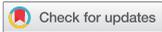


Despite these shortcomings, the book does seek to contribute to the field. For one thing, it explicitly situates itself in the debate over whether or not the New State can be labelled ‘fascist’. Martinho repeatedly reiterates his rejection of such a label by rereading old arguments, such as the dictatorship’s ostensible lack of an expansionist perspective (57, 61–62), a charismatic leader (74) and a mass party (112). (For the most recent book arguing in the opposite direction, see Fernando Rosas’ *Salazar e os Fascismos* (Lisboa: Tinta-da-China, 2019).) The text also offers informative insights into Caetano’s writings, presenting Caetano as guided by a consistent anti-liberal ‘intellectual doctrinarism’ (175) going back to his youthful activism in the *Integralismo Lusitano* movement and arguing that in some areas he could be seen as further to the Right than Salazar, including in his refusal to see the colonies as a natural continuation of Portugal rather than conquered territories (136–37). The book’s most interpretative portion concerns Caetano’s rule, implicitly arguing against Rosas’ ‘failed transition’ thesis and making the case that the New State collapsed due to domestic factors, particularly ‘the rebirth of an extreme right’, the Catholic Church’s growing opposition and the increasing dynamism of the left-wing oppositions (209–10, although only the Church merits careful discussion in the book). The fact that some of Martinho’s points are engaging and discussion-worthy makes it even more disheartening that they are buried in such an unbalanced, convoluted work.

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JOSEPH M. PIERCE, *Argentine Intimacies: Queer Kinship in an Age of Splendor, 1890–1910*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019. xiii + 322 pp; 22 illustrations.

Pierce’s monograph centres on the period the Argentines describe as that of the ‘vacas gordas’, when beef was emperor (not merely king) in Argentina, whose ‘dueños de la tierra’ were embarked on a reduplication of the British Empire on a national scale in the attempt to make Argentina one of the great nations of the globe. The project worked until the Great Depression, which brought down Argentina as it did the other great capitalistic societies, revealing in the process the unsustainability, both economically and morally, of an oligarchic system that really never attained lasting historical splendour, despite the many tattered remnants that continue to nourish a certain Argentine national imaginary.

One of the most interesting aspects, however, of this enterprise was a reduplication of much of British socio-sexual ideology, which functioned in tandem with the underlying Mediterranean socio-sexual system that is still prevalent. The distinction is complex, but the basic differential is that the ‘sodomite’ was a socio-sexual subject in the European tradition, as Michel Foucault describes it, while in the Latinate tradition, the emphasis remains on millennial views of non-reproductive sexual practices rather than on psychological identities. Pierce’s brilliantly innovative study focuses on one of the most prominent Argentine families of the imperial experiment, the Bunge industrial clan. Working with the rich inventory of the sort of textual material produced by such upper-bourgeoisie families of the era—letters, diaries, autobiographical and fiction writing, (pseudo)scientific treatises, even photography—Pierce investigates the fissures in the grand heterosexual façade of such a family. His undertaking is almost Chekhovian in nature, and one quite expects the gun of sexual scandal to go off by the third Act of this family drama. What is particularly original in Pierce’s organization of his material is the use of photography, not only as one of the textual bases of his examination of real-life dynamics, but as the opening exhibit of his study. Photography is woefully understudied in Latin America, and one of the real merits of

Pierce's monograph is the contribution it makes to the use of photography in critical studies, not as merely illustrative sidebars, but as complex textual sources.

*Argentine Intimacies* takes on very large social issues as they play out through the relationships within the Bunge family, which is necessarily seen as a microcosm of the nation and the battlefield of the ideological forces at play, particularly as they relate to the formation of the British-style upper bourgeoisie in Argentina. This bourgeoisie may no longer be quite as triumphant, but its values have very much prevailed in Argentina, such that the sort of socio-sexual ideology at play here has become inherently that of the general middle class in the country—very much the epistemology of the closet, although it has been significantly challenged by the strong assertions of queer visibility that have led to major changes in the Argentine legal code (abortion, which almost passed in the last attempt to legalize it, is the last major milestone: the Bunges, who had very heavy closet doors, did not have to worry about abortion).

There are several other dimensions of Pierce's study that are equally notable. One is the use of the first-person reference. It has long been the norm of feminist scholarship for the discursive voice to express a personal involvement with the political/ideological matters at hand, and this criterion has carried over into queer scholarship as a dimension of the visibility that is integral to that scholarship. The abdication of scholarly aloofness emphasizes the degree to which the researcher is writing, in many ways, his own socio-sexual history. The personalized voice of the queer scholar is very much a significant counterpoint to the way in which the invention of heterosexuality in the late nineteenth century very much constructed a social discourse in which the queer voice not only should not, but could not be present. In the case of Pierce's study, which is fundamentally involved with an example of the construction of heterosexuality—the construction of the Argentine nation state and its embeddedness in the great oligarchic families—the voice of the queer scholar accompanies the discovery of the fissures of queerness in the discursive façade of the family drama of the Bunges.

Another important dimension is the matter of the 'normal'. The public discussion of homosexuality was born out of the discussion of the abnormal, as a deviance from the norm. To be sure, the queer scholar can allege that all life is queer and that what we call heterosexual (and pass off as the norm) is as valid an option as any other. That might be an easy sell for contemporary postmodern culture (especially among Buenos Aires sophisticates), but it does not seem self-evident in the case of the British-style high bourgeoisie. But this is precisely the point that Pierce wants to make: not only that the normal is a fictional construct, but if normal means that which most prevails, it is certainly not the aspirational official story of heterosexual paragons like the Bunges. So-called homosexuality does not disrupt the normal parameters. Quite the contrary: straight becomes abnormal when you begin to do the calculus of what goes on in a family behind all the closet doors. *Argentine Intimacies* is a fine contribution to Argentine studies, to *fin-de-siècle* studies and to queer studies when understood in a far larger sense than solely lesbian liberation. In the end, the Bunges, like most pretentious-ridden aristocrats, may have been fairly boring people, but the socio-sexual contradictions of their pretensions are indeed most interesting, and Pierce's study ensures that we fully understand that fact.

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