



# **Peripheral Wonders: Nature, Knowledge, and Enlightenment in the Eighteenth-Century Orinoco (The Bucknell Studies in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture)**

*Margaret R. Ewalt*

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*Margaret R. Ewalt*

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This book expands traditional conceptions of the Enlightenment by examining the roles of wonder and Jesuit missionary conceptions of the Enlightenment by examining the century in a production of knowledge that serves both intellectual and religious functions. The author analyzes a variety of classical and sacred rhetorical techniques for vivid persuasion that illuminate the simultaneously spiritual and scientific discourse employed by Joseph Gumilla in "El Orinoco ilustrado" (1741, 45), a text that concretizes an eclectic, Catholic Enlightenment that unites sentiment and reason, allows for emotion within scientific inquiry, and employs the strategy of wonder to accumulate, enumerate, and disseminate knowledge. Ewalt's work complements and extends studies proposing new and more inclusive Enlightenment models that challenge secular prejudices and reconsiders the assumption of European centrality by taking into account the Americas and other peripheral areas where modernity was redefined rather than resisted. Margaret R. Ewalt is Associate Professor of Spanish at Wake Forest University.

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