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Review Of "Cold War, Deadly Fevers: Malaria Eradication In Mexico, 1955-1975" By M. Cueto

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most important and interesting. There are six essays, by several leading figures involved in this debate, all written from a perspective of “evolution-acceptance” (but not, despite the ID trope, “belief in evolution,” which reduces evolutionary biology to a religious doctrine). That said, there is little new here either, so the volume becomes a handy source rather than a contribution to the debate.

In the opening essay, Nathaniel Comfort—unlike Kitcher—rejects the idea that ID is creationism, instead arguing that it is a new, or different, idea, a general anti-Darwinism, opposed by anticreationists, not evolutionists. How useful this distinction can be is unclear. It is true that opposition to evolution is part of a general opposition to “modernity,” but the very term “Darwinism” seems to be a vague and overextended fiction. Comfort thinks that the intelligent designists bear only vestiges of the older creationism—a view I think the *Dover* decision pretty much disproved. He also critiques what he calls “cultural Darwinism,” which seems to be roughly genetic determinism and the application of selection to cultural change. His historical account of “scientism” is at best one sided and at worst repeats rhetorical myths.

Michael Ruse’s chapter gives an excellent summary of the history of arguments from design. While it repeats the content of his books *Monad to Man* (Harvard, 1996) and *Darwin and Design* (Harvard, 2003), it is good to have something that one might assign as reading to undergraduates in a science and religion course. My only queries—not quibbles—are whether Paley wrote his *Natural Theology* in the light of Hume or if he was unaware of Hume’s *Dialogues* and whether John Ray’s natural theology was founded on Boyle’s (and perhaps Harvey’s) or if it was independent.

Scott Gilbert amusingly applies the pedagogy of evolutionary developmental biology (evo-devo) to teaching the controversy: to understand normal science, find the loss-of-function mutant. ID is that mutant: what science would look like without experiment or causation. He points out what has come to be known as “quote mining” by ID advocates: take out of context any phrase by an established scientist that might be read to underpin ID. Gilbert has himself been one of the victims here. Since evo-devo is often touted as an alternative to evolution (rather than a complementary program), Gilbert identifies the differences between ID and evo-devo. ID is, he says, “in the tradition of American flimflam artistry” (p. 47) rather than that of Paley, Aquinas, and Plato. He goes on to show that if there is a Designer, he’s a lousy municipal engineer, of-

fering examples from shared genes. He correctly identifies the motivation for ID as evolution being seen as an attack on providence, not literalism.

Edward Larson offers an extensive review of the attempts to have creationism or ID installed in classrooms in America, although I think his claim that special creation was the Christian default and that the Enlightenment revived evolutionary thinking is historically wrong. Jane Maienschein’s chapter discusses the relations between science and religion in general, with ID and stem cells as examples of the “entanglement of beliefs” (pp. 91 ff, 87 ff). She untangles several issues to make things a lot clearer, more elaborately than Kitcher.

Robert Young’s essay is curious. He treats Darwin and Wallace as being part of the natural theology movement (which is correct), but then fails to capitalize on that observation: that Darwinian thinking is evolving and that teleological ideas (like Dawkins’s “designoids”) could perhaps be expunged to complete the revolution they began. Nevertheless, his essay is a source for much interesting correspondence and excerpts of Darwin’s and Wallace’s works that are often overlooked.

Overall, neither of these books is going to kill the zombie, but both add to the debate.

JOHN WILKINS

Marcos Cueto. *Cold War, Deadly Fevers: Malaria Eradication in Mexico, 1955–1975.* xvi + 264 pp., figs., tables, bibl., index. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007. \$45 (cloth).

