

PARIS GOES WEST

From the Musée Social to an “Ailing Paradise”

World’s Fairs have always been showcases for the products of nations’ progress, manifested in grandiose monuments, machines, technological and scientific breakthrough exhibitions, and even in disturbing displays of those “other” people and cultures to justify racial stereotyping and the discriminatory practice of differentiating between the civilized and the savage. With the advent of the “social question” in France—referring to the social implications of industrialization that became the country’s main domestic challenge at the turn of the nineteenth century—the 1889 World’s Fair was more than a stage for the Eiffel Tower and the extraordinary Gallery of Machines.¹ It was, in fact, the launching ground for a new form of hygiene—social hygiene—which, focusing on people not as isolated entities but as interrelated agents of infection and contamination, would fervently attempt to ameliorate both the human race and its physical milieu. In a country that had had advanced public health and urban hygiene for a whole century, it was difficult to distinguish the boundaries between these practices and what was developing as a social hygiene crusade. It is important to remember that *urban hygiene*, as it was envisioned by Georges-Eugène Haussmann, was essentially a surgical transformation and regulation of the city of Paris that viewed the city as an economic-technical object but not yet as a social one; in contrast, *social hygiene* went beyond the health of the city and its population to encompass a new method for not only preserving the

human race but achieving its “constant improvement, to its perfection.”² As I demonstrate in this chapter, this method developed into a movement that eventually manifested itself as the revolutionary science known as eugenics—again, the social and biological movement that sought the “improvement” of the human race. In fact, the 1889 World’s Fair and its Social Economy Exhibition was where the fundamental ideas—ideals and fears—embedded in the redefinition of the “social question” laid the groundwork for the new type of eugenics first developed in France and then institutionalized in Latin America. This event also led to the formation of the Musée social, a conservative institution aimed at conjoining social change with what was branded as modern urbanism—that new comprehensive discipline devoted to diagnosing and treating the social, spatial, and scientific “body” of the city. This chapter traces the socio-spatial concerns and postulations of France, from the Social Economy Exhibition at the 1889 World’s Fair, to the inner workings of the Musée social, to its prominent members’ medical campaigns and urban practices in Latin America.

OPTIMISM AND ITS DEGENERATIVE AFTERMATH

Among the antecedents of our story, the Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1889, the World’s Fair held in Paris from May to November of 1889, is seminal. This exhibition, the greatest fair of the nineteenth century, which simultaneously celebrated the achievements of the industrial era and the centennial of the French Revolution, exposed the Third Republic’s position regarding the “social question” for the first time—the bourgeoisie’s haunting interrogation of a new form of poverty associated with the advent of industrialization, the crisis of philanthropic reform within the new liberal economy, and the impact of urban growth.³ The message, however, was not totally clear. On the one hand, the fair represented a celebration of progress, national pride, and the commencement of a new modern era. On the other hand, it revealed the problems caused by industrialization, a kind of anxiety over a lost social order, and the emergence of the so-called dangerous classes or the new poor—a segment of society that was seen as an urban human mass in which violence, criminality, diseases, and insurrection could materialize at any time.⁴ During the months that preceded its inauguration, and during the period when this exhibition was at the core of Parisian life, newspapers, various other periodicals, and even the *Bulletin officiel de l’exposition universelle de 1889*, the official publication of the 1889 World’s Fair, reflected this dilemma, showing both the triumphs of modern society and the



FIGURE 2.1.
*Construction of the
 Eiffel Tower, Paris, 1888.*
 © Roger-Viollet, *The
 Image Works.*

FIGURE 2.2.
*Interior view of the
 Gallery of Machines (by
 the architect Ferdinand
 Dutert and the engineer
 Victor Contamin),
 Exposition Universelle
 Internationale de
 1889, Paris. Library of
 Congress Prints and
 Photographs Division,
 Washington, DC.*



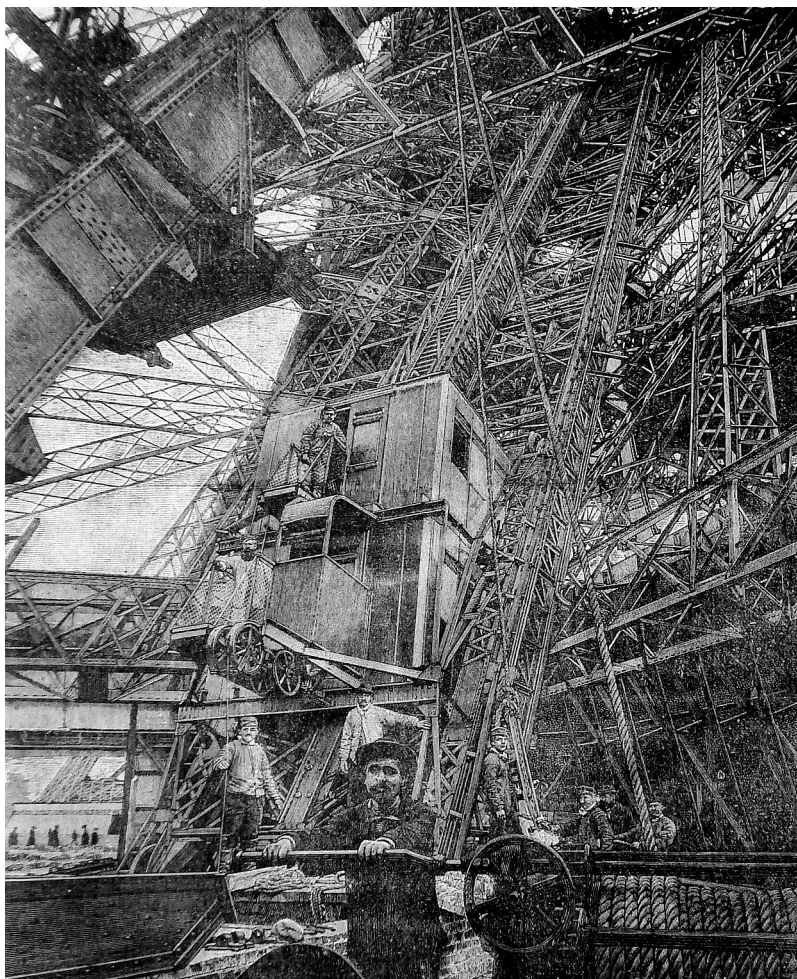
social fears that lay behind them. Their pages were filled with articles on public assistance, health and education, the care of infants, and even criminal anthropology. It was no coincidence that simultaneous with the World's Fair, Paris was also the stage for several related scientific and sociological conferences where this social fear was at the center of debate.⁵

FIGURE 2.3.

Cover image of the
*Bulletin officiel de
l'exposition universelle
de 1889, no. 148,
September 14, 1889.*
*Bibliothèque des Arts
Décoratifs, Paris.*

FIGURE 2.4.

Charles Garnier,
*dwellings of tribal
peoples of Africa, North
America, and the Arctic
regions in the History of
Habitation Exhibit,*
*Exposition Universelle
Internationale de 1889,
Paris, France.* Library
of Congress Prints and
Photographs Division,
Washington, DC.



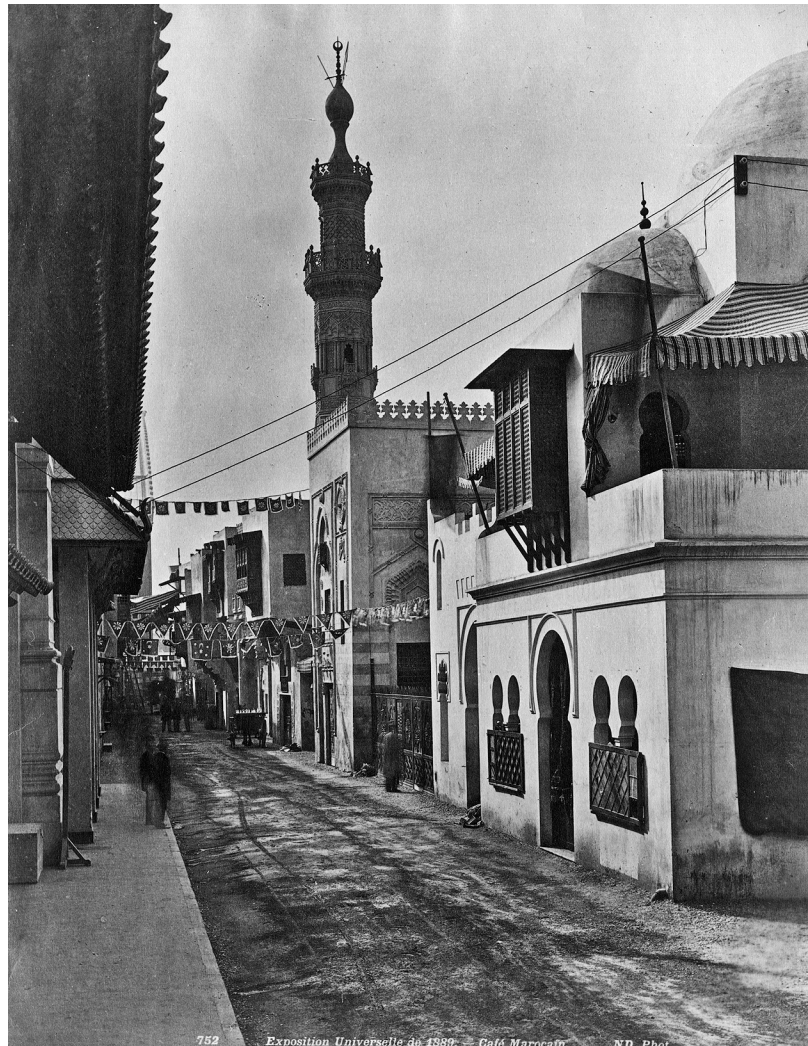
An article about one of these conferences, the Criminal Anthropology Conference, published in the *Bulletin officiel*, clearly manifested the fear of degeneration that haunted French society. The article highlighted the opposition of Léonce Manouvrier, a French physician and anthropologist who later would greatly influence Latin American medical science, to the idea promoted by the famed Italian physician Cesare Lombroso that criminality was a biologically determined condition. Manouvrier was convinced that transforming the milieu was a way to transform the human being, revealing French scholars' commitment to Lamarckian theories. According to the article, Manouvrier dismissed Lombroso's "born criminal" thesis by claiming that Lombroso failed to understand the complexities of the problem when he did not consider other factors such as race, gender, social class, and, even more importantly, the conditions of the milieu in producing criminality. Manouvrier even proposed uniting, under the term "anthropotechnology" (*anthropotechnie*), all the disciplines that had as their main goal the elevation of the human condition: "medicine, hygiene, morality, education, law, and politics."⁶ It was clear that the influence of French thinkers established the worldview, which still persists today, that the "social environment plays the most important role, in the long run, in shaping the actions and nature of the criminal."⁷ This Lamarckian view, which underscores the primacy of the environment as a transformative social agent, was prevalent in French intellectual and medical circles and was hotly debated at many of the congresses and events that accompanied the 1889 World's Fair.

