
REVIEW ESSAYS

INDIGENOUS AGENCY IN COLONIAL SPANISH AMERICA

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People of the Volcano: Andean Counterpoint in the Colca Valley of Peru. By Noble David Cook, with Alexandra Parma Cook. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. Pp. xv + 319. \$23.95 paper.

With Our Labor and Sweat: Indigenous Women and the Formation of Colonial Society in Peru, 1500–1700. By Karen B. Graubart. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007. Pp. xii + 249. \$55.00 cloth.

Blacks, Indians, and Spaniards in the Eastern Andes: Reclaiming the Forgotten in Colonial Mizque, 1550–1782. By Lolita Gutiérrez Brockington. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. Pp. xiv + 342. \$45.00 cloth.

Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica. Edited by Laura E. Matthew and Michael R. Oudijk. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. Pp. xiv + 320. \$45.00 cloth.

Conquest narratives lend themselves to easy dichotomies. The conquistadores made a fundamental distinction between us and them, Europeans and Indians, and took their own superiority for granted. After their remarkable military triumphs in Mexico and Peru, they perpetuated this division and used it to forge a durable system of domination: conquerors and conquered became rulers and ruled. This unequal power dynamic pervades most sources and has shaped the stories that historians tell. As

Susan Schroeder notes in the introduction to *Indian Conquistadors*, the epic Spanish conquest and the spiritual conquest, two paradigms that emphasized the Spaniards' ability to impose their will on native peoples, dominated scholarship until the mid-twentieth century. Then, Miguel León-Portilla and Nathan Wachtel published their works on the "vision of the vanquished."¹ But while these studies turned scholarly attention to indigenous perspectives, they also reinscribed the concept of a successful Spanish conquest, now viewed as a tragic event with destructive consequences. Subsequent research, largely based on indigenous language sources, has far more radically challenged traditional assumptions. The famous elegies presented by León-Portilla, which put such a striking human face on the Mexica's defeat, may also be profoundly misleading—or just specific to Tenochtitlán. Elsewhere, the "coming of the white people" may not have represented a sharp, immediate, and fundamental break with the past,² but something closer to a nonevent, in Schroeder's terminology. Local government and social structures proved surprisingly resilient, and in central Mexico, many community histories "contain no record of the conquest, or at best, the Spaniards are mentioned but only as if they were any other indigenous group. . . . It is noteworthy that *conquista* as a loanword has yet to appear in Nahuatl annals" (13).

Earlier images of the Indians as traumatized victims turning to mass alcoholism to ease their pain and anomie have faded; instead, indigenous peoples now appear as pragmatic, flexible actors, creatively adjusting to the new conditions brought forth by the Europeans' arrival, and even manipulating their supposed superiors. Consider, for example, Louise Burkhart's argument that Franciscan missionaries themselves became "missionized."³ Even military conquest has been recast as a struggle among different indigenous polities, something beyond the Spaniards' ability to understand and direct.⁴ The four works under review, in their attempt to demonstrate Indian (and African) agency and resistance, are thus entries in what is now a well-established field. What then do they have to offer? First, they extend the agency argument in fresh directions. Second, and perhaps more important, they give it new depth and specificity by focusing on particular regions of Mesoamerica and the Andes. How did lo-

1. Miguel León Portilla, ed., *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, foreword by J. Jorge Klor de Alva, updated and expanded ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Nathan Wachtel, *The Vision of the Vanquished: The Spanish Conquest through Indian Eyes, 1530–1570*, trans. Ben Reynolds and Siân Reynolds (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1977).

2. See Olivia Harris, "The Coming of the White People: Reflections on the Mythologisation of Latin American History," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 14, no. 1 (1995): 9–24.

3. Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), esp. 15–45.

4. This is best exemplified in Ross Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest*, 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006).

cal (geographic and human) environments affect colonial social relations? What empowered or limited indigenous actions? Was native resistance merely an annoyance to colonial power holders, or did it actually alter socioeconomic structures?

