El texto de Euclides se despega del relato característico del reportero para denunciar los problemas medulares enfrentados por los escritores de guerra. El autor no sólo enfatiza su independencia sino que explora, a partir de su experiencia, algo que—aunque a veces parezca relegado—subyace en el germen del libro de Uriarte: los sujetos de la modernidad se presentan como individuos complejos y atiborrados de dudas, quienes han advertido con diferentes matices, los costos que esos procesos supusieron, las guerras que produjeron y las punzantes dificultades que la experiencia bélica propone al escritor, a la hora de intentar representarla. La mirada perpleja de Lamb desde el Cerro de Montevideo, la visita de Moreno a los caciques prisioneros en el corazón de la cosmopolita Buenos Aires, por proponer sólo dos ejemplos de las múltiples situaciones similares relevadas por Uriarte, dan cuenta de un proceso histórico complejo en el que quienes buscaron erradicar desiertos advirtieron con azoramiento que habían terminado "haciendo desiertos."

Cristina Andrea Featherston *Universidad Nacional de La Plata*

ASHLEY ELIZABETH KERR, ***Sex, Skulls, and Citizens: Gender and Racial Science in Argentina (1860-1910)***. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2020.

Argentina has proven a productive setting for historical studies of science, medicine, and technology. Ashley Elizabeth Kerr's new book, *Sex, Skulls, and Citizens: Gender and Racial Science in Argentina (1860-1910)*, is an innovative and insightful addition to an already substantial body of work on nineteenth-century racial science in Argentina, including that of historians Irina Podgorny, Adriana Novoa, and Carolyne Larson. Kerr builds on these existing studies and extends in new directions, applying the tools of postcolonial theory, subaltern studies, and gender analysis to the subject of Argentine racial science, national identity, and the boundaries of citizenship. While she may slightly overstate the lack of attention to women and gender in the existing literature (see, e.g. the work of María Argeri and Susana Rotker), Kerr is correct in arguing that much more work needs to be done. To that end, *Sex, Skulls, and Citizens* provides a rich and thoughtful study. The author also makes the fair point that scholars of racial thought in Argentina have tended to separate the nation's immigrant history from that of its Indigenous peoples; her book is a corrective to that dichotomy.

Sex, Skulls, and Citizens is a fine example of interdisciplinary work. Kerr, a literary scholar, productively integrates archival sources and novels of the era. This is particularly appropriate, as many of the scientists of the time also

wrote fiction that dealt with themes similar to their scientific studies. After an Introduction outlining the book's scope, methodology, and contribution, Kerr presents five thematic chapters that examine facets of the multiple intersecting historical processes of sex, race, science, national identity.

Chapter one focuses on Argentine scientists' observations of the private and interior lives of Indigenous peoples. Scientists—most of whom crossed what we would call disciplinary fields, but could be described primarily as anthropologists and natural historians—concluded that Indigenous men were "lazy" (a common trope throughout the hemisphere) but also portrayed them as hypersexual and potentially violent. Both judgements led to the infantilization of Indigenous men, stripping them of the qualities required for citizenship: "Whether too masculine or not masculine enough, indigenous men posted a threat to the imagined ideal creole family and thus were incompatible with the rise of the Argentine Republic" (29). Interestingly, and not insignificantly, Kerr also finds that the same writers spoke of Indigenous women as "industrious." The next chapter takes up more closely the relationships between male scientists (all of whom were of European descent) and Indigenous women. The sexual and reproductive currency of Indigenous women has been understudied, Kerr argues here. Scientists saw Indigenous bodies as objects of desire, both for study and for sexual pleasure, "[using] eros as a potent lens for processing and understanding their relationships to a world that was simultaneously threatening, disappearing, attractive, barbaric, and in need of control" (40). Scientists did not always agree on interracial sex; it could be seen as a threat or a solution to the unique problems of postcolonial Argentine society.

Next, Kerr introduces material on the "living exhibits" of Indigenous peoples trapped in the Museo de La Plata. In Chapter three, she documents in sensitive detail this painful episode in Argentina's history, highlighting the central presence of Indigenous women in the Museum's published and photographic documentation. Despite scientists' attempts to reduce Indigenous captives to their race and sex, Kerr convincingly draws out signs of agency and resistance in the documentation. (While Kerr thoughtfully discusses agency in photographic evidence, some of the images of Indigenous peoples could have been excluded and/or further edited, while still illustrating the important points.)

The book's last two chapters turn to fiction and literature. First, Kerr analyzes male scientists' forays into popular writing, followed by a discussion of (white) women novelists and travel writers, whose work, she argues, should be included in the corpus of ethnographic work of the time. In general, novels and popular writing served to spread new ideas; literature was both a complement to and a conduit for scientific concepts floated among the Argentine population. Fiction, with characters symbolizing unresolved questions of national identity

and policy, reflected the debates and disagreements among scientists about these themes as well as those of race mixing and the concept of extinction. Women writers addressed national, racial, and anthropological themes, and sometimes even "appropriated those discourses to challenge exclusionary masculine actions and advocate for more opportunities for both women and Indigenous peoples" (126). Perhaps because there are fewer publications available by women on these subjects, Kerr focuses on comparing Eduarda Mansilla, an upper-class Argentine, and Florence Dixie, a Scottish woman who travelled through Patagonia and published a popular account in 1880, followed by two children's books inspired by the same topic. Both women, Argentine and Anglo alike, lived within and commented on the larger historical realities of Argentina as a settler colonial society. This latter connection, not often recognized but described by Kerr, is worth highlighting: when it comes to historic patterns of colonization and the seizure of Indigenous lands, Argentina is somewhat atypical for many other Latin American countries, and has commonalities with former British colonies.

Sex, Skulls, and Citizens is distinct for Kerr's thoughtful intersectional analysis of women's agency, in which she elaborates on the variety and depth of their roles in the process of constructing and debating national identity and citizenship in late nineteenth-century Argentina. She argues with an abundance of evidence that "Indigenous and white women shaped Argentine scientific racism as well as its application to projects aiming to create a white, civilized nation (...) As sexual partners, skulls to study, and potential citizens in formation, women were at the heart of the nineteenth-century scientific enterprise" (2). The author does not limit herself to analyzing the writing of elite women, but, rather, uncovers the substantial traces of Indigenous women who participated in scientific encounters as informants, laborers, and even sexual partners.

In addition to deft use of theory and gender analysis, Kerr is also to be commended for locating and incorporating valuable archival material from the Museo de La Plata. I did wonder about the absence of pioneering female anthropologist Juliane Dillenius, even as her husband Robert Lehmann-Nitsche makes an appearance. Along similar lines, Chapter Five would have benefitted from a broader scope and inclusion of writers other than Mansilla and Dixie. Otherwise, I have no quibbles with this fine study. It will play a vital role in the collective rethinking underway about nineteenth- and twentieth-century Argentine history at the nexus of race, sex, and nation. *Sex, Skulls, and Citizens* is a valuable addition to the historiography, one that will be read with fascination by scholars and equally enjoyed by their students.

Julia E. Rodriguez *University of New Hampshire*