Although the main goal of the World's Fair was to portray a victorious and positive image of the French Third Republic, which at the time still faced numerous political and social challenges, the fair actually displayed both the achievements and the tribulations of a modern republican society. Even the floor plan for the exhibition attempted to re-create the Arc de Triomphe to symbolize the pride of France.⁸ The symbolic arc was formed by the two main platforms of the exhibition, the Champ de Mars and the Esplanade des Invalides, connected by the Quai d'Orsay. However, the division between these two main platforms clearly revealed the contradictions faced by France as a modern republic. At the center of the Champ de Mars, the Eiffel Tower reached for the sky as a new symbol of the republic; and the Galerie des Machines, in its no less extraordinary iron structure, celebrated the triumph of industrialization with a spectacular display featuring a conglomeration of machinery. On the other side of the exhibition, at the Esplanade des Invalides, a series of buildings, performances,

and exhibits revealed a very different and complex image regarding progress.⁹ This image was reflected in the stylistic palaces representing the French colonies, re-creations of African villages, and the first extensive exposition of colonized people, including over four hundred Indochinese, Tahitians, and Senegalese.¹⁰

Interestingly, the Social Economy Exhibition—the section of the World’s Fair devoted to the “social question”—was sited just in front of these representations. It is notable that this exhibition, a tribute to social peace presenting the social technologies that could be used to reduce social conflict, was placed right next to the French Ministry of War. It is also revealing that the exhibition was located next to the Agriculture Fair—a showroom for what the state could achieve with the help of the private sector, namely, the organization,

FIGURE 2.5.
Alphonse Delort de Gléon, reconstruction of a street in Cairo at the 1889 World’s Fair, Paris, France. Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art Library, Washington, DC.



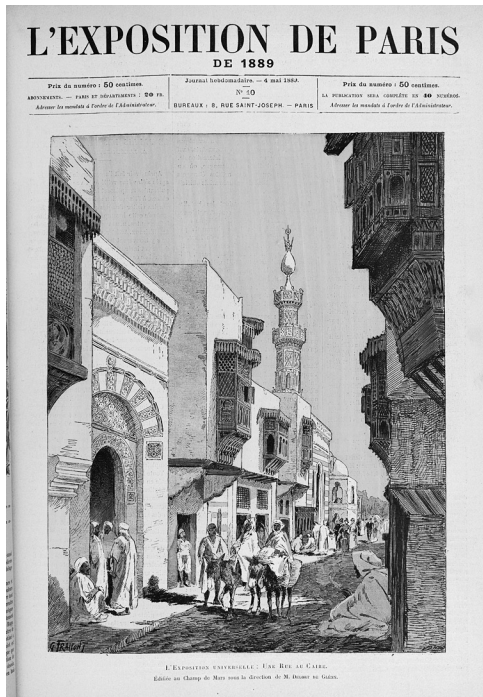


FIGURE 2.6.
G. Traiponi, engraving,
“Une rue au Cairo.”
Cover, *L'Exposition de Paris*, no. 10, May
1889. University of
Glasgow Library,
Special Collections.

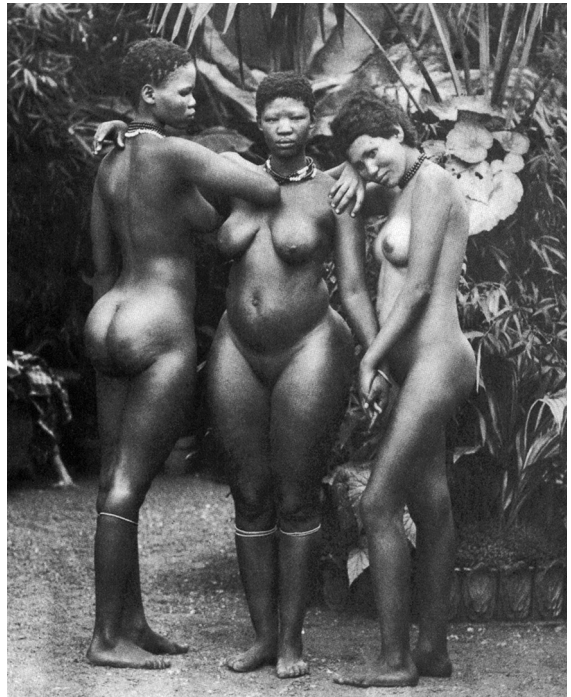


FIGURE 2.7.
*Photos of indigenous
women from South Africa
at the Jardin zoologique
d'acclimatation, Paris;
Album “Hottentots”
presented at the 1889
World’s Fair, Paris.*
Vénus hottentotes au
Jardin d’Acclimatation
à Paris. Photograph by
Pierre Petit, 1888. Photo
© PVDE/Bridgeman
Images.

rationalization, and standardization of “a social hieroglyph into a legible and administratively more convenient format”—mirroring in the human realm what scientific forestry and agriculture were doing to the natural world.¹¹ Finally, the Social Economy Exhibition’s location next to the Hygiene Pavilion, the state-sponsored display devoted to France’s progress in health, is significant for the way it appropriated the scientific inquiry and authority of its neighbor. By 1889, under the light of Pasteur’s bacteriological revolution, hygiene had acquired an indisputable scientific status, and the Social Economy Exhibition announced the emergence of a new science: the science of society.¹²

The Social Economy Exhibition embraced concerns about the ramifications of industrialization, assuming a critical position toward the liberal tradition and pointing to the moral and human aspects of industrial development. However, this exhibition was undoubtedly pro-industrial: it was conceived not as a critique of industrialization, portraying the working class as the forgotten stratum of French society, but as a warning about the social complexities that had to be faced by the republic.¹³ In the same spirit that the colonial palaces and representations of Arab and African communities were portrayed as colonized societies proud to be part of the French grandeur, the Social Economy Exhibition opened with the “cité sociale,” a working village in which proud workers were portrayed in their model houses, wearing

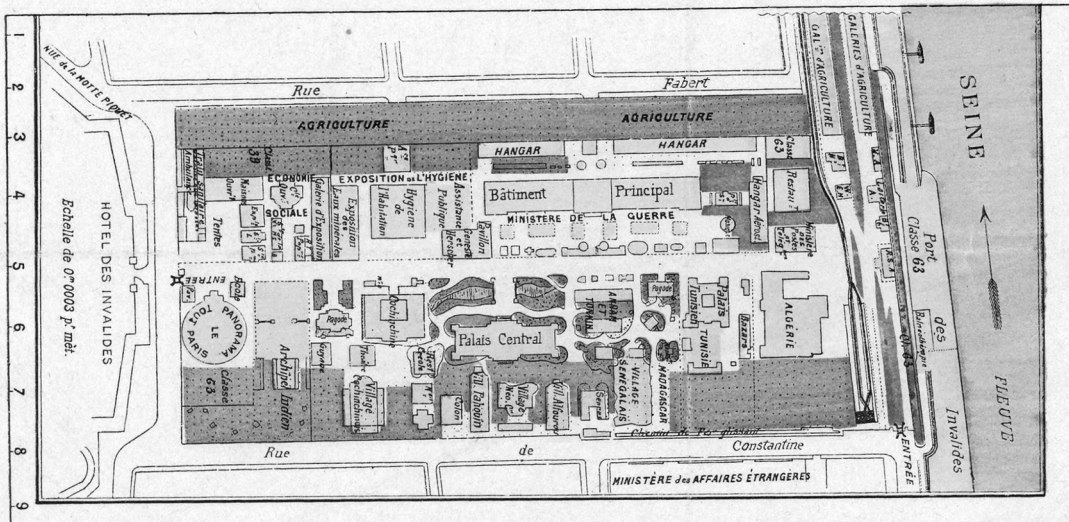


FIGURE 2.8.
Layout, Esplanade des Invalides, 1889 World's Fair, Paris. Département des Estampes et de la photographie, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Gallica, <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.

their uniforms, and accompanied most essentially by their families.¹⁴ Rather than the filth and darkness that characterized popular representations of industrial spaces and workers' slums at the time, the Social Economy Exhibition showcased the hygienic houses of orderly workers, low-cost cafeterias, day-care centers, dispensaries, and other social and economic organizations promoted by a new generation of industrialists.¹⁵ As part of these displays, an exhibition hall, the Galerie de l'économie sociale, presented documents on industrial reform and social welfare. In the end, the exhibitions at the Esplanade des Invalides reveal a clear link between colonization and industrialization—the basis for the emergence of the utopian ideology of progress. In fact, it would not be inaccurate to say that discussions generated by these exhibitions “set the stage for the rise of the modern welfare state in France” and, with it, the major components of French eugenics.¹⁶

As part of its redefinition of the “social question,” the Social Economy Exhibition turned its attention from the industrial world to society at large. One of its fifteen sections was devoted to a new concept of hygiene—social hygiene.¹⁷ As noted in chapter 1, social hygiene was considered an economic science concerned with the outputs of human capital: production (*travail*) and reproduction.¹⁸ The first to define social hygiene was the criminologist Alexandre Lacassagne, who, in 1876, saw it as an “art of knowing” the influences that come from the milieu; then, in 1902, the Pasteurian Émile Duclaux emphasized the broader theoretical dimension of the term in which illnesses were not seen as physical maladies but as social repercussions.¹⁹ At the core of both definitions was an emphasis on the agency of the social

milieu and the notion that social hygiene, differing from “hygiène privée” (in which hygiene was seen as an individual moral attribute), governs the collective, not the individual, body. Thus, as part of a late-nineteenth-century redrawing of boundaries between the public and private spheres, social hygiene became an important aspect of workers’ lives and also of the greater social body and its milieu.

Even before eugenics became part of public policy, the Social Hygiene Section of the Social Economy Exhibition emphasized eugenics’ main obsessions: the ravaging effects of modern social diseases; the “amelioration” of the infant, the child, and the adolescent; and the reimagining of the city as one means of eradicating degeneration.²⁰ Echoing these concerns, three of the fifteen sections that constituted the Social Economy Exhibition—Section XI: Workers’ Housing; Section XII: Workers’ Clubs, Recreation, and Play; and Section XIII: Social Hygiene—clearly considered architecture an influential element and one of the main instruments for improving the lives of the workers and their descendants. These sections emphasized the moral and physical results of improving spatial conditions for the workers, from the private space of their houses to the public space of their recreational and health centers—sport clubs, gardens, gymnasiums, temperance cafés, refectories, and lavatories.

In a guide to this 1889 Social Economy Exhibition, published in the journal *La Réforme sociale*, the engineer Émile Cheysson highlighted a main distinction between this exhibition and the one on hygiene in the 1867 World’s Fair. A follower of the French social scientist and sociologist Frédéric Le Play, Cheysson argued that the emphasis shifted from one exhibition to the other, from the idea of assistance—merely helping and healing the individual injured body—to the liberal idea of *prévoyance* as the method for eliminating poverty and improving society’s welfare.²¹ Furthermore, if *assistance* was conceived as therapeutic and private, *prévoyance* was conceived as a broad-scale preventive measure for social planning. Seen as a progressive science, social hygiene was in fact reactionary in the sense that it “attempted to restore a previous status quo or reverse negative trends.”²² In its attempt to go beyond the health of the individual, social hygiene sought to overcome biological degeneration—the greatest fear haunting French society. Perceived as the culprits of degeneration, three major health problems—alcoholism, tuberculosis, and venereal disease—were grouped together to become known as “social plagues” or “moral diseases.” With this clear threefold target, fears of degeneration thus provoked the implementation of social hygiene and the institutionalization of eugenics.