Indian Conquistadors, as the title suggests, sets out to counter the victor-vanquished narrative. Here, the famous alliance between the Spanish and Tlaxcala is not treated as an anomaly or special case but rather takes its place in the mainstream of indigenous responses to invasion. In their overview chapter, Michel R. Oudijk and Matthew Restall (whose volume *Maya Conquistador* is an important precursor to this book⁵) point out that tens of thousands of Indians joined in the wars of conquest as fighters, guards, spies, messengers, translators, and (crucially) porters. But these high numbers did not simply reflect their allegiance to “reputedly charismatic Spaniards” (104), as Laura Matthews argues in her essay on Central America. Instead, both indigenous peoples and (unwittingly) Spaniards commonly responded to local, preconquest dynamics. Spanish troops followed existing trade routes and brought the Nahuas’ drive toward Guatemala to completion. Oudijk and Restall provide a particularly fascinating example of how the Mexica’s overthrow allowed other native polities to carry out their own agendas. Don Gonzalo Matzatzin Moctezuma, the ruler of Tepexi, formerly allied with the Mexica (and grandson of the emperor), seized the opportunity to reconquer several towns so that he could have their tribute for himself rather than giving the lion’s share to members of the Triple Alliance.

Indigenous motives, however, were often more complex. Several contributors pose versions of the question that Matthews asks: “What did these thousands of men, women, and children think they were doing . . . what did they expect in return?” (104). In most cases, the answer—especially for the indigenous nobility—is that they wanted to claim status and rewards in the emerging regime. Hence the value of seemingly voluntary alliances with the invaders. Among the book’s most intriguing essays are those exploring indigenous representations of their own role in the conquest: Florine G. L. Asselberg’s study of the *lienzos* of Tlaxcala, Analco, and Quauhquechollan, and Stephanie Wood’s analysis of the *Mapa de Quauhtlantzinco*. The story told in these images is one of purposeful (even celebratory) assimilation of certain Hispanic values—notably Christianity—but ultimately in service of local interests. The *lienzo* medium itself, and the pictorial strategies employed, encapsulated events within an indigenous framework and upheld community identity. These records effaced any memory of conflict with the invaders. Indigenous warriors appear as equal partners with Spanish conquistadores, each fighting under their own leaders and banners—a collaboration of two noble

5. Matthew Restall, *Maya Conquistador* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).

peoples against less civilized foes. Both Tlaxcala and Quauhquechollan adopted the Habsburg coat of arms but also introduced native symbolism, in effect announcing the birth of “a new elite . . . based on both local prehispanic tradition and the power of the newcomers” (75). Acculturation in this form hardly constituted an acceptance of subordination. In the *Mapa de Quauhtlantzinco*, the proud autonomy of the town’s four leaders is portrayed still more vividly. They are constantly shown at the center of the action; true indigenous conquerors, they subjugate neighboring towns and impose Christianity by the force of their will, with little or no aid from Spaniards. Cortés himself is largely reduced to a witness.

These sources, and the more common petitions and *probanzas de méritos*, give us important insights into how native peoples—especially ruling elites—understood, contested, and even co-opted Hispanic colonization. They show that the conquest, far from a being a nonevent, became central to the community’s legacy and self-image. Yet they remain colonial texts, produced for specific political purposes. Their very assertion of indigenous agency functioned mainly as a bargaining chip in pleas for royal and viceregal patronage. This sort of clever manipulation is well documented in the literature on subalterns—and so are its limitations: for instance, that working within the system tended to inhibit more radical challenges to colonial rule. How much leverage did “indigenous conquistadores” actually possess? The chapters here suggest that their room to maneuver varied widely in time and space, and depended in part on the continuing role of native allies in maintaining the new order. Bret Blosser demonstrates that, in Nueva Galicia, the indigenous auxiliaries known as *flecheros* earned the *fuero militar* (privilege or exemption granted for military service) and used their value as frontier soldiers to protect and sometimes expand their communities’ landholdings. Likewise, Nahua colonists in the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca served as an indispensable military force, then later became “cultural intermediaries and power brokers” (230) between Spaniards and regional Indians. From their redoubt of Analco, as Yanna Yannakakis argues, they deftly played on Spanish fears of the “naturally” treacherous and idolatrous locals to maintain a series of special privileges, at least until the eighteenth century.

