

culture” (3). She uses the combination of these three fields to mount an argument that involves the notion of a non-literary reading of religious texts, a kind of reading interested not so much in literary aesthetics but in the ways in which books serve as a form of ministry, enabling their readers to build for themselves better lives and a better world.

Smith’s choice of texts for her case studies are always intriguing, and often quite refreshing. She pulls books from a number of different genres including self-help, novels, history, non-fiction, and biography. She begins her study with Mrs. Humphry Ward’s *Robert Elsmere* (1888), a British Social Gospel tale much admired by Henry James, and ends with books from a new era of spiritual interest and awakening near the turn of the twenty-first century with Kathleen Norris’s *The Cloister Walk* (1996) and Jack Miles’s *God: A Biography* (1996). Her examination of the religious publishing industry in the 1970s and 1980s is particularly rewarding with an insightful and historically rich analysis of Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth*. One of the most pronounced weaknesses of Smith’s study comes in the area of methodology. Her argumentation at times depends on a small sample size of readers, a common problem faced by almost every scholar engaged reader-reception studies. Small sample sizes always leave the interpretations which they birth in some doubt.

Smith’s book has been a long time coming, and when it arrived it came as a massive, nearly 400 page book. The wait for it is certainly worth it. Smith’s scholarship is capacious, thoughtful and in many ways groundbreaking. It shows the seasoning of many years of engagement with this particular topic of study, and it will be a must-read for anyone interested in popular culture studies centered on the history of the religious book in America and lived religion.

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David Mauricio Adriano Solodkow. *Etnógrafos coloniales: Alteridad y escritura en la Conquista de América (siglo XVI)*. Frankfurt and Madrid: Vervuert and Iberoamericana, 2014. 506p. ISBN 9788484897941. US \$45 / €36 (paperback).

In *Etnógrafos coloniales: Alteridad y escritura en la Conquista de América (siglo XVI)*, David Mauricio Adriano Solodkow recognizes the inherited and enduring authorial and historical

tendencies of colonial ethnographers to employ sameness and otherness in their literary discourses in an effort to classify the indigenous peoples of the New World. This recuperated Western approach functioned as a forum where “la alteridad del mundo indígena americano fue cosificada, apropiada y representada de acuerdo con parámetros epistemológicos europeos” (“the otherness of the indigenous American world was objectified, appropriated and represented in accordance with European epistemological parameters,” 17). The primary aim of this text is to determine the ways by which ethnographic discourses were implemented and reformulated in America during the sixteenth century in order to find a possible pattern of regularity.

Stress is placed on the mechanisms of knowledge and the relations of symbolic and material domination that were utilized in ethnographic discourses. Moreover, Solodkow focuses on how colonial ethnographers, through their various forms of writings that repeatedly justified Spanish conquest, created cultural differences, otherness, and new social and ethnic identities. More often than not, their historical dialogs did much more than simply explain otherness, since they frequently attempted to abolish, dominate, and translate it. Through an interdisciplinary approach, Solodkow carefully analyzes a wide array of colonial sources to demonstrate how ethnographic discourses are responsible for “la conformación de los imaginarios coloniales” (“the configuration of colonial stereotypes”) and for the “formación de los relatos de identidad” (“formation of stories of identity,” 20–21) during the development of the first Colonial Modernity.

Chapter 1 starts with the widely inconsistent anthropological origins and theories that were documented by European historians, chroniclers, and missionaries, which regularly focused on how the indigenous past correlated with Euro-Christian history. Solodkow touches on sixteenth-century theories that frequently ignored Native narratives, such as Hebrew ancestry, teratology, Motolinía’s speculations, and Christian creationism. Chapter 2 concentrates on Christopher Columbus’s initial interpretations, representations, and the invention of the *buen salvaje* during his first voyage. Our attention is drawn to how this first ethnographic discourse “está atravesado por una tensión entre el deseo colonial, la intervención lascasiana, la resistencia contracolonia indígena y las reacomodaciones de los archivos

culturales de la cultura europea como filtros para la interpretación de la realidad caribeña” (“is characterized by a tension between colonial desire, Lascasiana intervention, counter-colonial indigenous resistance and reaccommodations of the cultural archives of European culture as filters for the reinterpretation of Caribbean reality,” 115). The objective of the third chapter is to expose the legal and political mechanisms found and applied in ethnographic discourses and to demonstrate how they justified and continued to direct material and religious colonial expansion. These types of legal discourses were persistently being modified, canceled, revisited, and contradicted.

Chapter 4 explores some of the earliest ethnographic treaties and chronicles in an attempt to highlight the ways by which demonological discourses were employed to categorize and understand the perceived idolatrous behavior of indigenous peoples. In the subsequent chapter, Solodkow takes a look at how Bernardino de Sahagún’s ethnographic narrations took advantage of mechanisms of knowledge and control and used symbolic and material relationships of power over the Native populations in Nueva España. Finally, Chapter 6 focuses on the notorious works of José de Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute* and *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, and emphasizes the complementary nature of the recurrent concepts of idolatry and brutality in order to show how the perceptions of empiricism and protorationalism have been greatly misunderstood by colonial scholars.

The book history approach applied here to ethnographic discourses during the sixteenth century in *Etnógrafos coloniales* is an invaluable literary tool for Colonial Latin American scholars and students. Solodkow eloquently takes hold of the scattered pieces of indigenous colonial interpretations and representations and compiles them into a logical and refined study.

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