At this same Social Economy Exhibition, Cheysson launched the idea for a “social museum” that would represent and render appealing the social technologies proposed to a wider public by the LePlayists, followers of Le Play, whose essential objective was to assume a more active role in the construction of the French welfare system. This idea of a permanent exhibition would later materialize as the “Experimental Museum of the World” known as the Musée social.²³ So, in 1895, the exhibition’s previously nomadic collection of documents found its permanent place at this institution, a kind of early think tank in which an interdisciplinary group of professionals would address the social problems of the times through a scientific mode of intervention. From the start, the Musée social was conceived as a new kind of museum that echoed the classical conception of *museion*, an institution going beyond the traditional museological functions of collecting, classifying, preserving, and displaying to assume a more civic and pedagogical role. In other words, this initiative refashioned the idea of a museum: instead of isolating objects by their traditional functions, it displayed them in relationship to their social and cultural circumstances.²⁴ Thus, the Musée social—a living museum of research and practice—would host a permanent exhibition of social economy and a library in its main facility in Paris’ Seventh Arrondissement, and also sponsor research by interdisciplinary professionals whose investigations of social questions went beyond the industrial world and the boundaries of the French territory and its colonies. This new group of social technocrats had considerable influence over French law and discourse, but its main impact was actually on the French colonies and on the non-French periphery in emergent Latin American nations.

PROFESSIONALIZING EUGENICS

Two of the most seminal figures of the Musée social, the physicians Adolphe Pinard and Louis Landouzy, extended the ongoing social discourse from the human body—both individual and collective—to physical space. Pinard, while trying to unveil the causes of declining fertility in France, developed the concept of puericulture—a kind of human analogue to agriculture—for the “scientific cultivation” of the mother-child unit.²⁵ In order to face the apparent depopulation of the nation, Pinard, who was influenced by the morally driven analysis of protosociologists such as Le Play, added a Lamarckian notion of heredity to the moral exhortation of the value of raising children, in this way connecting the well-being of the child to the mother’s health, the health of previous generations, and environmental influences.

Puericulture bound together pro-family and pro-natalist outlooks, which emphasized the traditional role of women in the family—women *in reproduction*—under the auspices of medicine, presented as an apolitical and empirical form of knowledge. In puericulture, the functions of morality and science were interchangeable.²⁶ While Pinard focused on the mother-child unit, his colleague Louis Landouzy, who was likewise influenced by Lamarckian ideas of heredity, argued for the cultivation of the human species across entire life spans. Landouzy focused on what he saw as social environmental poisons: alcohol, tuberculosis, and syphilis, the earlier-mentioned “social plagues.” To define the battle against them, Landouzy coined the term “homiculture.” Influenced by Pinard and Landouzy, the hygienist and eugenicist Justin Sicard de Plauzoles evoked puericulture by naming three main components of social hygiene: the production and reproduction of human capital through eugenics; the conservation of this capital through hygiene and medicine; and the further development of this capital through professional and physical education.²⁷ Thus, as we shall see, puericulture paved the way for both the planning of the family and the planning of the city. For Sicard de Plauzoles, social hygiene provided the first opportunity to forecast the convergence of hygienics and eugenics in France. In this sense, these two apparently different movements—hygienics, acting to conserve the health of the body and to transform the milieu, and eugenics, acting to ameliorate human heredity—had converged to the point of fusion. The hygienists’ goal—improving housing, education, public space, and health—was shared by both hygienists and eugenicists to the point that professionals in each field were listed among the members of both organizations. What brought these two groups together was a concern over the influences of the environment on the individual and social body.

Considered “the strong arm of the Musée social,” the Alliance d’hygiène sociale—a coalition of public health groups that emerged in 1904 as the first organization of social hygiene—turned space into a key instrument for combating social diseases in “the preservation of the race, its improvement, and its perfection.”²⁸ This was the first time that a group of physicians and architects had joined forces “to introduce a new way of conceiving and promoting collective action as a medical, moral, and social means of prevention.”²⁹ Among the names of the Musée social’s reformers were the most prominent architects and urban planners in France at the beginning of the century, such as Eugène Hénard and Adolphe Augustin Rey, making the urban fabric the main focus of collective action. Influenced by the poet and intellectual Gustave Kahn, the architects of the Musée social were ready

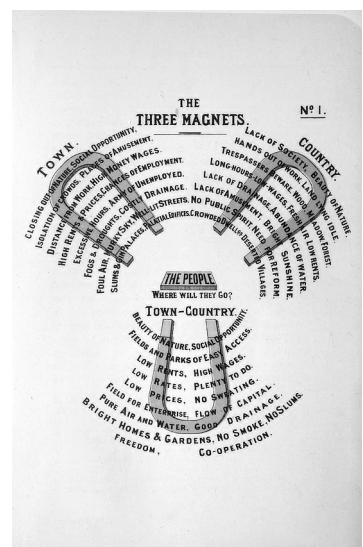
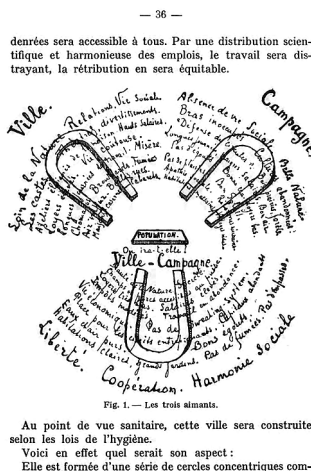
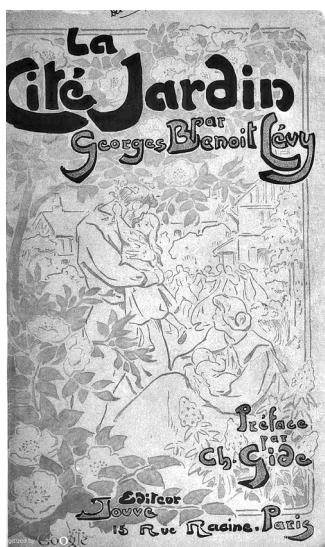
to participate in a coalition driven by medicine that incorporated medical methodologies into the urban question. While Kahn in his 1901 book, *L'Esthétique de la rue*, had prophesied that “hygiene is God, the physicians are its prophets, and the architect follows their prescriptions,” a few years later, the architects at the Musée social, however, were ready to take the lead.³⁰ Connecting beauty directly to health via the details of the street, Kahn’s social critique created a concept of aesthetics with economic, hygienic, administrative, financial, commercial, and social questions at its core. Kahn’s influence is clear in Robert de Souza’s 1913 book, *Nice, capitale d’hiver*, and in Donat-Alfred Agache, J. Marcel Auburtin, and Édouard Redont’s 1915 book, *Comment reconstruire nos cités détruites*, where they all voiced their conviction that hygiene and aesthetics were the main responsibilities of urban design. Taking up this call, Le Corbusier clearly saw himself as god, prophet, and technician—Kahn’s medico-aesthetic trio—which he repeatedly claimed from the 1920s to the 1940s, as discussed in chapter 4.

With planning now as France’s most powerful tool for resolving its social problems, in 1908 the Alliance d’hygiène sociale inspired the creation of a new section of the Musée social devoted to urban and rural hygiene, later called Section d’hygiène urbaine et rurale et de prévoyance sociale. A shift toward the social function of architecture, with a focus on the larger urban fabric rather than on individual buildings, characterized the work of its members, differentiating them from the more aesthetic-oriented traditions of the Beaux-Arts school. Three years later, the Musée social’s faith in the ability of urban planning to combat social concerns was reaffirmed at the 1911 Congrès d’hygiène sociale in Roubaix. There, at Roubaix City Hall, architecture, urbanism, and landscape design became critically linked with a new urgency to sanitize houses and neighborhoods, working facilities, open spaces, parks, and playgrounds. Under the direction of Jules Siegfried, the president of the Musée social, the conference opened with a clear manifestation of its medical-spatial agenda: “the study of all questions relating to the health improvement of spaces.”³¹ The conference’s program covered “topics ranging ‘from the insalubrious city (Ville-Taudis),’ where all forms of contagion, of misery and death are developed, ‘to the garden city (Cité Jardin),’ where the race gets fortified, where air and sun guarantee health and life.”³² Relevant members of the Musée social, such as the social engineer Georges Benoît-Lévy and the architect Agache, lectured on the importance of the “garden city.” Even Georges Risler, who would later be president of both the Musée social and its Alliance de hygiène social, advocated

FIGURE 2.9.
Cover for Georges
Benoît-Lévy's book, *La
cité jardin* (Paris: Henri
Jouve, 1904). Courtesy
of HathiTrust.

FIGURE 2.10.
Ebenezer Howard's
diagram "The Three
Magnets," translated and
published in Georges
Benoît-Lévy, *La cité
jardin* (Paris: Henri
Jouve, 1904). Courtesy
of HathiTrust.

FIGURE 2.11.
Ebenezer Howard's
diagram "The Three
Magnets," originally
published in *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path
to Real Reform* (London:
Swan Sonnenschein,
1898), and reprinted in
his celebrated 1902 book,
*Garden Cities of To-
morrow* (London: Swan
Sonnenschein, 1902).
Courtesy of HathiTrust.



for the garden city as the right environment in which to breed communities of disciplined, family-oriented, hygienic, and preemptive workers. In the first session of the conference, Benoît-Lévy claimed that the “garden city” was the “social hygiene city par excellence” and even argued that the world’s social history of the twentieth century was inscribed in the very subtitle of the conference: “De la ville-taudis à la cité-jardin.”³³ And Agache highlighted the significance of healthy housing in the development of the “human plant,” emphasizing the interdependence of physical hygiene and moral hygiene.³⁴ In fact, the so-called garden city, a new urban model of decentralization conceived to combat both the ill health of modern metropolises and the abandonment of rural territories, was an early synthesis of what Lamarckian eugenics would soon bring together: the complicity of medicine, morality, and architecture.³⁵

After the creation of the new section on urban and rural hygiene, physicians and architects joined the Musée social in even greater numbers. A new official commitment to planning and urban development thus arose at the core of the Musée social with the work of Hénard, Augustin Rey, and Agache as well as other prominent architects, including Louis Bonnier, André Bérard, Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier, Marcel Poëte, Léon Jaussely, Maurice Rotival, and Henri Prost, among others. In 1911, when Landouzy became the vice president of this section, it included ninety-eight members—almost a third of the total membership of the Musée social.³⁶ In 1913, this group, which took credit for conceiving the practice of modern urbanism, created the first professional association in France devoted to its

development, the Société française des urbanistes. With its fervent embrace of medicine as an emissary of progress, Latin America was identified as a perfect laboratory for this new generation of innovative reformers.³⁷ Within a few years, the architect members of the Musée social designed urban projects for Latin American cities, including master plans by Bérard for Guayaquil (1913), by Forestier for Buenos Aires (1924) and Havana (1925–1930), by Agache for Rio

FIGURE 2.12.

Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier, project for the Avenida del Palacio y del Nuevo Malecón, Havana Master Plan, Secretaría de Obras Públicas, Havana, 1925–1930. Fonds Forestier and Fonds Leveau (150 Ifa-149 Ifa), SIAF/Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine/Archives d'architecture du XXe siècle, Paris.



FIGURE 2.13.

Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier, project for the Avenida del Palacio y del Nuevo Malecón, Havana Master Plan, Secretaría de Obras Públicas, Havana, 1925–1930. Fonds Forestier and Fonds Leveau (150 Ifa-149 Ifa), SIAF/Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine/Archives d'architecture du XXe siècle, Paris.

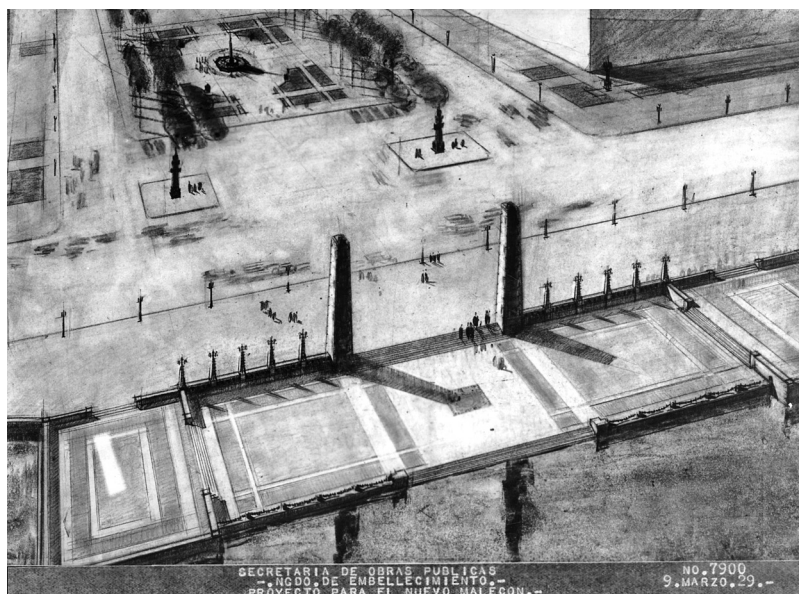


FIGURE 2.14.

Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier, photograph, Antonio Maceo Park, Havana, Secretaría de Obras Públicas, Havana, 1928. Fonds Forestier and Fonds Leveau (150 Ifa-149 Ifa), SIAF/Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine/Archives d'architecture du XXe siècle, Paris.



de Janeiro (1929), and by Rotival for Caracas (1935).³⁸ Most of these projects used science, morality, and aesthetics to legitimize a race-centered modernist agenda in which urbanism was recruited as a racial-class technology that allowed governments to segregate entire communities, constructing what the scholar Bruno Carvalho called “an environment of inequality.”³⁹ So it is to Latin America that we now turn, specifically to Brazil’s capital city during the early 1920s, when eugenics and hygienic ideas decimated an entire populated mountain, leaving in its wake the tabula rasa upon which Agache conceived his Rio master plan.

RAZING THE MOUNTAIN

In the early 1920s, a highly dramatic event took place in Rio de Janeiro. The battle against bubonic plague, yellow fever, and other tropical diseases had led to radical sanitary and urban reform that reached its climax with the sensational demolition of an entire populated mountain located at the center of the Brazilian capital.⁴⁰ This mountain, Morro do Castelo, was not just an ordinary mountain; it was the original site where the colonial city, with its historical buildings and underground infrastructure, was established in 1567.⁴¹ In spite of its historical value, after Mayor Francisco Pereira Passos’ urban reforms of 1902–1906 that expelled thousands of inhabitants

from the center of the city, the Morro do Castelo stood in downtown Rio as the very last refuge housing the poor.⁴² By the early 1920s, in addition to the almost 600 residential buildings that had been demolished under Pereira Passos' *bota-abaixo* (shut-down) strategy, the razing of the Morro do Castelo destroyed another 408 buildings, driving out another 4,200 low-income residents to even less favorable living conditions in the surrounding hills and on the outskirts of the city.⁴³ Most of these demolished buildings were collective housing structures called *cortiços* (literally beehives)—the precarious tenement houses that hosted the poor in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions.⁴⁴ According to the city's authorities, the Morro do Castelo was a "montanha de estrume" (a mountain of manure) that, together with its "undesirable" inhabitants, needed to be removed from the city center.⁴⁵ This led to the segregation of the southern part of the city (the seafront neighborhoods) for the upper classes, the relegation of the industrial north and the periphery for the poor, and the emergence of communities known as favelas in the city's hills.⁴⁶ Due to these urban reforms, from 1906 to 1920, a vastly uneven growth distribution marked Rio's fate: its "population grew by 4 percent in the areas with the most extensive renovations, while in the other areas of the Federal District, where few or none of these improvements had taken place, the population increased by 61 percent" and in the suburbs by 96 percent.⁴⁷ This did not happen without resistance; many Morro do Castelo inhabitants refused to leave the center of the city where the sources of work were located, moving to nearby hills such as the Morro do Pinto and Morro de Santo Antônio, and to Santa Teresa and the areas of Gamboa and Espírito Santo.⁴⁸ Although the migration of poor people to the city's hills slowly began at the end of the nineteenth century, it was not until "the era of the demolitions" that the favelas, as urban slums, proliferated.⁴⁹ So the demolition of the Morro do Castelo was the climactic moment in which science—in the form of eugenics—justified both the radical transformation of the built environment and an almost two-decades-long marginalization of the disenfranchised, mostly blacks and mulattos, from the center of the Brazilian capital.

The idea of eliminating this mountain was not new. As far back as 1798, a medical report had argued for the mountain's demolition on the grounds that it was an enormous barrier that blocked the circulation of air from the sea and consequently facilitated the proliferation of diseases.⁵⁰ But it was not until the 1920s that aesthetic and moral reasons were added to sanitary ones, and the mountain came to be seen as the very negation of modernity itself, a reservoir of vice and



FIGURE 2.15.
Augusto Malta, demolition of the Morro do Castelo, Rio de Janeiro, October 9, 1922. Image record 007A5P3F10-36, Augusto Malta/ Instituto Moreira Salles Collection.



FIGURE 2.16.
Augusto Malta, demolition of the Morro do Castelo, Rio de Janeiro, August 30, 1922. Image record 014AM005017, Augusto Malta/ Instituto Moreira Salles Collection.

FIGURE 2.17.

Augusto Malta, demolition of the Morro do Castelo, opening of parallel road to Avenida Rio Branco, Rio de Janeiro, July 29, 1921. Image record P009CJHF4001, Augusto Malta/Coleção Jennings Hoffenberg/ Instituto Moreira Salles Collection.

FIGURE 2.18.

Augusto Malta, demolition of the Morro do Castelo, above to the right, Igreja de São Sebastião, Rio de Janeiro, October 29, 1921. Image record 014AM005030, Augusto Malta/Instituto Moreira Salles Collection.



diseases, a place of a “marginal” population—mostly poor blacks, prostitutes, and former slaves—who, according to the elites, invaded the center of the city “with their embarrassing practices of superstition and misery.”⁵¹ At that time, medicine had become the principal tool used by the state to study and then reconfigure its national population. It was only at this point, when hygiene became social hygiene, and hydraulic technologies had reached a more innovative level of

development, that the implosion of the Morro do Castelo was possible. The engineer and industrialist Carlos Sampaio (1861–1930), the mayor of the city from 1920 to 1922, diverted \$20 million allocated for the upgrading and electrification of the deteriorating main artery that connected the suburbs to downtown Rio to pay for the demolition of the mountain and the bulldozing of the central esplanade.⁵² Moreover, Sampaio raised substantial funds from public and private sources to pay for the upgrading of fashionable southern neighborhoods and to engineer major urban and environmental transformations in the zone, including the flattening and sanitizing of the Rodrigo de Freitas lagoon and its urban border, the conclusion of the Avenida Beira Mar connecting downtown Rio with the Botafogo neighborhood, and the reconstruction of the Avenida Atlântica along the Copacabana waterfront.⁵³ In his attempt to move forward with the reforms initiated by Pereira Passos, Sampaio brought back to the forefront the “urban question” and its social implications. So it was not a coincidence that the demolition of the Morro do Castelo was executed almost simultaneously with new mandates that privileged European immigration and banned people of color. One such mandate was the “white only” decree (No. 4247) of 1921, which literally prohibited the immigration of blacks to Brazil.⁵⁴ In this way, the demolition of the Morro do Castelo, in progress that year, contributed not only to the overwhelming class disparity but also to a similar racial disparity between the low number of new “white” inhabitants moving into the urban developments in the south, and the “colored” inhabitants displaced to the north, with its inadequate services and poor sanitation.⁵⁵ As part of this whitening agenda, Sampaio was convinced that the once-valued mountain, now contaminated, had to be eliminated. As he victoriously stated:

The celebrated mountain, historic due to the fact that the city of Rio de Janeiro was founded there, sacred due to the existence of a convent and two churches, legendary and enchanted due to the subterranean galleries in which it was said were gold and precious stone treasures, for more than a century challenged the physicians that recommended its demolition in order to ameliorate the poor hygienic conditions of the city, as well as the engineers who saw in such an action an important technical challenge and a lucrative operation.⁵⁶

A few lines later, Sampaio pointed out not only the hygienic, technological, and economic justification for the mountain’s demolition but also its aesthetic one:

... because it was a barrier to ventilation ... and produced, due to its nonaesthetic and nauseating aspect, a bad impression on travelers, who, upon entering the splendid Rio de Janeiro Bay, had the same sensation as seeing a rotten front tooth in a beautiful mouth.⁵⁷



FIGURE 2.19.
Poster for the Centennial Commemoration Exhibition of the Independence of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro, September 7, 1922, to March 31, 1923. Lithograph by Carlos Oswald, 1923. Arquivo Nacional, <http://www.exposicoesvirtuais.arquivonacional.gov.br/pt-br/exposicoes/60-4-rio-do-morro-ao-mar/283-a-exposicao-internacional-de-1922-memoria-e-civilizacao>.

