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Book Review

Hemispheric Indigeneities: Native Identity and Agency in Mesoamerica, the Andes, and Canada. Miléna Santoro and Erick D. Langer, eds. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 450 pp.

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A nonessentialist and heterogeneous concept, indigeneity deals with understanding the persistent survival of the native peoples who have inhabited the Americas since Europeans arrived five centuries ago. A provocative study of the complex subject of indigeneity, this ambitious volume informs readers about the inventive approaches that now enrich this field by juxtaposing the current work of indigenous and nonindigenous scholars. Focusing on three demographics—Mesoamerican, Andean, and Canadian indigenous peoples—the contributors demonstrate the historically shifting evolution of their self-representation regarding indigeneity. While the native scholars speak from their emic perspective, self-perception, and precolonial intellectual sovereignty, the nonindigenous scholars are concerned with conceptual and historical clarity apropos of indigenous agency or, for that matter, marginalization in relation to the coloniality of power.

These comparative texts stimulate hemispheric dialogues and also synthesize the locus of enunciation by covering the colonial, the republican, and the modern historical periods in the three cultural areas. By concentrating on cradles of civilization in the Andes and Mesoamerica and, for the first time, Turtle Island, namely, Canada, the essays lead readers to an appreciation of the different approaches to indigeneity. And by deconstructing the history of otherness hidden behind the term *Indian*, especially when such inquiry privileges emphatic indigeneity as this volume does, they present an assertive appraisal of the coloniality of power.

Three of the book's 10 essays are by indigenous scholars, who provide us with the ontological and chorographic affluence of their from-within perspective. The remaining scholars synthesize earlier debates dwelling on attempts to understand the convoluted and prejudiced classificatory state-inspired demographic legibility of "the Indian." In doing so, they strengthen the ongoing rich dialogues that

events in 1992 triggered throughout the Americas when the descendants of native peoples re/membered their own processes of being and becoming indigenous. This ontological and chorographic re/membering of the Indian body politic moves the struggle over self-representation forward by offering readers an intricate historical narrative.

Contributors in the first part historicize the early tensions prompted by colonial-settler politics, reminding readers that the so-called conquest of the Americas was in no way one synchronic phenomenon. Susan Kellogg, Susan Elizabeth Ramírez, and David McNab advance the difficult task of systematizing an Indian historiography. Kellogg offers an early notion of colonial "Indianism," suggesting with this term Mesoamerican self-representation in the form of an indigenous assertiveness that challenged colonial powers. Ramírez coins the term *ancestralities* to illustrate the Andean pluriverse that nurtured the sense of identity deployed to resist colonial rule. Emphasizing Mi'kmaq *oraliture* and what he calls spirit memory, McNab examines the ethnohistory of the Mi'kmaq people of Atlantic Canada vis-à-vis multiple deceitful treaty-making interactions with Europeans. While stressing the process of becoming indigenous as a nonessentialist and dynamic entity, he narrativizes a saga of First Peoples unbroken injustice and dismemberment similar to the Mesoamerican and Andean cases, bringing these issues into the very present.

Essays in the second part revisit the long 19th century and its distressed agnatic process. Luis Fernando Granados, Erick Langer, and Karl Hele each offer reappraisals of early modern state relations with indigenous peoples. Granados emphasizes the dismemberment of Mesoamerican peoples by focusing on exploitation, domination, and marginalization—epistemological genocide—a leitmotif that inspires him to analyze the top-down taxonomizing of peoples who claimed indigenous heritage then and today, taxonomizing that did not engage them on their own terms (or languages). In the Andean area, Langer privileges distinctive indigenous trade routes as proof of economic agency and autarchy. Studying census records, he tabulates concrete achievements and prosperous livelihoods to show that exchange networks gave Andeans unmeasured commercial control of specific economic activities but that simultaneous processes of land dispossession, displacement, and ecological depletion pushed them to the margins, prompting lasting economic poverty. Hele echoes similar themes when he meticulously

details the dismembering of aboriginal lands through mining and the persistence of the aboriginal-settler history of infamy.

The third part, mainly about the 20th century, reevaluates Indianism as a decolonized issue, as revitalized self-representation rising from earlier, barely known indigenous autonomic struggles that challenged the state radically. Focusing on the Mayan areas that rebelled in 1994, Lynn Stephen documents “lived autonomy through practice”—land, health, communications, and education—as the Zapatistas and others implement it within the state’s “legal limbo” (256). Relying on a myriad of indigenous legal practices preserved in native sources and community and family archives, Aymara historian Waskar Ari-Chachaki narrativizes the literate and cosmicentric precursors of contemporary Katarismo and Indianismo in Bolivia. By upholding Aymara and Quechua nomos, he re-centers a persistent decolonial legal project that invigorates contemporary struggles. Miléna Santoro’s work on the appropriation of film technologies by native artists of Canada seeking to decolonize the indigenous image offers a chronological

account of three historical periods of visual sovereignty, converging on rekindled spirits that, at last, control the image.

Needless to say, throughout this volume landscape and hylozoism are lively. Both concepts reappear in David McNab’s stories of dispossession and survival. Coining the term *spirit memory*, he reclaims an autobiographical indigeneity based on his own experiences that crisscrosses Abiyala, the Kuna name for the Americas, portraying a re/membering act that reaches out by acknowledging the vibrant indigenous nomoi he finds alive. In Mesoamerica, indigenous healing is cosmicentric and hylozoistic, a commonality of indigenous socionature since nature is not dispirited.

Reasserting contemporary, decolonial indigenous thought, the authors in *Hemispheric Indigeneities* are determined to dissect and critique previous homogenizing uses of the term *Indian*. Readers are exposed to the multifaceted heterogeneity of indigenous peoples’ agency and their ethnic, gendered, historical, and multinatural complexities as an autonomous, sovereign subject.