The life and work of a mentor to Simón Bolívar

**Tropes of Enlightenment in the Age of Bolívar**

**Simón Rodríguez and the American Essay at Revolution**

**RONALD BRIGGS**

In *Tropes of Enlightenment in the Age of Bolívar*, Ronald Briggs shines a much-needed light on the writings and life of Simón Rodríguez, early tutor to the hero of Latin American independence Simón Bolívar and an accomplished essayist in his own right. Bolívar and Rodríguez’s lives intersected often after those early years. When Bolívar swore his life to Spanish American independence on a hill outside Rome in 1805, Rodríguez was there to witness the historic moment. And when Bolívar needed to shape the new government of Bolivia, he enlisted Rodríguez to serve roles in developing both its educational system and its infrastructure.

The book, released during the bicentennial of the early wars for Latin American independence, boldly places Rodríguez in the pantheon of important writers who influenced philosophical thought during the upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Noah Webster, and Tom Paine. Beyond merely providing the first in-depth analysis of Rodríguez’s writings and life work, Briggs also reveals an innovator of style as Rodríguez shaped the utility and vitality of the essay as an emerging form of argument.

*Tropes of Enlightenment in the Age of Bolívar* is an essential study of a unique and playful writer who is finally revealed as a foundational figure in Spanish American independence and an influential thinker in the larger field of hemispheric studies.

“…a brilliant, erudite, and expansive recovery of one of nineteenth-century Spanish America’s most unjustly overlooked men of letters.”—Christopher Conway, University of Texas at Arlington, author of *The Cult of Bolívar in Latin American Literature*

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**Ronald Briggs** is Assistant Professor of Spanish and Latin American Cultures at Barnard College.