

Reading Quiz 0.1 - INTD290

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1 How to Submit this Assignment

Once you answer the questions, take a picture of your work and convert it to a PDF. Submit the PDF to the assignment link on Moodle.

2 Introduction–The Latin American Scientific Theater (Juan Jose Saldaña)

- 1. The author begins by describing different methods of historical analysis as applied to Latin America, and in particular scientific development there. What is the author's conclusion about the social history of Latin America with respect to science?**

The author's conclusion about the social history of Latin America with respect to science is that science is one of many shared threads that will surely continue to tie together even more tightly the framework of Latin American history.

- 2. What is an example of the failure of economic explanations for the development of science given by the author?**

An example of the failure of economic explanations for the development of science was Fernando de Azevedo. He was inspired by the Weberian sociology of culture. The work of López Sánchez and Gortari, in turn, originated in the methodology provided by historical materialism. His work claims that the association of civil and religious power, characterized by the Counter-Reformation in Portugal, is the cause, because obscurantist cultural policies, necessary for economic exploitation, were imposed in the colony. The absence of the Protestant ethic and culture) for nurturing science contradicts the efforts of Azevedo and his collaborators to create a history of something that did not yet exist: science in Brazil.

- 3. What is the function of La Sociedad Latinoamericana de Historia de las Ciencias y Tecnología, when was it founded, and what does it publish?**

The founding of the Sociedad Latinoamericana de Historia de las Ciencias y la Tecnología in 1982 helped spur growth in the 1980s of amateur approaches to making the discipline professional and to bringing international recognition to the history of science in the region.

- 4. What does the concept of peripheral science, versus central science have to do with Latin America and Europe? What are some examples the author gives in which Latin America was central?**

"Peripheral" science offered new, specific facets for historical study. There was absolute opposition between science and religion. Therefore, for colonial scientists, science did not quite fit into this kind of interpretative scheme, and historians often denied its existence or, when it could not be ignored, declared scientific and technical discoveries from the Americas exceptional. But when the ties with traditional

history were broken as a consequence of continued research, unsuspected individuals, scientific texts, and institutions emerged. This happened not only in New Spain but also in Europe, so we can say that Latin American scientists were up on the scientific currents and concerns of the time.

An example the author gives in which Latin America was central is Trabulse studied the exact sciences in sixteenth and seventeenth century Mexico, periods declared by previous historians to be void of science. Along the same lines, Trabulse studies astronomy and religion and declares that they were “indivisible, since focusing on only one aspect . . . would mutilate what should be considered as a whole.

3 Chapter 1–Natural History and Herbal Medicine in Sixteenth-century America (Xavier Lozoya), part I

- 1. What does the author have to say about the two versions of the history of scientific thought in Latin America, with regard to the Enlightenment? When did Christopher Columbus land in the New World, and what was the origin of the word “Indian?” In the opinion of the author, what will be the future of indigenous history?**

Proponents of this two versions conclude that Latin Americans have been present in the development of “universal knowledge.” This is a way of interpreting the history of science inherited from Enlightenment thought in the eighteenth century that makes us believe we are moderns at the end of the twentieth.

Christopher Columbus landed in the New World on Wednesday, October 17, 1492. Due to his geographical confusion, his knowledge of the Spanish language originated the widespread custom of using the terms “indigenous” and “Indian” as synonyms in America.

These indigenous peoples—transcultured, acculturated, or assimilated—however one may wish to see them today, nevertheless and without true access to the printing press, still in essence preserve and transmit their knowledge orally.

- 2. From the viewpoint of the author, what seems to be the definition of the term “ethnohistory?” How is it connected to globalization?**

Analyzed from a peculiar viewpoint called “ethnohistory,” indigenous culture, at the end of the twentieth century, began again to scrutinize the lives of the “primitives” with the same interest as in the sixteenth century. Perhaps this is because we live in a time of transculturation similar to the transculturation during the time the New World was being explored.

- 3. How was the reconquest of former Spanish territory held by Arabs from North Africa different from the conquest of Latin America with regard to preservation or censorship of knowledge?**

The Reconquest of the Christian territories, in contrast, did not mean the Arabs’ cultural destruction, and their religious antagonism—there seen as infidelity and not idolatry, as was the case in Latin America—did not lead to the destruction of all their informational and cultural sources. In Latin America, on the contrary, Christianization had as a consequence the total renunciation of the knowledge that had been accumulated for millennia as an original way of understanding the world and human existence. This world view was slowly reduced by extortion and macabre repression. Only a few of the customs and traditions practiced in the refuges of native Latin Americans survived, and this was solely through oral transmission.

4. Describe the origin of the myth of the Fountain of Youth. How did this tale arise in both Europe and Latin America? What does it tell you about how people interpret what they see and hear in a foreign land?

This legend coincided with a medieval story—that of the “Fountain of Youth,” the description of which was attributed to the king of Ethiopia in 1165, called in Europe “Prester John.” Archbishop Christian of Maguncia had used the document that spoke of this legendary place to recruit soldiers for the Third Crusade. If the soldiers found the “Fountain” in the country they were to be sent to, they needed only to bathe in the waters to recover the strength of youth.

The Fountain of Youth myth is a propaganda because the story promotes a particular point of view that is often misleading in reality. It shows people are very gullible and easily tricked into exploring a foreign land.

5. Upon hearing of the condors from indigenous people, European colonials thought the description matched which animal? Why?

European colonials thought condors were griffins, a type of fierce bird that takes gold from certain mines to protect it from the *Arimaspi* [who] with the same greed steal it from the *Scythians* who eat meat and are called *anthropophagous* by the Greeks. This was because these birds are so large, they are able to carry large things with their talons and eat them and tear them apart.

“While I was writing this, a soldier from Peru told me that in the Province of Homagua in the West Indies there are birds so large that they snatch the Indians away with their talons and eat them and tear them apart in the air and that they cover, with their wings, the gold that is in great abundance in these lands and above make nests and breed.”