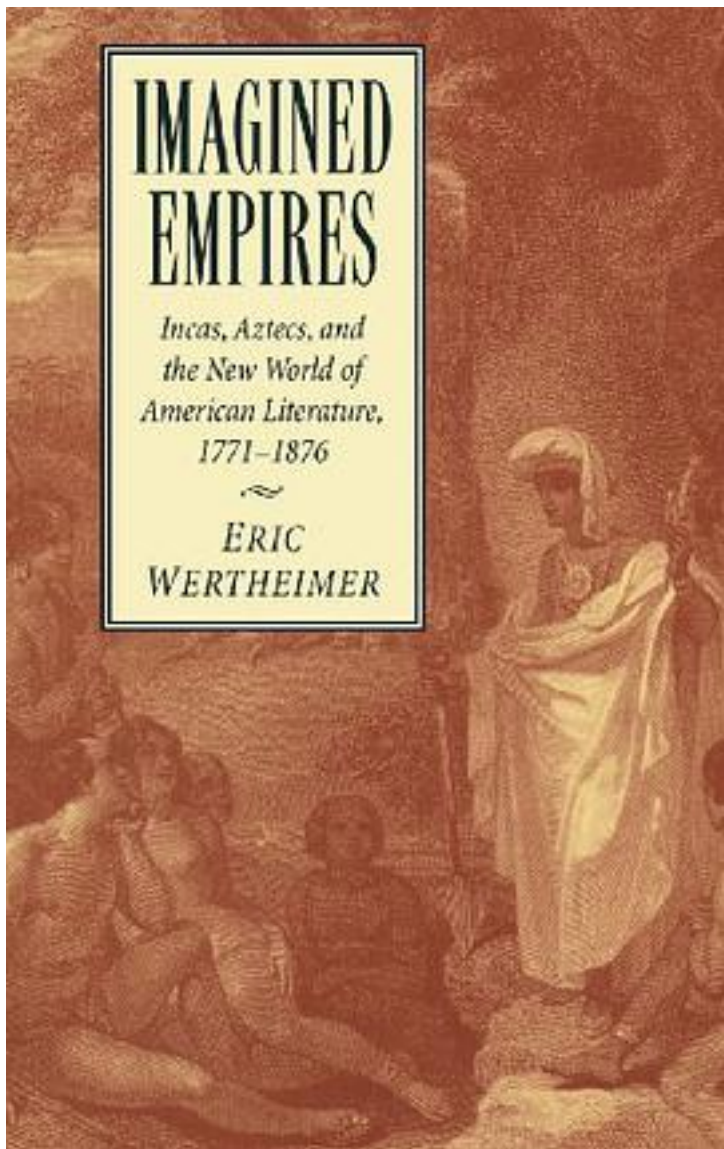


Imagined Empires



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著者:Wertheimer, Eric

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Imagined Empires, first published in 1999, demonstrates that early American culture, and in particular literature, took great interest in South American civilisations, especially the Incas and Aztecs, and in so doing made a statement about the role of the United States as an empire in the emerging political order of New World colonies and states. By examining the work of Philip Freneau, Joel Barlow, William Prescott, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman, the long-contested concept of 'indigenous origins' is given expanded meaning beyond traditional critiques of American culture. Eric Wertheimer recovers the Incas and Aztecs in Anglo-American literature, and thus sheds new light on national sovereignty, identity and the development of an American history narrative.

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目录:

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