NICOLA MILLER, ***Republics of Knowledge: Nations of the Future in Latin America***. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.

Miller uses the term "republics of knowledge" to encompass the three main themes that run throughout her book. First, it evokes the early modern concept of the Republic of Letters to denote a network of engaged intellectuals whose community transcended national boundaries. Second, the word "republic" is deployed for its centrality to the work and thought of both statesmen and cultural brokers throughout the nineteenth century. These actors focused intently on acquisition of knowledge to advance material goals and consolidate political legitimacy. Miller's third and final argument points to the possibility of interpreting nations as "communities of shared knowledge" (4). She offers a working definition of knowledge as "the outcome of a process of interpretation that involves a human mind making a claim to a demonstrable truth" (8). There is an important conceptual innovation in Miller's definition because with it she avoids valorizing the standard ontological binaries (European vs indigenous knowledge) and instead is more interested in finding out why some truth-claims prevail over others with a discussion of "all the attendant consequences for asymmetries of power." Her case studies are drawn mainly from Argentina, Chile, and Peru, although the patterns in other countries likely were very similar.

The book is divided into two broad sections. The first is called "Landscapes of Knowledge" and covers roughly the first three decades of the nineteenth century as new countries took shape after the independence wars. These chapters treat the establishment of early cultural institutions and practices that were intended to create what is often called the public sphere: national libraries, printing presses and bookstores (and a growing market for books), university curricula and architecture, drawing schools, and museum spaces. Of these topics, Miller's attention to drawing schools is the most original. She offers many examples of ways in which drawing skills moved out of the realm of elite training and scientific record-making to other practical uses for state-building like city planning and infrastructure design. Drawing teachers taught their young charges to use logic, mathematics, perspective, and mimicry to replicate their environment (or subject). In the nineteenth-century way of knowing, drawings had an importance beyond mere aesthetic practice; they were a way of addressing "the epistemological questions raised by independence and the foundation of new political communities" (99). What was the relationship between the local and the universal? What was the relationship between written word and visual authority? Is it more important to be beautiful or to be useful?

The second section is called "Knowledge for Nation-Making" and, as the title implies, is devoted to formal and practical institutions created in the mid-

nineteenth century to foster the economic power and material progress as governments consolidated their power and made it meaningful and legitimate. There are chapters focused on official language policies, maps and geographical surveys, political economy, engineering and infrastructure, and criminal codes. The chapter on official language policy is particularly thought-provoking as it examines the concurrent use of language at three levels—universal, national, and regional—each of which determined the contours of belonging for particular communities. Miller links debates over the purity of national Castilian in usage with contemporaneous concerns over the racial composition of the citizenry. Through the creation of dictionaries, overseas branches of the Royal Academy, and the establishment of standard, textbook Spanish, certain forms of the language—and their speakers—gained primacy over others. Paraguay was the exception; there, government entities and public life were conducted in both Spanish and Guaraní. Although social theorist James C. Scott's influential book *Seeing Like a State* does not appear in the bibliography, Miller's insights and observations about the role of infrastructure and knowledge in the process of nation-making reaffirm the sorts of processes he observed for the twentieth century elsewhere.

Miller is a skilled historian who never loses sight of the lives and experiences of real, individual humans while she assesses high-level trends. Chapter 2, for example, focuses on the establishment of universities as repositories of knowledge and highlights the example of Juan Cristósomo Lafinur, an energetic, eclectic intellectual whose modernized course offerings at colleges in Buenos Aires brought him into an intense confrontation with established authorities whose epistemology was grounded in older, theological traditions; in this battle over truth-knowledge, opponents threatened Lafinur so seriously that he left the country. In chapter 9, in which Miller discusses several examples of entrepreneurs pitching infrastructure projects, we meet Uruguayan Francisco Lecocq who tried to bring the *frigorífico*, or refrigerator ship, to enhance the transportation options of the beef industry, and the Clark brothers who lobbied two governments to build a *transandino* railway. Both episodes were complicated transnational affairs that sought to bring and adapt an overseas idea to a local context, thereby creating issues of what Miller calls "engineering sovereignty" (181).

Nicola Miller is an excellent writer and an adept synthesizer. In this book, she surveys a broad array of cultural institutions, practices, and artefacts across both space and time and draws out the common motivations and outcomes. At the same time, she is able to convey the significant differences among various national strategies. *Republics of Knowledge* is an important study that is clear enough to be useful and interesting to non-experts while its conceptually rich methodology and detailed content offers much of value to the specialist. Miller's

book actively broadens the definition of an intellectual and what counted as knowledge by locating them outside the formal boundaries of print and high culture. Her case studies clearly document the poly-directional nature of knowledge generation and its relationship to both state-building and nation-making (not the same thing) in nineteenth-century Argentina, Chile, and Peru.

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STEFAN RINKE, ***Latin America and the First World War***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

In recent years, especially following the centennial of the Great War, a series of new historical studies about the impact of the First World War on Latin America have contributed to reinterpreting and revising significantly its importance for the region. Most of this recent scholarship, including recent works by Olivier Compagnon, María Inés Tato, Ana Paula Pires, and Hernán Otero, among others, has focused on the role of the press and adopted in certain cases global, transnational, and comparative perspectives. Although the outbreak of the First World War did not have a direct effect on Latin American countries, reexamining how it was presented and discussed in the press and reinterpreting it as a global moment and from a comparative perspective, has prompted a number of historians to illuminate and shed new light on the significant impact it had on Latin American countries individually and on Latin America as a whole. This recent literature shows how the depiction and discussion of the Great War in the press, including periodicals, images of the war, photos and illustrations, generated wide-ranging ideological, cultural, and social effects across the region. Stefan Rinke's thoughtful and remarkable book, *Latin America and the First World War* (2017), is a direct product of this recent historiographical renewal. The book draws mainly on a wide range of primary sources from the press and published works of intellectuals, diplomats, and politicians, as well as social and political activists. It presents itself as a global history of the First World War. Therefore, it is worth assessing its contribution primarily in relation to these two important dimensions and its inception within this new emerging historiography. Published as part of the Cambridge University Press series "Global and International History" and as a translation of the original German version, Rinke's book makes an important contribution to the understanding of Latin American progressive and more active engagement in global affairs and its assimilation to modern international society.