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Race, Place, and Medicine: The Idea of the Tropics in Nineteenth-Century Brazilian Medicine. By Julyan G. Peard. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999. x + 315 pp. Appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$54.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.)

Between 1866 and the end of the Brazilian Empire in 1889, a small group of physicians in Bahia achieved international reputation as investigators in the forefront of the study of tropical diseases. In the mid-1860s, a small group of doctors began to meet regularly in the home of Dr. John Patterson, a Scottish physician to the British community. The physicians were mostly outsiders to the medical establishment of Bahia. Some were foreigners, while others, although graduates of the local medical school, were sons of the middle class or laborers and lacked the connections for access to elite society and careers. That these physicians, retrospectively labeled the *Escola Tropicalista Bahiana*, should contribute decisively to the emergence of tropical medicine as a specialty was as timely as unexpected.

In their meetings, the doctors discussed patients they treated and diseases they encountered. They founded a long-lived medical journal, the *Gazeta Médica da Bahia*, to publish their research and disseminate medical information gleaned from European publications. They used their clinical practices at the *Santa Casa de Misericórdia* to introduce innovations and to teach "the most ambitious and promising young students and recent graduates" of the medical school (p. 33). Their visits to Europe, where they trained with such eminent figures as Joseph Lister and Rudolph Vichow, equipped them with the latest scientific knowledge and inserted them into an international network of "doctor-scientists...who corresponded with each other, exchanged specimens, [and] kept informed of one another's work through the medical journals" (p. 70). A dozen or so men "managed to carve out an institutional base from where they negotiated a new way of thinking about sickness in tropical Brazil" (p. 11).

The *Tropicalistas'* contributions to science came at a time when bacteriology and parasitology emerged as alternative explanations to miasmas and climate as the causes of disease. Their challenge of established notions of medical understanding placed them in frequent conflict with the leaders of the medical community in Bahia and in the national capital, Rio de Janeiro. "The *Tropicalistas* [portrayed] themselves as being on the cutting edge of a new kind of medicine focusing on the tropics, and as key actors in the process of reconceptualizing Brazil as a newly civilized and advanced nation...in part by the intervention of its doctors" (pp. 77-78). Eventually their medical successes, their cultivation of a generation of younger doctors, and their growing international reputation brought the *Tropicalistas* into the mainstream. By the end of the nineteenth century, their methods were accepted, their agenda was co-opted, and the management of scientific study

shifted to the political center of Rio de Janeiro. In the absence of support for their work in Bahia, the *Escola Tropicalista Bahiana* faded away.

This study brings the *Tropicalistas* to a wide audience and places them convincingly in both international and Brazilian contexts. The chronology is often confusing, the copious notes tell stories which might better be incorporated into the text, and the bibliography's treatment of original sources borders on the cavalier, but these are minor caveats. Peard's book is solidly based on the writings of her protagonists and their contemporaries, as well as the secondary literature on the contexts in which they worked. Both the scientific community, which studied the maladies of warm climates, and the emerging prickly world of the Brazilian Empire, where the suspicion that race and climate might condemn the nation to backwardness, undermined the nationalistic vision of a Brazil destined to "produce civilization in the tropics for the first time" (p. 108). It tells a story of Latin American contributions to the unfolding of tropical medicine, where the literature had focused on European nations seeking to rationalize their investments and control in Africa and Asia. Likewise, our understanding of Brazilian development is enriched by this history of outsiders on the periphery, who became the source of "the newest and most controversial thinking in nineteenth-century medical science and practice" (p. 167).

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