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12-1-2015

Review of Peter Wade, et al., eds., *Mestizo Genomics: Race Mixture, Nation, and Science in Latin America*

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**Recommended Citation**

Rodriguez, J. E. Review of Peter Wade, et al., eds., *Mestizo Genomics: Race Mixture, Nation, and Science in Latin America*, in *Isis*, 106:4 (December 2015).

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open-world and democratic origins of the Internet is unfounded. The author reminds us that in reality the early development of the Internet was carried out by applying pragmatic principles that had considerable appeal but fell short of the basic requirements of openness and democracy, such as broad membership and voting rights in the standard-setting bodies.

*Open Standards and the Digital Age* is a densely written book based on a significant number of primary sources and a rich, multidisciplinary bibliography. Andrew L. Russell paints on a big canvas, but the panoramic view is often overburdened by details. Similarly, his book probes deeply into some tangents, which, although important, sometimes lead the reader astray. Felicitously, summary sections for each chapter, as well as the introduction and conclusion chapters, bring the main threads together to provide a refreshing view on the history of the early communications networks, and particularly of the more recent digital ones.

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**Peter Wade; Carlos López Beltrán; Eduardo Restrepo; Ricardo Ventura Santos**  
(Editors). *Mestizo Genomics: Race Mixture, Nation, and Science in Latin America*. xii + 304 pp., illus., tables, bibl., index. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2014. \$25.95 (paper).

It is becoming increasingly difficult to claim ignorance of scientific productivity in Latin America. Recent economic and political advances in the region, along with relative stability of scientific institutions in countries such as Mexico and Colombia, have added up to significant scientific activity. In *Mestizo Genomics: Race Mixture, Nation, and Science in Latin America*, a talented multinational group of anthropologists and historians of science and medicine detail the past and present of one such field, genomics, in three Latin American countries. This project is extremely relevant to Latin Americanists, as race and racism continue to be a central, and fraught, theme. *Mestizo Genomics* reveals a diversity of attitudes and practices about racial ideas in the region that have been shaped largely by historical factors but also share some common experiences.

Critical studies of science and medicine have privileged insight into the question of social understandings of race and the implications. *Mestizo Genomics*, compiled in this spirit, describes itself as an anthropological study of genomics in historical perspective, with the starting point being that in genomics research, scientists work with “natural-cultural assemblages” and in fact “participate in the process of assembling them” (p. 205). Based on nearly a year of laboratory observation in three different sites in Latin America (Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico), the collective project “focused on the geneticists and their laboratories and involved participant observation in the labs” (p. vii). The goals of the book are deceptively simple: to study “the way these human populational genomics projects operated in practice, the categories and methods they used to proceed, the reasons they took the shape they did, and how their results circulated, including domains beyond the science labs” (p. viii).

An introductory chapter explains the reasoning for the book, including a brilliant demystification of genomic categories and their interpretation by the public. The rest of the book is organized into two distinct but connected parts; each part has three chapters alternating the findings of the Brazilian, Colombian, and Mexican laboratory studies. Part 1 presents in-depth historical context on the scientific and popular racial theories in each country. Some of the interesting themes that emerge include the appearance of “salvage genetics” in Colombia and the fine-grained racial categories that emerged from population studies in Mexico. Part 2 consists of the findings of the laboratory fieldwork at each site, also embedded in the larger regional and national story of the scientific work observed. The chapter on Brazil reveals the unique approach to Native American (Charrúa) populations in tension with national and regional visions of Brazilian identity; the Colombia chapter clarifies the complicated, multilevel activities

that make up genomic research, including the “possibility of challenging and stretching population categories” (p. 158); and the Mexico chapter updates and further complicates the uneasy relationship between ideas of *mestizaje* (racial mixing) and identity. These alternating country studies allow for reflection on connections and divergences; by the time the reader has reached the final concluding chapter, he or she is ready for the masterful conclusion. Here, some of the interesting comparative outcomes include regionalism as a factor in national scientific projects, the tendency to confuse cultural traits and biological categories, the application of gender concepts to genetics, and the ubiquity of tensions between local/national and transnational scientific agendas and vocabulary. On this last point, the authors conclude that “nation was not a category that could circulate and work as effectively in transnational science circles as admixture or mestizo, which were genomic objects that could yield interesting results” (p. 192). Overall, the book’s case studies reveal, perhaps not surprisingly, the persistence of nationalism in scientific institutions and that social norms more generally infuse scientific ideas. Thus, *Mestizo Genomics* contributes further evidence that race as a concept is too slippery to be real and perhaps futile to categorize.

All in all, the clarity of the project, the skill of the researchers, and the fine editing of the book as a whole allow for a study of great breadth and significance. (In fact, one of the notable features of this book is the remarkable consistency in quality and style across the chapters.) *Mestizo Genomics* will be of great interest to science studies scholars interested in racial science, biology, and genomics. Latin Americanists will find a compelling description of the historic and recent developments in scientific theories of diversity, unity, and homogenous identity in the area, and Latin America’s variety and specific taxonomies should be instructive to scholars of U.S. and European genomics.

**Julia Rodriguez**

**John S. Haller, Jr.** *Shadow Medicine: The Placebo in Conventional and Alternative Therapies*. xxix + 255 pp., app., notes, bibl., index. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. \$35 (cloth).

In characterizing the development of modern medicine, historians have told multiple stories. One story focuses on the emergence of the randomized controlled clinical trial (RCT) as symbolizing how medicine has achieved professional legitimacy by embracing scientific methods—a movement known as evidence-based medicine. Another story describes how nineteenth- and early twentieth-century medical practice remained an “open marketplace” until scientific developments (including the RCT) finally discredited the therapeutic views of alternative healers. Implicitly, both narratives view the RCT as a methodological wedge that separated conventional from alternative healing practices. How then are we to account for numerous documented instances of a “placebo effect,” that is, pharmacologically inert substances that still therapeutically benefit patients? From the standpoint of conventional pharmacologically driven medicine, the existence of a placebo effect constitutes a professional anomaly. From the standpoint of alternative psychologically driven medicine, the existence of a placebo effect constitutes a professional opportunity. This claim—that the placebo effect can exist as a kind of boundary object on the interface between conventional and alternative medicine—is the provocative thesis of John Haller’s book *Shadow Medicine*.

Haller begins by tracing how statistical methods were introduced into medicine during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He discusses methodological and ethical issues that have shaped the structure of the modern clinical trial, the role of the pharmaceutical industry, and the pioneering of meta-analysis through the creation of the Cochrane Collaboration (a quantitative method of systematically reviewing multiple clinical trials to create a stronger evidentiary basis for therapeutic decisions).

For Haller, modern conventional medicine excludes the spiritual and psychological dimensions of