So this dramatic demolition—which generated an extensive territory that, two years later, would be occupied by the 1922 Centennial Exhibition commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of Brazil’s independence—represented the first and most radical action in the construction of a new national image, free of backward associations and racial exoticism.⁵⁸ The 815,000 square meters of flat land that resulted from the demolition of the mountain and the new esplanade landfill reclaimed from the sea was rapidly occupied by splendid eclectic pavilions, gardens, and public spaces, and even a hydroplane port built to provide a modern and glorious entrance to the city that was called “the port of Brazil.” With this action that displaced thousands of “undesirable” inhabitants and eliminated Rio de Janeiro’s original urban nucleus, the reformers’ strategic vision of “changing the city to change the society” was emphatically proclaimed.⁵⁹

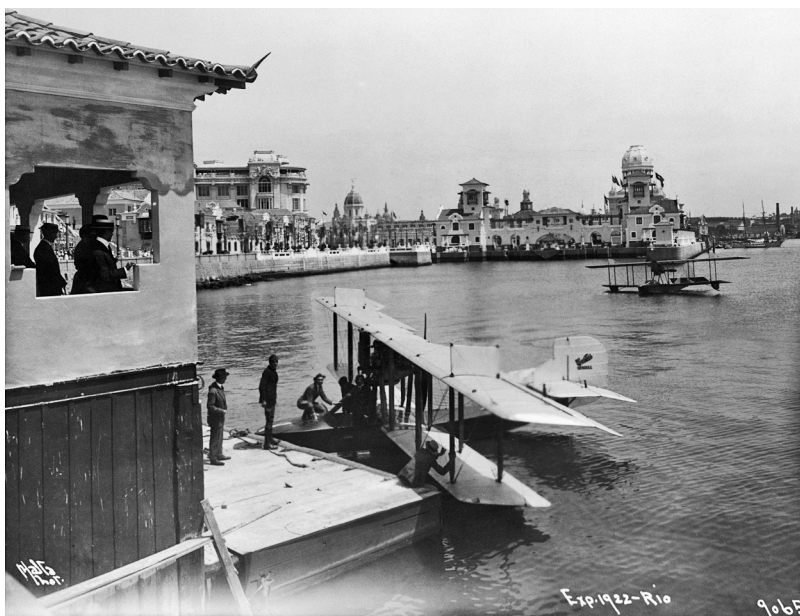
Conceived as the modern and successful face of a country that, nearing the end of its First Republic (1889–1930), still faced serious political and economic crises, the 1922 Centennial Exhibition was placed over the void left by the erased mountain and its colonial center.⁶⁰ Most of the pavilions designed for the site were built in the neocolonial style—a style selected by the organizers to represent their new modern country in the centennial anniversary of its independence. One must ask: What about this style of architecture appealed to the exhibition’s planners? First, it paradoxically offered the possibility of something new through the reformulation of its own old European forms. Second, it was a style that, by borrowing from colonial precedents, was believed to compensate for the colonial architectural heritage destroyed with the razing of the mountain.⁶¹ Clearly, for the establishment in Rio, no other style could both evoke a new modern Brazilian identity and retain the country’s deep European roots. And the Centennial Exhibition was the perfect showcase for this style

FIGURE 2.20.

Augusto Malta, photographs of neocolonial pavilions, Centennial Exhibition of 1922, North Portal, Rio de Janeiro. Image record 007A5P4F2-65, Augusto Malta/Coleção Gilberto Ferrez/Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles.

FIGURE 2.21.

Augusto Malta, photographs of neocolonial pavilions, Centennial Exhibition of 1922, Rio de Janeiro. Image record 007A5P3F10-36, Augusto Malta/Coleção Gilberto Ferrez/Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles.



that architects themselves justified even from an evolutionary point of view. According to Fernando Nereo de Sampaio, the vice president of the Brazilian Institute of Architects at the time, architecture was the very “definition of an idea, . . . the synthesis of a social movement, the moral, material and intellectual state of a civilization.”⁶² In fact, following Lamarckian theories, Nereo de Sampaio compared the propagation of architectural styles with the propagation of new natural species—both of which he considered products of “heredity



FIGURE 2.22.
 Advertisement, “*Fabrica de Calçado Souto*,”
 published in *O Livro de Ouro: Comemorativo do centenário da independência do Brasil e da Exposição Internacional do Rio de Janeiro*
 (Rio de Janeiro: Edição do Anuario do Brasil, 1923). Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, Rio de Janeiro.

by ideological assumptions that undoubtedly declared their modernist agenda of social engineering.⁶⁶ In the end, for the Brazilian technocrats and elites, “modernity [was] equated with whiteness.”⁶⁷

O Livro de Ouro, the more than five-hundred-page catalogue for the Centennial Exhibition, was explicit when it described the exhibition as an “expression of the constructive energy of a new race,” one that was able to triumph in the “battle between man, mountain, and ocean.”⁶⁸ The exhibition itself represented a literal “triumph” over the territory—promoting itself as a tabula rasa, a new territory cleansed of its history and its unwanted inhabitants.⁶⁹ It is striking that even the catalogue speaks of a desire to totally eliminate all traces of African and indigenous components of Brazilian culture.⁷⁰ Exploring the imagery displayed throughout the catalogue provides a powerful demonstration of a new alliance between beauty, health, tropicality, and modernization adopted by the Brazilian elites to represent themselves and their new nation. In most publicity materials for companies and products, white men, women, and children of classic Greco-Roman appearance, wearing white robes and crowns, are arranged against a transplanted European-looking hill and gardens to frame the architecture and machinery of modern factories.⁷¹ Here, the ideal of beauty and virtue is represented as “Hellenic.”⁷² These representations of

and [environmental] adaptation.”⁶³ For Nereo de Sampaio, it was precisely through the influences arising from the milieu that those characteristics, passed on from generation to generation, could be modified, creating new forms linked to a specific period and society.⁶⁴ Other architects at the time, including Morales de los Rios Filho, followed these Lamarckian ideas to argue that by responding to heredity and environmental adaptation, architectural styles are the consequences “of a historic tradition, social and ecological exigencies, aesthetic sensibilities, racial or economic necessities, religious devotion, political transformation, the discovery of new materials, wars, invasions, migrations and customs.”⁶⁵ Although not one of these architects ever directly referenced Lamarck or eugenics, they were actually using an architectural style as a way to express the main tenets of Lamarckian eugenics and also to announce a new era of architecture, permeated

FIGURE 2.24.
*Pão de Açúcar and the
funicular, ca. 1912. Post
card, n.d. Collection of
the author.*



FIGURE 2.25.
*S. H. Holland, photo-
graph of the construc-
tion of the Christ the
Redeemer statue at the
peak of the Corcovado
Mountain, with view
of Pão de Açúcar, Rio
de Janeiro, Brazil,
ca. 1931. Image record
013RJ009013. S. H. Hol-
land/Brascan Cem Anos
no Brasil Collection/
Instituto Moreira Salles.*



Tower, the Statue of Liberty, and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.⁷⁴ The advertisement exalts the mountain because of its beauty and history but especially because of its new funicular, the third cable car built in the world, which facilitated access to the peak. The exhibition catalogue also celebrates the Corcovado, the extraordinary mountain at the center of the Tijuca Forest, the world's largest human-made urban rainforest located at the very center of the city, which would be crowned a few years later with a monumental 40-meter-tall statue of Christ the Redeemer.⁷⁵ In fact, the stone foundation was laid at the peak of the mountain on April 04, 1922.⁷⁶ In razing the Morro do Castelo while transforming two other mountains within the city into sites of pure aesthetic pleasure, tropical nature—now monumentalized—is portrayed as a site of the interplay between the body, labor, and technology. In the end, the exhibition was conceived as a self-portrait of a modern nation—a nation that was able to undertake a self-remaking process, changing its milieu to change its population.

On another level, the exhibition itself represented a triumph of control over nature and over illness itself. Organized as main attractions of the fair behind the neocolonial façades of the exhibition's pavilions, two particular museums isolated the so-called social diseases presumably eradicated with the demolition of the mountain and the displacement of its supposedly "degenerate" inhabitants: tuberculosis and syphilis.⁷⁷ Thus, the demolition, part of the reform called "regeneration," reveals not only Brazilian elites' faith in their slow but steady march toward "whitening" the population but also their new fear of the pariahs of modern times: alcoholics, syphilitics, prostitutes, and sexual deviants. It was not by accident that most of the population eradicated by the reform was black—the same people that the Brazilian writer Lima Barreto had identified as those "non-invited to the party."⁷⁸ For Brazilian elites, medical science represented the medium through which modernity could be achieved and the rationalization by which their actions could be legitimized.

In his article in the *Livro de Ouro*, the well-known Brazilian physician and eugenicist Antônio Austregésilo cites one hundred years of Brazilian achievements in medicine, biology, and hygiene. He emphasizes the primacy of medical sciences by stating that "nations with primitive medicine cannot be great; without doubt, it is hygiene and biological experimentation that determine the scientific vitality of developed nations."⁷⁹ He exalts Oswaldo Cruz' success in the eradication of yellow fever from the cities; Carlos Chagas' campaigns against venereal diseases, leprosy, tuberculosis, and malaria; Juliano Moreira's and Franco da Rocha's assistance to the mentally ill; and

various other policies adopted by the National Department of Public Health spanning from domestic hygiene to food control.⁸⁰ Austregésilo was convinced that “the Brazilian medical spirit was always a *satellite* of the French spirit.” Although Brazilians were aware of medical advances produced in Germany, Italy, England, and the United States of America, he argues that it was to France that they turned for knowledge and orientation.⁸¹ Clearly, a fear of the degeneration of their population provoked the French to shift their attention from infectious to genetic diseases, and to become preoccupied with a new series of medical classifications and new measurements for fitness. This new threat immediately assaulted the Brazilian establishment. Various articles published in the *Livro de Ouro* emphasize the “urgent protection of the fittest” and the need to extend social hygiene from the schools of medicine to general education in each elementary and high school throughout the country. In other words, the articles emphasize the importance of hygiene education, not only in medical circles but, most critically, in the education of “all men and women who will be fathers and mothers.”⁸² The ideas behind these articles and the numerous advertisements throughout the *Livro de Ouro* demonstrate the Brazilian elites’ determination to merge hygienics and eugenics, materialized as the French science-faith known as puericulture.⁸³

As at the 1889 World’s Fair in Paris, the 1922 Centennial Exhibition in Rio also included several international scientific conferences.⁸⁴ Among them, the First Brazilian Congress for the Protection of Infants (Primeiro Congresso Brasileiro de Proteção à Infância), organized by the recently created Department of Infancy in Brazil, was an agent for France’s transformation of puericulture into a neo-Lamarckian form of eugenics.⁸⁵ Revealing the influence of French medicine on Brazilian medical circles, the debates at the Congress focused on the importance of puericulture—a term revitalized by Pinard as “the research and application of all knowledge relative to the reproduction, conservation and improvement of the human species.”⁸⁶ Echoing Pinard, Brazilian physicians were convinced that “a child was the result of two forces in equilibrium: heredity and milieu,” and that consequently puericulture in the Brazilian context was considered “one of the most accessible ways of conserving and perfecting the human species.”⁸⁷ Pinard was a neo-Lamarckian; he believed in the hereditary transmission of acquired characteristics. From this notion, two main tenets can be derived. On the one hand, children—considered a national biological-political resource—and their mothers were treated as a single unit regarded as a “collective political economy.” On the other hand, environment became the plausible stage for apparently

FIGURE 2.26.
Interview with the Brazilian eugenicist Renato Kehl, "A Puericultura Pre-Conceptional," ca. 1940. Departamento de Arquivo e Documentação, Casa Oswaldo Cruz/ Fiocruz—Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Funds Renato Kehl (Box 3), Rio de Janeiro.



