

Maya culture of the sixteenth century and the history of the mendicant orders, their theologies, and their missionary activities in the Americas.

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**NUEVOS MUNDOS: AMÉRICA Y LA UTOPIA ENTRE ESPACIO Y TIEMPO [NEW WORLDS: AMERICA AND UTOPIA BETWEEN SPACE AND TIME].** Edited by Juan Pro, Monika Brenišínová, and Elena Ansóntegui. Madrid and Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana and Vervuert, 2021. Pp. 367. Paperback, \$35.44, E-book, \$36.99.

Millennialism and utopia, the political and the spiritual/religious: two complex topics with an uneasy and complicated relationship. They may be as far from one another as humanly possible – or they may overlap significantly. The recent book *Nuevos mundos: América y la utopía entre espacio y tiempo* is an excellent testimony of this. As the proceedings from a 2019 Prague conference on utopian projections on the American continent, the book offers diverse themes, from early colonial utopian hopes of Spanish missionaries to nineteenth-century liberal utopias focused on modernization and progress to the projection of ecological utopia onto the native peoples of the Americas. According to the authors, the main difference between millennialism and utopia is the activity/passivity of its agents. While millennialism is inherently passive (since the end is nigh regardless of what humans do), the realization of political utopia requires an active agent that would bring it forth. However, in practice, the distinction is not that simple. Perhaps inadvertently, *Nuevos mundos* show how religious and utopian imaginations often intertwine and coexist and how they tend to project themselves onto the same themes and same concepts. As such, the book represents a thought-provoking and inspirational reading for any religious studies scholar, which moves on the blurred borders between religion/spirituality and politics, both in historical context and in contemporary culture.

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## **New and Alternative Religious Movements**

**MAGIC, SCIENCE, AND RELIGION IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE.** Mark A. Waddell. *New Approaches to the History of Science and Medicine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. x+220. Hardback, \$89.99; Paperback, \$25.99. Waddell is the Associate Professor at Michigan State University's Lyman Briggs College. He explores the development of the European worldview between 1400 and 1750 and illuminates the dynamics of tradition and innovation in different belief systems and practices. At the center of Waddell's interest are the influence of classical antiquity, the relationship between God and nature, the problem of occult or hidden causes, and the interconnectedness of the pre-modern world. The book comprises seven chapters alongside a detailed introduction, a

conclusion, bibliographical essays, and an index. Chapter One introduces Hermeticism, Kabbalah, and the search for ancient wisdom, and examines the realm of “learned magic.” Chapter Two traces the history of witchcraft and demonology. Chapter Three expounds on the relationship between magic and medicine, while Chapter Four discusses the changing understanding of the cosmos, presenting a detailed analysis of the roles of the astronomers Copernicus (1473–1543) and Galileo (1564–1642). The impact of these scholars on how early modern philosophers spoke of God is examined in Chapter Five. Chapter Six is devoted to the meaning of experiment and alchemy during the scientific revolution. The last chapter deals with the dawn of the Enlightenment and discusses the radical change in European thought. This fascinating and detailed study enables a deeper understanding of the dynamics and development of modernity and makes a valuable contribution to European History, the History of Religion and Science, and the History of Medicine.

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**WHITE UTOPIAS: THE RELIGIOUS EXOTICISM OF TRANSFORMATIONAL FESTIVALS.** By Amanda J. Lucia.

Oakland: University of California Press, 2020. Pp. xviii+301. Hardback, \$85.00; Paperback, \$29.95.

In this ethnographic study, Lucia, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California-Riverside, examines the intricate interplay of authenticity and cultural appropriation at “transformative festivals” in the USA. Catering to “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR) individuals, the chosen festivals (Bhakti Fest; Burning Man; Lightning in a Bottle; Shakti Fest; Wanderlust) are understood as liminal domains for spiritual growth and self-transformation through various practices (e.g., breath work; dance; kīrtan chanting; yoga). Yet, despite the widespread claims of self-reflexivity and productive self-critique, one important question remains largely omitted by those involved: why is the vast majority of festival visitors white? One of Lucia's main themes of the book is to convey aspects of “neocolonial logics of white possessivism.” In Chapter One, she points to a variety of examples thereof related to aficionado exoticism (Indic and indigenous spiritualities), ranging from the insensitivities of “white shame-ans” to the practices of devout spiritual seekers and converts. In Chapter Two, the focus lies on the strained relationship between whiteness and yoga, and Chapter Three describes how a broad range of physically and emotionally unsettling exercises are introduced in order to “destabilize the conventional self” to enhance spiritual practices, while also elevating ascetic ideals. Chapter Four examines “doorways to wonder” referring to peak experiences, often with lingering somatic qualities. Using an impressive pool of data (fieldwork, interviews) combined with compelling auto-ethnographic inputs, Lucia proves that a large number of SBNR individuals are deeply committed, not only to the exploration of alternative lifestyles, but also to the maintenance of these life-styles long-term, which consequently affects consumption patterns, livelihood, and general