Cold War, Deadly Fevers is a good example of questions and narrative styles historians of Latin American public health have been developing in the last decade. In a way, the book is both history of public health and history in public health. On the one hand, it offers a quite detailed account of the relations among the Mexican state, international health organizations, and Mexican civil society, focusing on the ups and downs of malaria eradication efforts between 1955 and 1975. On the other hand, it aims at illuminating “the recurrent patterns of sanitary backwardness and suggest[ing] what might be done to make a real difference from the past” (p. xi). Marcos Cueto’s book emphasizes the Cold War years—a period only marginally discussed in the historiography on Latin American public health—and centers its focus on the complex fabric woven by high-level politics and every-

day life—a very difficult and not much studied dimension.

Cold War, Deadly Fevers first examines the emergence—in a context of diplomatic struggles, national security concerns, and altruistic visions—of the humanitarian, economic, and political motivations displayed by bilateral and multilateral agencies involved in the eradication campaign. This involvement had three main assumptions: that eradication was biologically feasible, that it yielded more benefits than costs—particularly when compared with other forms of intervention, such as malaria control—and that government political commitment was possible. The discussion of this first topic closes with an exploration of some of the reasons for the late 1960s decline in the global commitment to eradication—not only the concern that DDT was responsible for environmental contamination, but also the perception that it was both a way to delay death without really improving health and a factor leading to overpopulation.

The second topic exhaustively discussed in the book is the Mexican government's validation of the malaria eradication campaign and its appropriation by local medical personnel. This process took place in a period when authoritarian regimes and pro-business political leaders were particularly interested in developing capital-intensive agriculture and also in expanding public health services to some rural areas. As part of these efforts, the Mexican government used the mass media in its public health education campaign, and local medical personnel appropriated some of the specific elements of the international campaign while utilizing them as a way to further rural sanitation.

The third topic deals with two local responses to the eradication campaign. One of them was articulated by medical anthropologists and local physicians, who emphasized campaign officials' lack of cultural perspective. As might be expected, this criticism underlined the fact that Western medicine aimed at overcoming ordinary people's resistance to eradication strategies by trying to replace what looked like the products of ignorance and the remnants of traditional medical practices. The other response, studied in less depth, is an indigenous revolt, based in southern Mexico, that, according to Cueto, reaffirmed the inability of the campaign to deal with cultural differences.

At times *Cold War, Deadly Fevers* reads like a public health report. This is particularly apparent in the chapter of conclusions, organized around a number of lessons the Mexican case can offer for malaria eradication efforts that are based on vertical health programs—not only in the interpretation of other cases in the past, but

also for current initiatives or those that might be implemented in the future. These lessons underline a number of issues. The first is the need to avoid the usual assumption that tactics that were successful in a specific region can be applied effectively anywhere or everywhere. The second is the conviction that malaria and other infectious diseases are not only natural realities, requiring adequate technological solutions, but also socially and economically sustained realities that call for social, political, and cultural responses. The third is the necessity of taking past public health experiences into account when national or international agencies launch new programs. The fourth is the need to avoid overemphasizing new technologies as magic solutions, with insufficient attention paid to the strengthening of community-based malaria prevention and management initiatives. Connected to this lesson is the further point that both the general population and, often, the elites had, and continue to have, a limited understanding of public health—namely, as efforts mobilized in temporary and partial responses to emergencies.

The book has a very clear narrative and organization, with well-defined key topics discussed in 160 pages of text and 100 of notes. As a history of malaria eradication efforts it is very convincing; and the experience of the two decades Cueto has analyzed for the Mexican case reinforces some of the issues that have been discussed for other countries but in earlier periods. Among them are the dynamic negotiations—not merely subordination—that took place when external players articulated their agendas with the local ones and the renewed and expanded approaches that could result, sometimes addressing issues in a more ambitious fashion than originally defined by expert voices from the international health field. As a socio-cultural history of malaria in Mexico, the book's balance is perhaps less convincing, in part because that dimension requires the use of different sources, in part because Cueto's aim was mainly to write a history of and in public health. Without doubt, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers* is an important contribution to the expanding field of international health history.

DIEGO ARMUS

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