contradictory goals: the preservation of a country's national image and the transformation of its inhabitants, giving particular attention to urban planning and to the transformation of the milieu in which reproduction, maternity, and child rearing all occurred simultaneously. These two elements—heredity and milieu—were crucial for the transformation of puericulture into eugenics. In France, puericulture and its goal of producing healthy children rather than eliminating defectives had inaugurated a movement that sounded so benign and lovable that it soon attracted supporters from all sides of the political spectrum as well as interest abroad. By the time it was adopted in Brazil, where it morphed into its official form as the French Eugenics Society, puericulture had been tainted by the racial prejudice that characterized mainstream eugenics.⁸⁸ What is unmistakable about the way eugenics reverberated in Brazil was that it presented itself far beyond the structures of racial bias, seeping into the realms of science and aesthetics, becoming an "aesthetic-biological movement

concerned with beauty and ugliness, purity and contamination, as represented in race.”⁸⁹ It was at this very point in Brazil that the built environment, considered both the main carrier of vice and disease as well as the “main transmitter of modernism,” became the ultimate technology of Lamarckian eugenics.⁹⁰

AGACHE’S *LABORATOIRE* IN RIO DE JANEIRO

It was not by chance that, in 1926, four years after the commemorations of the independence of Brazil and its related scientific conferences, a group of physicians and architects met to discuss an urban plan that would determine the fate of the Morro do Castelo’s esplanade, temporarily occupied by the exhibition’s pavilions.⁹¹ Alleging hygienic and eugenic factors, it was also not a coincidence that this group, led by the influential Rotary Club of Rio with members that included the engineer Armando de Godoy and the physicians José Mariano Filho and João Augusto de Mattos Pimenta, proposed for this urban transformation the name of two architects who were members of the Parisian Musée social: Jaussely and Agache.⁹² It was, in fact, Mariano Filho, the physician and art critic—the most vehement proponent of neocolonial architecture in Brazil—who emphatically supported the candidacy of Agache.⁹³ Why did such an ardent promoter of a style inspired by Brazil’s colonial past become the main advocate for the appointment of a French architect? It is clear that this appointment was an expression of a country that had preferred European over Brazilian designers and that, since the time of the Portuguese Empire, had brought a constellation of French artists and architects to the country.⁹⁴ But it is telling that Mariano Filho proposed an architect from the Beaux-Arts tradition even though he was the main promoter of a style based on the incorporation of elements from a national tradition—one that emerged as a response to the “destructive cosmopolitanism” that its backers believed would disfigure the “face” of Brazilian cities.⁹⁵ The choice of Agache arose amid the cultural and political tensions of the 1920s between the “conservative” modernists—who argued for a modernity based on the languages of the country’s colonial heritage or on the languages of nineteenth-century Europe—and the vanguard modernists of the *Semana de Arte Moderna* (Week of Modern Art) in São Paulo—who wanted to represent modern Brazil as a stylized mixture of the foreign, the indigenous, and the African.⁹⁶ In a context in which the state supported a style that was in a sense antimodernist, pro-Iberian, and at the same time “white” as an emblem of progress and modernity,

the inscription of the new Morro do Castelo esplanade with European forms was a contradictory act.⁹⁷ First, the esplanade's tabula rasa that supposedly would bring forth a modern urban center was filled with neocolonial pavilions, and then it was reimagined with Agache's Beaux-Arts forms. What is clear here is that inviting Agache to formulate an urban plan in a European vernacular identified by the elites as their own expressed a visual ideology of "whiteness" that was the common denominator of both the neocolonial and the Beaux-Arts styles.⁹⁸ Of course, these elites—politicians, reformers, intellectuals, and physicians—were not a homogeneous group, but they seemed to agree on the normative élan they wanted for their cities. Even Mário de Andrade, one of the main protagonists of the Semana de Arte Moderna, was also an open supporter of Mariano Filho's ideas and the promotion of the style he called "maternal architecture."⁹⁹ In fact, in 1928, in a series of articles published in *Diário Nacional*, Andrade recognized and celebrated the role of the architects working for the "normalization" of the neocolonial as a Brazilian national style.¹⁰⁰ In many ways, these "modern" attitudes sought to homogenize the city and, with it, its population, and then proclaim the esplanade a political and economic altar to power, infused with European forms.

Agache arrived in Rio on June 25, 1927, and a few days later delivered his first lecture, "What Is Urbanism?" (O que é o urbanismo?). He began his lecture by introducing himself as the physician who, having a medical case on his hands, had to produce a diagnosis for the pathological condition of the sick city—Rio de Janeiro—that, due to its impetuous growth, needed to be treated:

I want you to see me as a kind of doctor who has been consulted and who is more than pleased to bring his knowledge to bear and to be able to make use of it in his consideration of this pathological case submitted for examination. I say pathological case because Mademoiselle Carioca [referring to Rio de Janeiro as a single woman] is certainly sick. But do not be afraid, since her illness is not congenital: it is one that is curable, because it is an illness that consists of a growth crisis.¹⁰¹

For Agache this was a sick city, one that went from a population of 800,000 in 1906 to almost 2,000,000 in 1928, a city that he felt was the result of a lack of discipline and "necessary precautions," a city that urgently required control. Agache explained:

Mademoiselle Carioca [again referring to Rio, using the term "*carioca*"—commonly used to refer to the people of the city], affected by

the rapid development of her circulation, is now ailing. Her breathing, her circulation, and her digestive system soon will be threatened. What to do? A physician needs to prescribe a severe regimen, a model of progress and discipline, and urgently provide her with a regulatory plan that allows her to blossom favorably.¹⁰²

To control the city's growth, Agache proposed a "discipline" that years earlier he had helped create with his colleagues at the Musée social in Paris, defined as "a science and an art" but overall as a "social philosophy."¹⁰³ According to Agache, to whom the term "urbanism" was attributed, urbanism embodied the "rules" for the "amelioration" of the city—it was, in his own words, "the renovation, the expansion, and the beautification of a city, accomplished by a methodological study of *human geography* and *urban topography* without disregarding financial solutions."¹⁰⁴ Underlying this statement is an interesting assumption: that both land and people can be codified and controlled. In any case, Agache's definition of urbanism highlighted the difference between the "modern" urbanism born at the Musée social and the urban transformation undertaken earlier by Haussmann and imported to Rio de Janeiro by Mayor Francisco Pereira Passos to inaugurate the century. This distinction is apparent in modern urbanism's emphasis on social welfare, the primacy of the socioeconomic aspects of urban planning that displaced preoccupations with circulation and hygiene, which drove Haussmann's interventions.¹⁰⁵ In the search for moral and economic progress, this move from circulation to social welfare, from hygiene to eugenics, was conceived as part of a new interdisciplinary and transnational mission undertaken by the architect members of the Musée social. They found in medicine a rationale and a methodology for their practices, and in the Latin American nations, culturally dependent on France, the perfect site for their experiments and for the promotion of the new "science" of urbanism—complicit with social engineering.

In November of 1927, Agache received a commission to develop the first comprehensive master plan for Rio de Janeiro. After studying the city and its problems for two years, Agache and his team produced a complete diagnosis of Rio, elaborating on the various short- and long-term projects that should be executed for its "expansion, amelioration, and beautification." In 1930, Agache's master plan was completed. Although the plan included the expected blueprints and photographs of the urban areas to be surgically altered as well as each building's details, it also included more than three hundred pages of text devoted to the promotion of his main goal: social ideology. Beyond the

possibility of an immediate execution of his plan, Agache sought to indoctrinate the people of Rio in the “cause” of urbanism. From his very first lecture in Rio, he warned his audience that it “is necessary that the sick patient be the first to desire her cure.” In no uncertain terms, Agache was referring once again to Rio as a young female while describing his role as a “positivist missionary” who was there in a “conquest” to indoctrinate “the maximum number of adherents to the cause of urbanism,” the social doctrine that would ensure the city’s cure.¹⁰⁶

In his master plan, following his historical account of the development of the city, Agache produced two documents that would allow him to convey his plans to radically transform the city center by demolishing two mountains: a current aerial photograph of Rio to produce what he called “plan photo-topographique,” and his “plan schématique.” Agache used both documents to identify the nearly razed Morro do Castelo, whose demolition produced a new infill of land that included an area that Agache called Ponta do Calabouço.¹⁰⁷ Through these documents, he also identified the still existing Morro

FIGURE 2.27.
Donat-Alfred Agache,
“Plan Schématique”
published in Agache,
A cidade do Rio de
Janeiro, remodelação,
extensão e embeleza-
mento, 1927–1930 (Paris:
Foyer Brésilien, 1930).

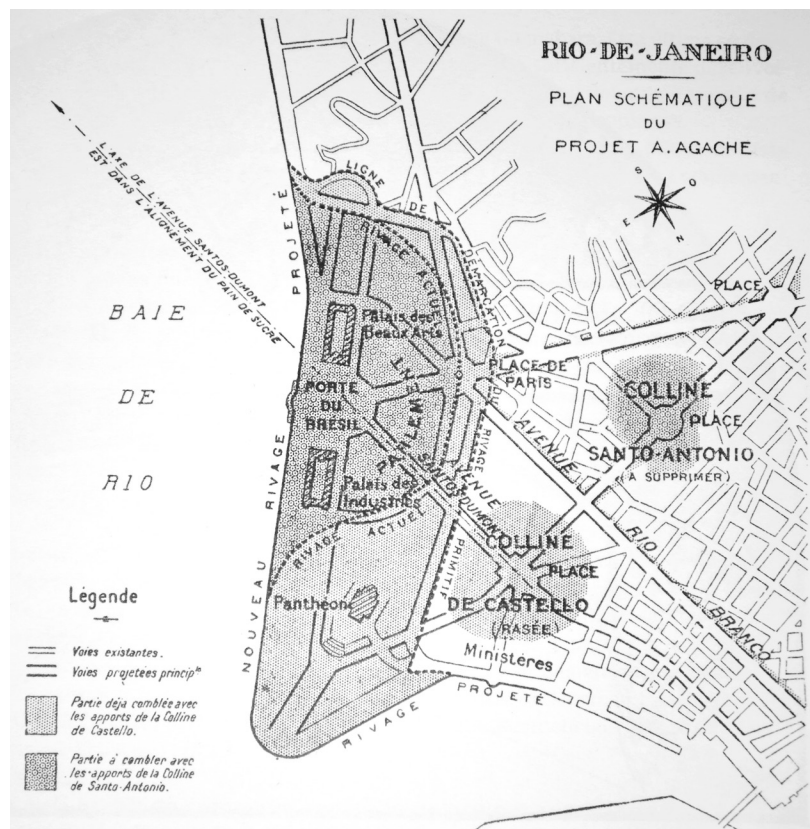
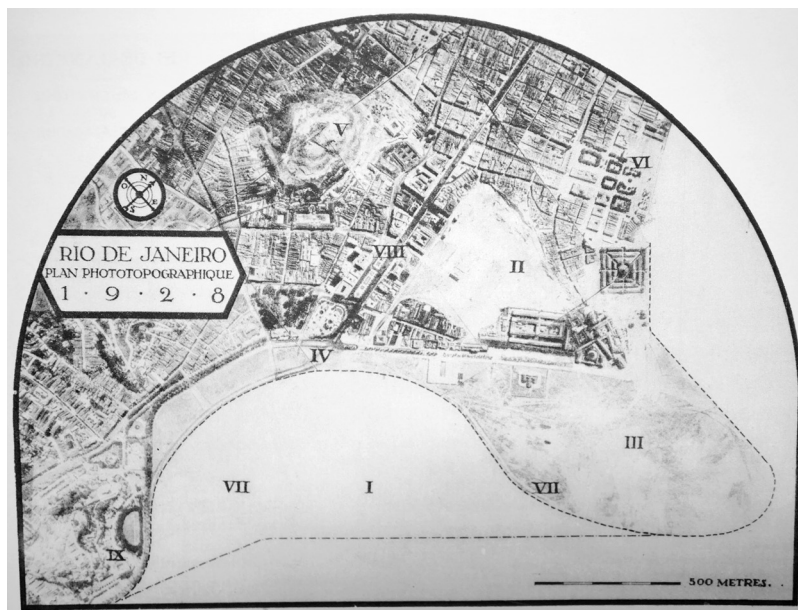


FIGURE 2.28.
 Donat-Alfred Agache,
*"Plano Photo-
 topographique,"*
 published in Agache,
*A cidade do Rio de
 Janeiro, remodelação,
 extensão e embeleza-
 mento, 1927–1930* (Paris:
Foyer Brésilien, 1930).



