The Sacred and The Profane: Native Impulses in Latin American Epic

This paper examines the development of the epic genre in Latin America and its three main objects of literary representation: the Indian, Nature, and the Catholic Church. It also highlights discursive strategies, whereby conventional Spanish and Portuguese epic heroes are displaced or eclipsed by native or religious icons. This radical transformation of a traditional epic model occurs under the aegis of Counter-Reformation, when the sacred and the profane compete, seeking to establish a representational hegemony within the genre.

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