

food, exercise, passions . . .) that worry patients. This excess is furthermore relative: the norm referred to, in contrast to the two other discourses, is strictly quantitative and determined ad hoc, depending on the patient. This results in a perception of sexual practices as ‘aetiological factors’ and nothing more. A further consequence is the therapist’s lack of interest in the links between these practices and the patient’s imaginary, desires and even pleasures. This also results in, for example, the new denunciation of involuntary nocturnal pollutions. In fact, following Patrick Singy, Tissot’s patients do not have a sexuality strictly speaking, at least as we understand it today.

Patrick Singy’s overview is seducing and effective: for example, it measures the distance separating *Onania* from Tissot’s book. The author wisely insists on the necessity of thinking of these discourses as permeable to each other, and not as monolithic blocs. Two regrets, however: certain letter extracts are very short, and hence, of limited interest; perhaps the selective approach should have been extended as expected in any anthology. Also, it is surprising to notice the absence in the bibliography of major references, such as by Alain Corbin’s *L’Harmonie des plaisirs* (2008) or *Les Origines de la sexologie* by Sylvie Chaperon (2012). These regrets are nevertheless minor in the face of the extremely stimulating nature of the analysis delivered by Patrick Singy and the avenues he opens for the history of sexuality.

Anne Carol

University of Aix-Marseille, France

doi:10.1017/mdh.2015.18

Marius Turda, *Eugenics and Nation in Early 20th Century Hungary*, Science, Technology and Medicine in Modern History series, ed. John V. Pickstone, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp. x, 343, £70.00, hardback and eBook, ISBN: 9781137293527.

Marius Turda’s *Eugenics and Nation in Early 20th Century Hungary* charts the history of Hungarian eugenics in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Based primarily on journal articles, debates and lectures, Turda delivers a well-researched monograph with detailed description of hitherto unexplored sources. The narrative is framed by Hungarian eugenicists’ engagement with their peers abroad. Turda opens the book with sociologist Oszkár Jászi’s letter to Francis Galton from 1907 and ends with Pál Teleki’s plea for support against the partitioning in a letter to Leonard Darwin, delivered with the help of the Swedish Pontus Fahlbeck and published in *The Eugenics Review* in 1919. In-between the two letters, Turda closely tracks the intellectual conversation grappling with the manifold meanings and practices of eugenics, the formation of societies and eugenicists’ attempts at social reform.

Turda enumerates a long list of intellectuals, who, in diverse ways and to various degrees, engaged with eugenic theories or invoked eugenic concepts in their attempts towards social reform preceding and during the First World War. Furthermore, he explores the roots of the connection between eugenics and nationalism, an important relationship to understand in the light of the social and political effects of the country’s traumatic partitioning in 1920. Finally, he depicts Hungarian eugenics as part of a more broad, primarily European movement. Through the Hungarian case, Turda aims to address ‘the biological transformation of the modern state’ (p. 5) and places Hungarian eugenics in an international, particularly German and British, context.

Turda's narrative shows a blossoming community of eugenicists with strong ties to, and intensive intellectual exchange with German and British colleagues. He demonstrates that one characteristic of the specificity of Hungarian eugenics is that its proponents and theorists came from many different, and often opposing, political backgrounds. Turda argues that the reason for this is that 'eugenics was a modern, rational and scientific interpretation of social and biological improvement that brought any number of different social, religious and political groups together' (p. 243). The book's protagonists, whether situated on the left or right of the political spectrum, shared belief in the necessity of the modern transformation of Hungarian society and agreed on the hegemonic future of the Hungarian nation in the region.

Not only did Hungarian eugenics transcend political boundaries, but it also interwove various professional networks and disciplines. The field of eugenics in Hungary, in Turda's understanding, became a fluid concept that was open to differing interpretations on the one hand, and had blurred boundaries with public health, women and child protection, medicine and social sciences on the other.

The exhaustive description of his fascinating sources unfortunately comes at a price. Turda misses here an important opportunity to engage with the wider reverberations of eugenics, its language and practices. While we get a good sense of professional networks, conversations and the agendas of the eugenicist community, it is less clear why Hungary came to be in the forefront of European eugenic thought and what the overall stakes regarding nation were. Apart from the war years, we are also left to wonder if and how eugenic concepts translated into daily life, public administration and social encounters.

In order to fully understand the significance of prominent eugenicists' theories and contributions, prior knowledge of Hungarian history is required of the reader, since we get little sense of the political, social and cultural context from the book. The early twentieth century was peppered with governmental crises, with recurring issues of Hungary's relationship to Austria and ethnic tensions in a country where barely half of the population was Hungarian. These issues seem crucial when considering the relationship between eugenics and nation and addressing them in more detail would add richness and depth to this otherwise thorough historical analysis. Moreover, the early twentieth century saw an abundance of progressive ideas in Hungary. The question arises whether eugenics was one of several modern theories and practices that found a fertile ground or whether there was something particular in the local interaction of eugenic concepts and Hungarian society, politics and culture that prompted the country's intelligentsia to respond swiftly to these new ideas.

That said, this book remains an important contribution to the history of eugenics more broadly. By shifting the temporal focus of historical enquiry into eugenics and nation from the interwar era to the pre-war years, Turda skilfully demonstrates the prevalence of eugenic reasoning in nation-building on the one hand, and its importance in developing scientific answers to the manifold challenges of modern societies on the other. The book may therefore be of interest to historians of modern Hungary, historians of eugenics and historians of science and medicine who focus on national and international professional networks and the question of disciplinary boundaries.

Dora Vargha

Birkbeck, University of London, UK