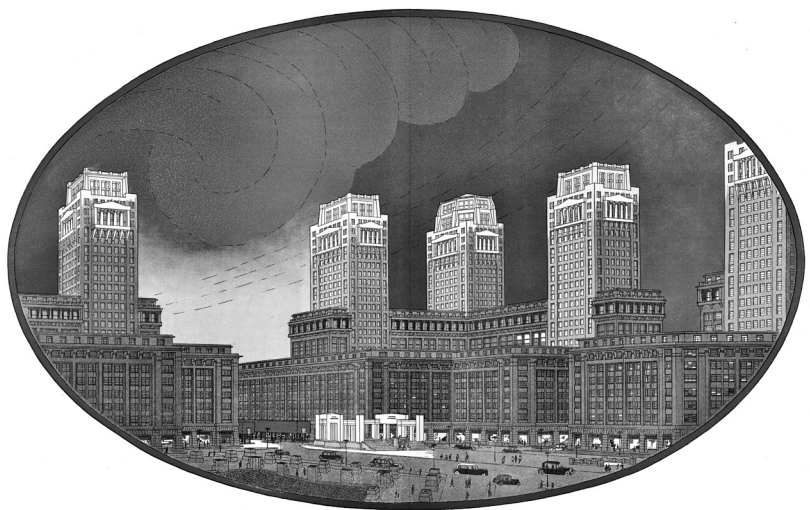
de Santo Antônio, whose eventual demolition would also produce a new infill of land, thus drawing a more rectilinear border from the waterfront of the Glória neighborhood to Agache's Ponta do Calabouço. In the schematic plan, Agache marked an axis from the epicenter of the former mountain, now Castelo Plaza, to the Pão de Açúcar, Rio's natural landmark at the other side of the bay.¹⁰⁸ Advocating the demolition of the Morro do Castelo and the Morro de Santo Antônio, Agache argued that the administrative and financial area of the city found itself trapped between these two mountains, with the only circulatory road being the Avenida Rio Branco, the main axis of Pereira Passos' urban intervention. The razing of the Morro de Santo Antônio would add another 200,000 square meters of flat land on the other side of Rio Branco Avenue, and about 650,000 square meters of land filled in to rectify the border of the Glória and Flamengo neighborhoods.¹⁰⁹ Also, the elimination of this mountain would eradicate the crowded and inefficient conditions of the streets and houses of the colonial city, replacing them with parks and majestic avenues. Clearly for Agache, as for his promoter, João Augusto de Mattos Pimenta, urban intervention in Rio meant more than the demolition of mountains and the creation of new urban esplanades; it meant the identification of the "unhealthy" areas to be clinically removed from the "healthy" new urban fabric. The push for the mountains' demolition, which had fueled the elites' agenda for almost a decade, was without doubt a prelude to eugenics, the new "science" that, as would soon be described

FIGURE 2.29.

Donat-Alfred Agache, green urban areas and reservoirs (Map/detail), published in Agache, A cidade do Rio de Janeiro, remodelação, extensão e embelezamento, 1927–1930 (Paris: Foyer Brésilien, 1930).

FIGURE 2.30.

Donat-Alfred Agache, business center and Castelo Square in Rio de Janeiro, published in Agache, A cidade do Rio de Janeiro, remodelação, extensão e embelezamento, 1927–1930 (Paris: Foyer Brésilien, 1930).



at the inaugural session of the First Brazilian Congress of Eugenics in Rio, “guaranteed the efficiency and the perfection of the race.”¹¹⁰ Thus, when Agache supported the demolition of the two mountains by saying this was the only way to create an aesthetically pleasing, functional, and prolific downtown urban area, he was actually championing architecture as the only means capable of improving the health and beauty of the city and its population.

Agache argued that “those territories recovered from nature due to human tenacity will allow us to offer two essential functional ele-

FIGURE 2.31.

Donat-Alfred Agache, Ponta do Calabouço, or city's social area, published in Agache, A cidade do Rio de Janeiro, remodelação, extensão e embelezamento, 1927–1930 (Paris: Foyer Brésilien, 1930).

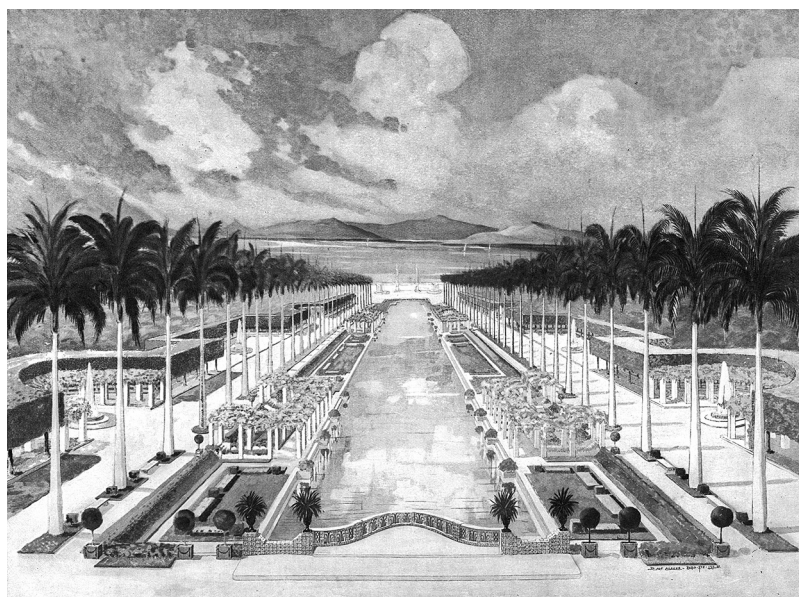
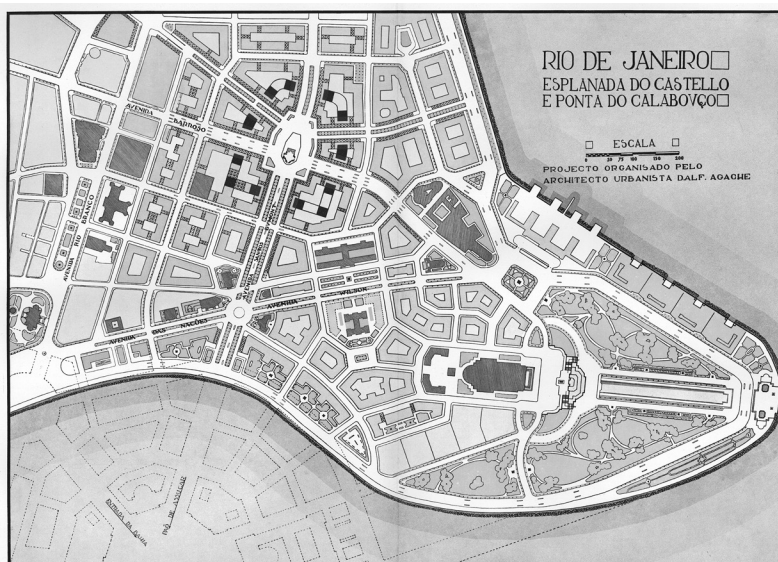


FIGURE 2.32.

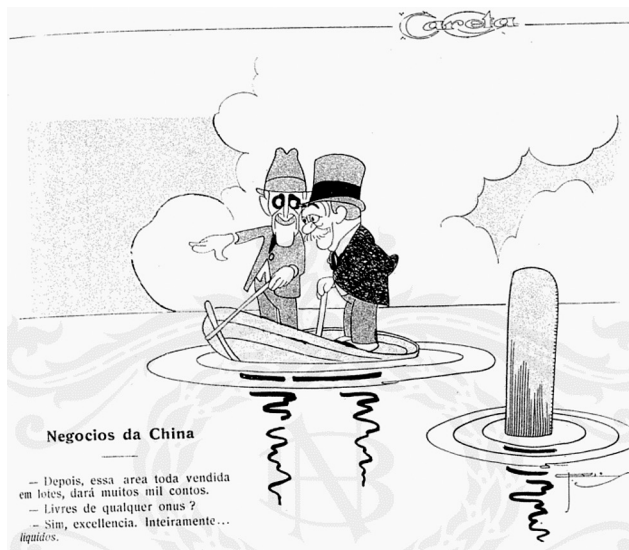
Donat-Alfred Agache, gardens in Ponta do Calabouço, published in Agache, A cidade do Rio de Janeiro, remodelação, extensão e embelezamento, 1927–1930 (Paris: Foyer Brésilien, 1930).



ments to the city: the government center and the financial center . . . representing urban economy in harmony with the modern needs of progress.”¹¹¹ In a further delineation of the central area of the city, Agache organized three main functional elements: the business center, the “city’s social” center, and Rio’s “command post.” In the area that was once occupied by the Morro do Castelo, Agache visualized the “Castelo” business center—an architectural complex of identical skyscrapers that represented the “economic forces associated with the social ideals of our epoch.”¹¹² As the architectural historian David Underwood observes, “for Agache, this meant the creation of good urbanistic ensembles that subordinated undisciplined individuals and single buildings to a disciplined and uniform total environment that could satisfy modern ‘social and economic exigencies’ in a ‘logical and regular’ fashion.”¹¹³ These series of skyscrapers that emerged from a solid platform of horizontal buildings, hosting shopping arcades, parking facilities, and other public services, surrounded a colossal plaza crowned at its center with an almost cartoonish miniature monument to commemorate the place and the founder of the city: a monument that resembled a ruin, one fragment of those buildings dislodged from the hill on which the city was founded. At Ponta do Calabouço, a kind of isthmus reclaimed from the sea, Agache visualized cultivated nature, a kind of “tropical Versailles,” a French formal garden with a reflecting pool surrounded by a succession of glorious palm trees and gazebos marking an axis between the magnificent views of the bay and a monumental building, a pantheon for national heroes. Agache saw this area of gardens and promenades as the perfect setting for

FIGURE 2.33.
J. Carlos's cartoon,
“Negócio da China,”
published in *Careta*,
August 27, 1921.

