Public Abstract

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THE ROMANTICS AND THE INFORMAL EMPIRE

This study examines the cross-influences of Great Britain and Latin America in the Romantic epoch. The study argues that the reflexively imperialist notions and self-assured superiority of the British were slowly being changed by the increased interaction with Latin Americans and the dissemination of information about Latin Americans in this period. The persistent and subtle Eurocentric views did not disappear but were changed—both in a tempering and in a strengthening. In brief, the study examines ways Britain was able to gain influence over such a large portion of the world that it did not have direct control over, using a form of “informal imperialism” by attempting to steer the commerce and political direction of various Latin American nations. British literature about Latin America demonstrated the ambivalences, the paradoxes, and the clashes within British imperialism itself. Likewise, Latin American literature’s pushback against its imperialist influences, including that of Great Britain, demonstrated the unique character of the continent itself. British influence left its trace in Latin American culture, although Latin Americans resisted and subverted this influence.