

JOSÉ R. JOUVE MARTÍN. *The Black Doctors of Colonial Lima: Science, Race, and Writing in Colonial and Early Republican Peru*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014. 209 pp.

Among African-descended populations of South America, the names and activities of Afro-Peruvians are generally unfamiliar to students and scholars of Latin American literature and history. Thus the average reader no doubt would be surprised to learn that during the colonial period and the early years of independent Peru, many of the practitioners of medicine were men of African descent, several of whom rose to prominence in their respective fields and in the society at large. In his well researched and well documented study, José R. Jouve Martín of McGill University examines, within the context of Peruvian history, medicine, and literature, the professional lives, writings, and achievements of the best known members of this group – José Manuel Valdés, José Manuel Dávalos, and José Pastor de Larrinaga – , thus illuminating a little known reality of colonial Peruvian society. This book, as the author states, “is a contribution to the ongoing research on the history of the black presence in Peru” (xxiii). He maintains, however, that it differs from earlier studies on African peoples in Peru by focusing on science rather than on slavery.

The latest volume in the series Associated Medical Services Studies in the History of Medicine, Health, and Society, *The Black Doctors of Colonial Lima* consists of 209 pages, encompassing an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a section of copious explanatory and informative notes, a bibliography of historical and modern sources, and a helpful index of names, subjects, and a few Spanish terms. Four pages of drawings of Afro-Peruvian men of medicine illustrate the text.

In his introduction, Jouve Martín explains the purpose and *raison d'être* of the book, whose chapters explore “both the black experience and the politics of medicine in colonial Peru” (xxi). He argues that because studies of black doctors and surgeons are scarce, his work on those of Lima during the period 1760-1840 affords an examination of both their medical beliefs and “the role they played in the dissemination of the scientific revolution and in shaping the sanitary life of the city” (xxi-xxii). He posits as another of his book's aims “to restore their writing and voices to their rightful place” (xxiv).

Chapter one offers a historical overview of the presence and participation of African-descended people in the Peruvian medical establishment, from the founding of Lima in 1535 to 1791, the year in which Larrinaga published his *Apología de los cirujanos del Perú* (5). Besides Larrinaga, Jouve Martín also introduces here Valdés, Dávalos, and the mulatto Dominican friar and healer Martín de Porres, famous for his

miraculous healing techniques and elevated to sainthood in 1962. He also cites several other lesser known Afro-Peruvian physicians whose reputations as surgeons, professors or diagnosticians earned them mention in Peruvian medical annals.

The second chapter begins by revealing establishment doctors' opposition to the development of surgery as a way to alleviate physical ailments, and goes on to discuss how Valdés and Larrinaga contributed to the Enlightenment-oriented journal *Mercurio peruano*. Their writings, which took the form of scientific articles as well as (in Larrinaga's case) poems, enabled them, as Jouve Martín writes, to "transcend their role as physicians ... to become public intellectuals in Lima's world of letters" (35).

Chapter three explores the jealousy and "professional rivalries" (65) that existed between Larrinaga and other members of the medical profession, particularly the Creole intellectual Hipólito Unanue, Valdés and Dávalos, in their respective efforts to establish a school of surgery, and in their differing opinions on medical cases. Later, Jouve Martín shifts his attention from science to politics, explaining the different positions that Dávalos, Valdés and Larrinaga took regarding contemporary political events of Spain and France that shaped Peruvian history, and the role of José de San Martín and Simón Bolívar, the two main liberators of South America. He closes the chapter discussing three texts by Valdés that are noteworthy precisely because they offer a rare example of a black writer's opinion of the emancipation movement and the two principal military leaders.

The final chapter follows Valdés's activities after Peru's independence from Spain up to his death in 1843, focusing on his controversies, successes, setbacks, and legacy as a member and, later, head of the *Protomedicato general de la República*. In his conclusion, Jouve Martín examines the origin, intentions, and significance of Valdés's biography of Martín de Porres, and explains the three mulatto doctors' relative silence on the institution of slavery and their efforts to distinguish themselves from the darker, less fortunate masses – both free and enslaved – who toiled in manual labors. Finally, he provides plausible reasons for the disappearance of blacks and mulattoes from the medical profession in the nineteenth century.

Several minor typographical errors – misspellings, omissions – are noticeable but do not hinder comprehension. With one exception, translations are clear and sensible: a dance characterized as "propio de negros" is awkwardly rendered as "suitable for blacks" (39) instead of "typical or characteristic of blacks." Jouve Martín freely incorporates Spanish terms, most of which he translates or explains parenthetically. Although one can often determine from context the meaning of those not

explained (e.g. *numeración, reglamento, rector*), a glossary of foreign terms used (including *de vehementi, de levi* [16]) would have been helpful. Also, while the separation and hierarchy of medical practitioners is explained – university-educated physicians disdained the work of surgeons, who generally had no degree –, one wonders what training surgeons actually received in preparation for their practice.

Jouve Martín adroitly weaves together the stories of the three mulatto doctors and surgeons, those of other famed Afro-Peruvian physicians and lesser known healers – including slaves – with the history of medicine and politics in colonial and early republican Peru, revealing the existence and consequences of various conflicts, tensions, and multi-layered issues – social, professional, political, economic, cultural, individual and collective – that shaped and influenced the lives and livelihoods of both the privileged classes and the common people. Scholars and students of Latin American history and literature, African diaspora studies, and the history of medicine in the Americas will find this study particularly interesting, useful, and readable.

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ROBIN LEFERE. *La novela histórica: (re)definición, caracterización, tipología*. Madrid: Visor, 2013. 301 pp.

En los últimos veinte años, la crítica ha abordado el estudio de la novela histórica mayormente desde el punto de vista de las transformaciones que experimentó el género a la luz del desarrollo de la llamada nueva novela histórica hispanoamericana calificada también como postmoderna. Sin embargo, a pesar de un amplio corpus de textos críticos que debaten su caracterización, la interpretación contextual del fenómeno y su historia, no existe un consenso acerca de su definición. En *La novela histórica: (re)definición, caracterización, tipología*, Robin Lefere evita el esquema dualista que opone la nueva novela histórica a la novela histórica y, comprometiéndose en debates y polémicas tanto en el ámbito hispano como fuera de él, desarrolla exitosamente una perspectiva teórica totalizadora sobre el género. El libro de Lefere consta de dos partes: la primera se dedica a la problemática teórica de la novela histórica, mientras que la segunda compila ocho artículos publicados entre los años 1999 y 2012 revisados por el autor y presentados como estudio de casos que sirven para el desarrollo de la parte teórica.