



Excess Baggage: A Modern Theory and the Conscious Amnesia of Latin Americanist Thought (American University Studies)

Jonathan Pitcher

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Excess Baggage investigates how we read modern theory, how we apprehend Latin American culture through that theory, why this approach is flawed, and how our reading could be different. It is a study of modernity's supersessive, paradoxical attempts to outthink thought. This methodology, never autochthonous to any context despite its claims, is traced through one of its more extreme moments, the Enlightenment, and then through the work of Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx (and their more recent postmodern acolytes) to the Reformation. Although these thinkers are self-differentiating, the divisions are artificial, for each, even in present formats, references a preternatural origin that is subsequently projected into the future, disavowing history's ability to perceive itself as anything other than revolutionary.

This book traces post-1960 Latin Americanism through readings by its critics-cum-theorists, as dictatorially assigning a univocal reading to a continent's cultural production, regardless of how ethical the theory may itself seem. Though predominantly a metacritical work, a reading of philosophy and its Latin Americanist manifestations, there is also comparative reading of European, North American, and Latin American literature.

Meaning has always existed in all such contexts, but is either eradicated or misread by the premises of our critical equipment. In fact or fiction, *Excess Baggage* appeals for an admission of contextualized mnemotechny, inevitable in thought regardless, and the real danger in the present milieu.

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