

The Criminals of Lima and their Worlds: The Prison Experience, 1850-1935. By Carlos Aguirre. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005. Pp. xi, 310. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$79.95 cloth; \$22.95 paper.

In this superbly researched and written book, Carlos Aguirre initiates the reader into the fascinating details of the penal and criminal world of Lima, a world that had to negotiate the tension between an “authoritarian and exclusionary” modernization process and a continuation of “traditional forms of social domination” (p. 217). The state’s inability to implement true prison reform, because of lack of funds and personnel, and the challenges posed by inmates skillful at negotiating and resisting regulations, formed part of the modern/traditional tension. As background, Aguirre examines the development of the criminal question in Peru, looking at the growth of scientific criminology and the making of a criminal class, whose incarceration and ability to work benefited the modernizing state. The author then turns to Lima’s various penal institutions and the prison population, pointing out how new penal facilities coexisted with a “network of private, informal, and illegal forms of punishment” (p. 88).

In the last three chapters, Aguirre looks at daily life in prisons, how it conformed to official rules that were then transformed by inmates. Some of the most interesting material in this book is in these chapters. For example, prisoners were allowed to install booths in the main prison yard, where they traded a variety of commodities like cigarettes, clothes, and coca in a sort of “European fair” (p. 148). Inmates also organized sports clubs and called prison authorities *padrinos*. Rewards for good behavior included more time to read, less work, permission to cultivate plants for sale, consume tobacco and coca, and the right to send letters to relatives and receive visitors. Aguirre’s research reveals a population that was surprisingly involved in contemporary Peruvian society, one that reflected the full diversity of political and social life. For example, on one occasion inmates organized a reception for President Leguía on his birthday and on another, congratulated him for the resolution of a conflict with Chile. Letters written by prisoners in the late 1920s showed a change from a strictly individualistic to a collective approach in the pursuit of inmates’ goals.

Aguirre’s work contributes not only to our understanding of the Peruvian situation, but also provides an invaluable comparative perspective. For example, Aguirre points out that in contrast to Europe and Latin American countries such as Argentina, in Peru the “confluence of discontented workers and volatile criminal groups [was] largely absent in the perception of social commentators” (p. 60). “The so-called social question—the explosive combination of poverty, unemployment, low salaries, crime, strikes, and working-class agitation” (p. 61) did not have the same dimensions in Peru. The fact that crime was considered to be due to “deficient moral restraint,” rather than to a “collective social breakdown,” meant that authorities were able to disassociate crime from an exploitative economy (p. 61). Aguirre argues that this separation of criminals and workers “was not only a strategic political/discursive construction from above . . . but also a product of the evolution in workers’ own forms of social identity and consciousness” (p. 61).

Throughout this book, the author writes with a marked sensitivity for Lima's prison population. He concludes with a discussion of a unique series of colored drawings done by an inmate at El Frontón in 1932. The drawings show the abuse, arbitrariness, and suffering in places of incarceration, as well as what the author calls "the customary order." The latter, he argues, distinguished Lima's prisons and helped inmates overcome some oppressive elements, and revealed the "porosity and ambiguities of state-imposed mechanisms of social control" (pp. 215-16). The drawings often "invite the viewer to laugh," but readers of *The Criminals of Lima and their Worlds* will do so with a much greater understanding of and empathy for Lima's prison populations gained from Aguirre's research.

*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

KRISTIN RUGGIERO

Dutra's World: Wealth and Family in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro. By Zephyr L. Frank. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004. Pp. xv, 230. Illustrations. Tables. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$45.00 cloth; \$22.95 paper.

Antonio José Dutra's story is endlessly instructive. Born in Africa, and without ever knowing his parents, he was shipped out of Africa in the trans-Atlantic trade to become a slave in Rio de Janeiro, probably in the 1810s. Sometime before 1827, Dutra had bought himself free from slavery and began to prosper as the owner of a barber shop. Gradually he bought slaves, 13 in all—Frank rightfully makes much of the pervasive ownership of slaves as a damper against any early popular abolitionist sentiment—who worked in his barbering business and doubled as a band of musicians who could hire themselves out when business slowed. He also owned two buildings, one housing the barber shop with his living quarters above, while his eldest daughter, Ignacia de Jesus Dutra, lived with her husband next door in the other house. Years earlier Dutra had freed and educated her. Now he could afford to support his five minor children and current woman comfortably, paying for three daughters and one son to attend school. Following his wishes, Dutra was given a Catholic burial.

From the time of his death in 1849, when proceedings were set in motion to divide his property among his children, Dutra's story expands. Ignacia showed none of the timidity supposed true of nineteenth-century women. Worried that her husband, whom she neither liked nor trusted, would get his hands on her inheritance, she declined to act as executor and instead maneuvered for the court to delay the final distribution of the estate until her divorce (an ecclesiastical separation, not a divorce in the modern sense allowing re-marriage) was decreed, their conjugal property separated, and her husband was safely out of the picture. In the interim, Dutra's second-named executor managed the property, bringing in a profit from hiring out the band and renting one house, and so paid for the younger children's food, clothing, and school fees. And through it all we learn what it could mean for a freed African slave, a *liberto*, to re-make his life.