FIGURE 2.34.
J. Carlos's cartoon,
“Os extremos se tocam,”
published in *Careta*,
August 27, 1921.



the location of foreign embassies—a tropical land that was cultivated and healed for the enjoyment of European tourists, which, as a result of Agache’s transformation, would make Rio “among all the tropical regions, the one in which the white man can most easily adapt.”¹¹⁴

Notably, there was no accommodation for the poor—mostly blacks—in Agache’s plan, including those people who would be displaced after the Morro de Santo Antônio was demolished. In a talk given at the Rotary Club on November 12, 1926, Mattos Pimenta anticipated Agache’s plan:

Nevertheless, to outline the plan, even before its adoption, it is relevant to put an immediate stop, to raise a prophylactic barrier against the overwhelming infestation of the beautiful mountains of Rio de Janeiro by the plague of the “favelas” [the slums]—the leprosy of aesthetics that emerged on the hillside . . . and was spread everywhere, filling in dirt and misery. [The slums] do not constitute purely a ruthless crime against aesthetics; they are particularly a serious threat to peace and public health.¹¹⁵

This racist and classist view, equating the black race and poor people with what Mattos Pimenta called the “leprosy” of favelas, was also evident in Mariano Filho’s ideology. He suggests that when blacks isolate themselves in the favelas, away from white civilization, “violent impulses [arise] from the unconscious.” In his own words, the “return to primitive life enables blacks to satisfy their racial tendencies, their fetishistic practices, their dances and the macumba.” As the Brazilian scholar Joel Outtes observes, if the favelas provoked criminality and immorality, then, according to technocrats of the time, architecture had the power to fix it.¹¹⁶ In a dramatic way, the demolition of the Morro de Santo Antônio—which would produce the esplanade for the construction of Agache’s command post or “the entrance to Brazil”—was in fact a repressive project that was intended to provide order to a “feeble” society. This civic center, which Agache said would be the ideal space for the carnival parade so beloved by Brazilians, was presented in his drawings as a highly formal ceremonial space in which the multitudes, rather than dancing, were shown in army formation, in geometrical molded squares, as if they were part of the surrounding architecture. It seems that in his need to map people as if they were spatial components, Agache materialized what he called “anthropogeography,” a term that Le Corbusier would also use in his 1936 talks in Rio and in his 1942 book, *La Maison des hommes* (*The Home of Man*), as a way to collapse his concept of urban topography

FIGURE 2.35.
Donat-Alfred Agache, downtown aerial perspective of Rio de Janeiro, including the Command Post and the Castelo Business Center, published in Agache, A cidade do Rio de Janeiro, remodelação, extensão e embelezamento, 1927–1930 (Paris: Foyer Brésilien, 1930).

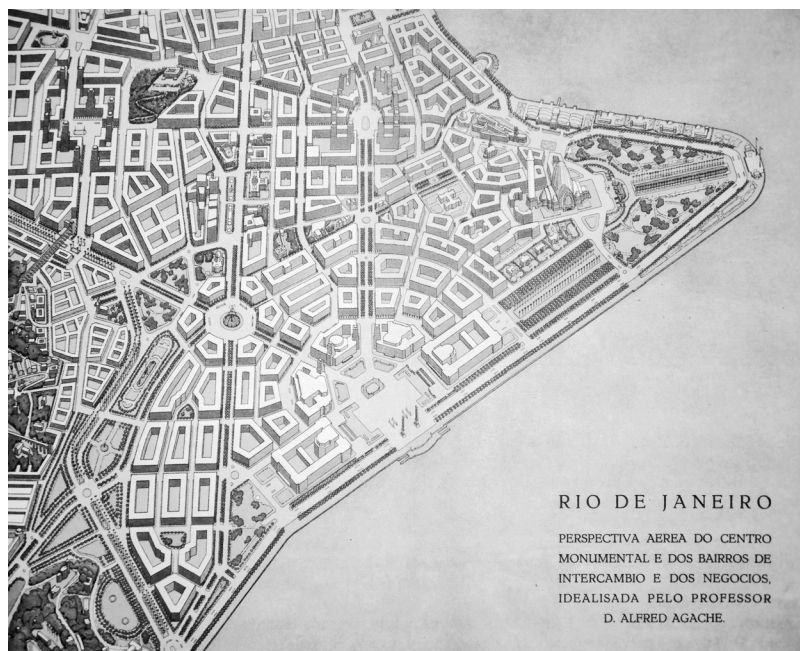
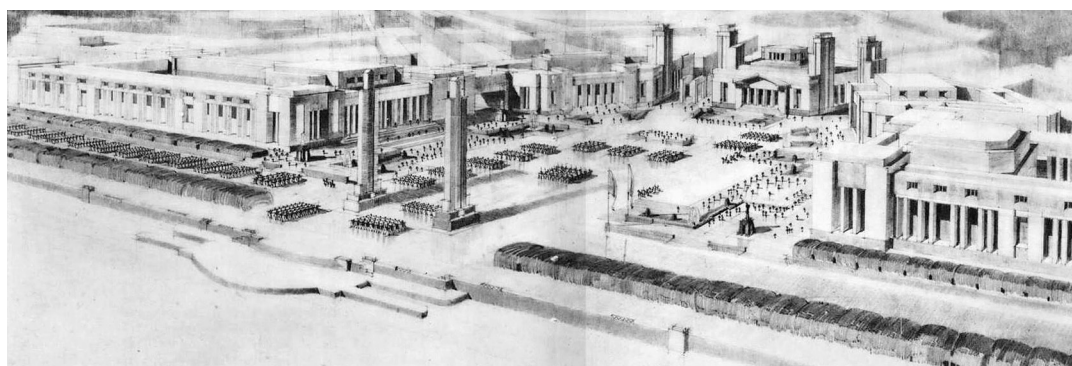


FIGURE 2.36.
Donat-Alfred Agache, Command Post (the entrance to Brazil), published in Agache, A cidade do Rio de Janeiro, remodelação, extensão e embelezamento, 1927–1930 (Paris: Foyer Brésilien, 1930).



into his notion of human geography—a topic for in-depth discussion in chapter 4.

As Agache was finishing his master plan for Brazil's capital city in 1929, Le Corbusier was making his first trip to Latin America, and at the same time, the First Brazilian Congress of Eugenics was opening in Rio with an important statement that brought architecture to the center of the social and biological movement of eugenics. At the inaugural session, the physician and anthropologist Edgard Roquette-Pinto addressed an audience of physicians preoccupied with the question of how a country as vast as Brazil could best increase, and even improve, its population. To accomplish this, Roquette-Pinto exalted "eugenics" as the new science that, together with medicine and hygiene, would guarantee the efficiency and perfection of the race.¹¹⁷

According to him, eugenics integrated heredity and environment as its primary tools: “It is critical to emphasize that the influence [on our race] does not stem from the natural environment but rather from the artificial environment, created by man.”¹¹⁸ With these words, Roquette-Pinto underscored a positivist agenda that was at the very core of the eugenics movement in Latin America: the crucial role of the built environment in the “amelioration” of “the biological patrimony” of the region’s diverse population.¹¹⁹

A few months earlier, this same eugenics stance was embraced by Lúcio Costa—the architect best known for his extraordinary modernist plans for the country’s new modern capital, Brasília.¹²⁰ In a 1928 article, he publicly declared:

I am pessimistic about . . . architecture and urbanism in general. All architecture is a question of race. When our nation is that exotic thing that we see on the streets, our architecture will inevitably be an exotic thing. It is not those half dozen who travel and dress on Rue de la Paix, but that anonymous crowd that takes trains from Central [Station] and Leopoldina, people with sickly faces who shame us everywhere. What can we expect from people like this? Everything is a function of race. If the breed is good, and the government is good, the architecture will be good. Talk, discuss, gesticulate: our basic problem is selective immigration; the rest is secondary—it will change on its own.¹²¹

It is clear that these sentiments represent a racist eugenics policy—one that has essentially gone unmentioned in the urban literature of Rio and that was almost absent from Costa’s own historiography. Just as the neocolonial style, appropriated in Brazil as the emblem of progress and modernity, was nothing less than the embodiment of “whiteness,” so too was Agache’s intention for Rio—manifested in his lectures, exhibitions, and even the texts that accompany his Beaux-Arts urban master plan—a bold expression of the historically overlooked interplay between social engineering and architecture. Yet it is undeniable that underlying these architectural styles and urban strategies are the evolutionary theories that were first internalized by influential modernists and then instrumentalized in their practices: from the demolition of the Morro do Castelo, to the construction of the centennial’s neocolonial pavilions, to Agache’s urban laboratory, and finally to the functionalist utopian canons of Lúcio Costa and Le Corbusier.

It seems inevitable, then, that at almost the same time in 1930, Getúlio Vargas was taking steps to authorize the creation of the



FIGURE 2.37.
Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Jorge Moreira, Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Roberto Burle Marx, Carlos Leão, and Le Corbusier, Ministry of Health and Education, Rio de Janeiro, 1936–1942. GC Foto 496, No. 46. Collection Gustavo Capanema, Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS—CPDOC, São Paulo.

Ministry of Health and Education to house the offices of culture, labor relations, industry, education, and health care—all under the roof of one federal institution that would, from that moment on, consolidate the eugenicist policies already in practice. It is also significant that a few years later, at the epicenter of Agache’s transformation in Rio—the esplanade that remained after the Morro do Castelo was demolished—a modernist building for this new ministry would be constructed.¹²² This ministry, which was in charge of implementing Brazil’s eugenics agenda, is the same one that invited Le Corbusier to be the key adviser to Costa and his design team.¹²³ As we shall see in chapter 4, this new building for the Ministry of Health and Education, the most celebrated icon of Brazilian architectural modernism, aesthetically referenced the eugenics movement’s strategy to control nature by incorporating, for example, a cellular panel on the building’s façade—the so-called *brise-soleil*—that functions as both an environmental device and a decorative element associated with tropical climates and primitive cultures.¹²⁴ It is telling that this decorative “tattoo” undermined the unadorned aesthetics that characterized the International Style, which was founded on an evolutionary stance that equates cultural progress with the “extinction”

of ornamentation—just as “primitive races were dying out through a biological process of selection.”¹²⁵ Although the heart of this story is discussed in chapter 4, it is important to note here that it was in Rio de Janeiro that Le Corbusier first articulated his eugenics stance during his 1936 talks; and just a few years later, he would consolidate his position by going so far as to claim that the built environment was a critical antidote to the body’s degeneration, arguing that “the degeneration of the house, the degeneration of the family, are one.”¹²⁶ It is evident, then, that Costa’s eugenics syllogism of breed begetting good government begetting good architecture would also work in reverse: as Le Corbusier envisioned it, architecture was poised to become an innovative tool for social engineering, an optimum medium for “the rebirth of the human body.”¹²⁷