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resisting colonialism, formed new multitribal enclaves. She analyzes the ironies inherent in the public dedication of monuments to Native leaders such as Miantonomi and Massasoit, the commemoration of battles in the Pequot War and King Philip's War, and inviting local Native representatives to celebrate the centennials of town foundings. Finally, in an insightful reading of William Apess's *Eulogy on King Philip*, O'Brien demonstrates how Apess epitomizes the survival, adaptation, and resistance of Native people in New England, composing his own version of New England history and reclaiming New England as "an Indian place" (190). As O'Brien notes, no town histories mention the controversial Pequot preacher, yet before a federal policy of sovereign rights had been articulated, Apess developed a vision of dual citizenship in which individual Indians would acquire all the rights of American citizenship, equal to their Anglo-American neighbors, while maintaining their sovereign rights as nations.

O'Brien, to borrow a phrase from Apess, "turns the looking glass" on the narration of New England history. *Firsting and Lasting* is a compelling, insightful, and comprehensive analysis of the replacement narrative and the resistance of Native people in southern New England to the stories intended to replace them. Using both traditional and modern methods that should be required reading for any student of American literature and history, O'Brien's book is a brilliant examination of settler colonialism which challenges the way that most Americans see their national "origin story." It represents the meticulous effort of a dedicated historian, and also bears the mark of the many years she has spent helping to build the field of Native American and indigenous studies. Future work on firsting, lasting, and the replacement narrative will assuredly illuminate this landscape in fresh ways. Those works will, however, owe a great debt to the intellectual labor of Jean O'Brien, as does my own.

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Indigenous Miracles: Nahua Authority in Colonial Mexico. By Edward W. Osowski. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010. 288 pages. \$50.00 cloth.

Edward Osowski's *Indigenous Miracles: Nahua Authority in Colonial Mexico* is a study of religion and power. Of the two major threads that run throughout the book, the first details the rise of miraculous sites after the conquest of Mexico. Osowski argues that Nahua ruling families sponsored these shrines to reinforce their authority within their communities and carved out a place for their polities in the new colonial order by appropriating rituals and images that were

initially aimed at expressing the religious and military triumph of Christianity. The second thread documents the significant participation of Nahua nobles and commoners in urban festivals in Mexico City. The municipal leaders who traveled to the capital to lead the construction of their arches and decoration spaces gained status and power upon their return to the community. For them, religious patronage was not only a public statement of Christian orthodoxy, but also proof of their allegiance to the Crown. The argument of the book comes full circle when Osowski asserts that council members participated in Corpus Christi or Holy Week for the same reasons they sponsored miraculous image sites: it was an opportunity to make regional claims of authority and autonomy that appealed simultaneously “to the cultures of two audiences, Nahua and Spaniard” (4).

Miraculous shrines, located on important topographical features, were usually caves, hills, or chapels. They honored different scenes from the life of Jesus, wondrous images, or places once inhabited by virtuous men. Although towns were now under the patronage of Christian images and devotions, hills and caves continued to be central characters in origin stories and important markers of communal identity and autonomy, for God had favored these polities with an independent effigy. According to the local devotional tales about these shrines, nobles were typically the first to receive or discover the image, which reinforces Osowski’s claim about the legitimizing power of these sites for the ruling class. Miracle traditions shared many attributes with indigenous “primordial titles” and “maps”: they all recounted ancient foundations, legitimized the descendants of the founders, and marked the boundaries of the community. Perhaps Osowski’s best example is the Sacromonte hill of Amecameca, a devotional site inside a cave dating back to the 1530s. To honor the place where a holy man had lived and done penance, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Indians built a chapel, with relics of this popular saint and a miraculous effigy of Jesus that further consecrated the shrine. The Sacromonte hill of Amecameca was a privileged vantage point from which lands could be surveyed and distributed every year. The sanctuary lay at the center of the homonymous *altepetl*’s territory.

Indigenous Miracles is largely based on court cases aired at the General Indian Court (part of the Supreme Court of Appeals or *Audiencia*) and the Indian Tribunal of the Archdiocese. Although both courts are located in Mexico City, the cases involved indigenous litigants and petitioners from adjacent provinces, allowing Osowski to offer a comparative perspective on the urban councils of Mexico City and the Nahua municipal councils of the rural provinces. For the *Corpus Christi* procession, some sixty communities placed their triumphal arches along the city’s streets. Relative proximity of one group’s arches to the cathedral doors expressed the group’s position within colonial

municipal hierarchies, reproducing preconquest patterns of tribute allotment and political leadership, both among the top-ranking Mexica *altepetls* and between them and other Nahua communities.

