipsed the scholarly memory of their medical background. The result is a text that interrogates physicians as intellectual voices, regardless of whether they successfully translated their visions into projects or saw them remain primarily in the world of ideas and dialogue. Those familiar with this era will expect the intersection between ‘medicine, politics, journalism, and literature’ (p. xxii), but the chapters also reveal intriguing connections between the physicians, uncovering networks within the medical class as their collective influence grew considerably over the course of the century. In the analysis that precedes each primary source, the historians provide nuanced and illuminating biographies of their subjects, weaving little-known details about the physicians’ early lives and careers into a broader inquiry into modern Brazil.

In a playful and insightful chapter on sanitation pioneer Belisário Penna, Luiz Antonio de Castro Santos and Regina Érika Domingos de Figueiredo argue that Penna was (or conceived of himself as) a type of maverick, campaigning for better sanitation, hygiene and rural integration in ways that ultimately represented a challenge to traditional elite politics in Brazil. The accompanying document is a passionate 1918 address in which Penna repudiates climatic and racial determinism and lauds the potential of disease control and eugenic interventions, such as those proposed by his Pro-Sanitation League, to address social ills. Similarly, but from the vantage point of psychiatry, Magali Gouveia Engel argues that Juliano Moreira – a foundational figure in the history of Brazilian psychiatry – maintained that any diagnosis of Brazil, like the best research, must be evidentiary and observation based. His own medical work led him to conclude that deficient cultural environments, not racial history, were the root causes of mental illness.

Simone Petraglia Kropf’s chapter on Carlos Chagas continues the thread of the medical pioneers of Brazil’s First Republic. In this chapter, she argues that through his research Chagas sought to redefine the notion of tropical disease and tropical pathology. For Chagas, parasitology was the means through which Brazil would achieve domination over and improve the productivity of her rural environments. In their respective chapters, editors Hochman and Lima tackle contemporaries Juscelino Kubitschek and João Guimarães Rosa, one a career politician and Brazil’s only physician-president and the other a literary figure who transformed his reflections on disease into poetic and evocative commentary on the Brazilian condition. According to Hochman, President Juscelino Kubitschek, though not often remembered as a medical expert, was an active member of the medical community during the years of his administration. Kubitschek prioritised a broadened understanding of economic development, encompassing plans for agricultural modernisation and

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