

broadcast media will attract marketing dollars from U.S. corporations. Thus they too, for economic rather than political reasons, want to lump the various Latino groups together. This is an interesting turn of events. In the not too distant past the distinctiveness of each Latino group was emphasized. Now, to encourage consumerism among the various groups, they are promoting a panethnic Latino identity.

In the final analysis the author's discussion of Latino news-making chronicles the ethnic history of the various Latino groups that have immigrated to this country. As such the reader comes away not only with a detailed picture of the cultural and economic forces that shape Hispanic media production, but a more enhanced picture of the complexity of the Latino community in the United States. Rodriguez' book is "must reading", for anyone interested in Latino media. It should be required reading for Latino Studies classes as well.

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Eric Wertheimer. *Imagined Empires: Incas, Aztecs, and the New World of American Literature, 1771-1876.* Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. xii, 243 pp., \$59.95.

Eric Wertheimer convincingly argues that inaccuracy and omission in historical narratives made an indelible mark on American identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The ethnic diversity of America, even though sparingly portrayed in the historical writing of the time, also had an important effect on American identity. Wertheimer concludes that while American identity has a public concept, individuals determine the real meaning in private spheres. He examines five Anglo, male authors (Philip Freneau, Joel Barlow, William Prescott, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman) to ascertain what they thought of as American history and who should be

represented in it. These authors incorporated the glorious civilizations of the Incas and Aztecs to draw upon their republican precepts and counterbalance the United States against the imperial nations of Great Britain and Spain; however they erased these indigenous groups when the problem of race crept into the American identity and when the United States began pursuing its own expansionist doctrines of Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine (which resulted in the less than justifiable Mexican American War and annexation of Texas). Wertheimer argues that Melville was only one among the five to highlight the humanity of the vanquished, although Whitman should be included as well. Melville included the subaltern perspective through the use of silence as a means of their resistance. Melville along with Whitman did not allow glorification of the past to eclipse the reality of the agents and specifically the suffering of the victims.

Wertheimer aptly portrays the struggle these authors faced in writing nationalist historical narratives. At the same time the reader is left yearning for a more complete explanation of how the contemporary reality influenced these authors and, conversely, how their writings impacted public policy or a sense of American identity among the populace. Wertheimer fails to explore adequately the causal relationship between the historical times during which these authors were writing and their works.

The book relates to the ethnic experience only in its portrayal of how Anglo authors controlled its historical presentation; no ethnic voice is present. Nonetheless Wertheimer suggests that some the American authors distinguished between the civilized Aztec and Inca groups and the nomadic and uncivilized North American natives thereby justifying the colonization of North America while condemning Spain's conquest of the New World and the Black Legend. Prescott is an example of one author who utilizes this dichotomy of barbaric and civilized and takes it one step further. He argues that while the Aztecs and Incas were civilized as a society, the individuals were in fact weak and irrational; reason was inaccessible to the Indians. Prescott also concludes that Mexico is not glorious like the Aztec civilization was because Mexicans are a conquered people (he fails to see the irony that most of the people

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living under the Aztec civilization were also vanquished). Wertheimer picks apart this and other historical inaccuracies and omissions on the part of the authors. He also reveals how writers like Melville (through silence) and Whitman (through absence and erasures) made sincere and humble attempts to at least allow individuals to imagine a vanquished voice.

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