The two indigenous city councils (*cabildos*) of Mexico City—San Juan Mexico and Santiago Tlatelolco—organized and led these participants. They extracted important amounts of money, food, and building materials from other Nahua communities as a participation fee. Osowski suggests that such a fee “intriguingly looks like a latter-day Aztec tribute tax” (157). In fact, his analysis of the different positions in the street order shows that officers of the two urban *cabildos*, the descendants of the pre-Columbian rulers of central Mexico, tended to favor rural towns with Nahua populations over communities of other ethnicities, such as the Otomí, Mazahua, and Pame (Chichimecs).

Although there are brief flashbacks into the previous centuries, the book centers on the second half of the eighteenth century, when, according to Osowski, important social changes were underway. Nahua lords came to depend even more on the patronage of public processions and image shrines because of increasing interethnic strife, conflicts between indigenous and nonindigenous people over the ownership of religious images, and Bourbon attacks on popular urban festivals. For Osowski, the multiethnic character of urban festivals and rural processions during the late colonial era points to the emergence of a “proto-national” popular culture. This culture had stopped being exclusively indigenous in order to express “the multiracial poor of Mexico City and its surrounding provinces” (5). Yet by 1810 the many contributions made by indigenous traditions about miraculous images, Holy Week, or Corpus Christi to Mexican popular culture were evident. Virtually all of the indigenous processional and theatrical rituals studied by Osowski involved Jesus Christ, which leads the author to argue that, in the eighteenth century, Christ images were more important as public, community symbols than those of the Virgin of Guadalupe, reserved for more private, home cults at the *santocallis* (“saint-houses”). For the author, the preponderance of Christ images suggests that symbols of Jesus as the suffering King had been “resilient political emblems” of community sovereignty since the sixteenth century.

The best portions of Osowski’s book analyze interregional travels and interethnic connections. Nahua participation in urban festivals, for example, shows that broad networks of collaboration were in place by the late eighteenth century. At that time, major miraculous image sites had become part of a regional complex of pilgrimages and processions, or “cultural provinces of devotion,” that linked communities in the Valley of Mexico and the highlands in very dynamic ways (68). At the center of these regional bonds of obligation and patronage between rural and urban municipal councils was an Indian officer of the General Indian Court, the *nahuatlato* or interpreter general. These

bonds clearly emerged during Corpus Christi, with the high-status *nahuatlato* as one of its main organizers. The interpreter sent out the royal invitations to all indigenous towns within a fourteen-league radius of the city and mediated conflicts among Nahua municipalities and disputes over street order during the procession, thus playing a key role in maintaining the power-sharing system in the Central Valley. Along with the councils of San Juan Mexico and Santiago Tlatelolco, the interpreter general controlled which municipalities received the highest- and lowest-status positions in urban processions.

Other actors played similar roles as go-betweens. Nahua “alms collectors” were granted eventual licenses by church authorities in Mexico City to travel into the provinces and gather donations for local holy images. The majority of these traveling alms collectors did not belong to the traditional indigenous elite and by Osowski’s account, they must have been fascinating characters. Analyzing 135 such licenses issued between 1789 and 1799, Osowski reveals that controlling religious revenue for local saints was at the heart of Nahua communal life, but because alms collectors traveled beyond the borders of the community, much remained outside the purview of nobles, brotherhoods, and priests. Covering significant distances and accompanied by paintings, crosses, and effigies that they had removed from local chapels and churches, hundreds of them entered rural towns, mining camps, and the outskirts of Mexico City “with a carnival parade of musicians playing the popular secular tunes of the day” (85). These foreign icons were worshipped on the streets or in domestic altars. Despite certain opposition of church and crown, women enjoyed a prominent role among collectors and donors. For Osowski, such interregional religious practices indicate that the people of the Central Valley shared a common vision about the value of these devotions. It was not simply an expression of local identity, but a sign of a flourishing “protonational Mesoamerican culture” (99).

Readers of *Indigenous Miracles* will find many valuable insights and captivating case studies, though it can be difficult to follow the ramifications of Osowski’s theses. At some points, despite somewhat narrow time span, there seems to be simply too much to cover, and yet the lack of an overview of previous periods makes it difficult to prove what is “new” and what is not in the late eighteenth century. A slight tendency to essentialize the differences between “Indians” and “Spaniards” (as in an otherwise stimulating discussion on gender parallelism among Nahua donors and alms collectors) is countered by the author’s insights about the early indigenous roots of Mexico’s popular culture. Some of Osowski’s indigenous miracles were not that indigenous after all.

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