Indigenous women, Robinson A. Herrera notes, also became significant cultural go-betweens: the essential element in early cross-cultural unions. Through them, Spaniards gained access to Indian resources, while native noblewomen, like some of their male counterparts, could now draw on two kinds of legitimacy. Doña Luisa Xicotencatl, daughter of Tlaxcala’s ruler, maintained and perhaps increased her high ranking among her own people while commanding respect among the Spanish (note the honorific *Doña*); she “embodied the alliance between the Spaniards and the Tlaxcalteca auxiliaries along with the traditional authority of her father”

(133). Yet she remained a concubine, and for all her political significance, she had little say in the key decisions about her life.

Such limitations should not be overlooked or underplayed: indigenous peoples deciding to ally with Spaniards operated within a wider system of constraints. Ida Altman and John F. Chuchiak IV place particular emphasis on the kind of compulsion that limited indigenous options. Altman recounts early Spanish forays northwest of the Valley of Mexico. The treatment meted out to *indios amigos* by the notorious Nuño de Guzmán hardly qualified as friendly. Most indigenous participants were forcibly recruited, and then suffered a variety of horrors: overwork, humiliation, terror, enslavement, and execution. The campaign became a death march, and only a minority saw home again. In the later Mixtón War, the viceroy Antonio Mendoza brought far better organizational and diplomatic skills to the table. By the 1540s, government officials and other prominent Spaniards “had begun to form effective working relationships with Indian leaders,” and Mendoza himself gained their “genuine and even enthusiastic support” (168). The new recruits—mostly volunteers—fought in ethnic units (though under Spanish commanders) and while they knew hunger, illness, and other hardships, their survival rates proved much higher. Instead of straggling back to their communities, they returned in triumphal procession. Still, could indigenous rulers have simply refused to supply auxiliaries to Mendoza? Altman’s contrast between Guzmán and Mendoza suggests quite limited indigenous autonomy; the Spanish commanders largely determined the mistreatment of their supposed allies.

Chuchiak’s analysis of Francisco de Montejo’s final Yucatán campaign paints an even grimmer picture. As governor of Chiapas, Montejo used this region as a staging ground, gathering the vast army of auxiliaries that made this foray into the peninsula successful, unlike his earlier ones. Here, the majority of native “allies” consisted of slaves—more than thirty thousand from Tabasco alone. Chuchiak bluntly characterizes Spanish actions in Tabasco as “an absolute pillaging of the human resources of the province. . . . In the encomienda towns held directly by Francisco de Montejo and his son, population decline and the forced labor of Tabasco natives reached epic proportions, with an average of more than 80 percent of the population forced into service in their army” (192–193). Nahuatl recruits from central Mexico, who did much of the actual fighting, initially held a higher status, but for the most part lost it after the fighting ended. By the 1570s, they and their descendants who remained in Yucatán had been reduced to a demoralized remnant, impoverished and neglected.

Many indigenous conquistadores suffered a similar fate. If the line between those seen as victor and vanquished blurred in the conquest period itself, ethnic power relations solidified with the passing decades. Native polities that allied with the Spaniards found that the exemptions from

tribute and other privileges they had gained were all too easily forgotten by colonial administrators and had to be constantly reasserted and defended. The petitions they produced provide a key source for several of the authors in this volume. But this was ultimately a losing battle—which is why modern investigators have to go to such lengths to understand the allies' original motivations and their attempts to contest the fundamentally exploitative nature of the colonial regime.

Long-term adaptations to colonialism comprise the central focus of *People of the Volcano*, a study of the Colca Valley in southern Peru. Noble David Cook and Alexandra Parma Cook have researched this region for more than three decades and have produced a richly detailed and nuanced treatment of the valley's Cabanas and Collaguas peoples from the late pre-Hispanic period to the early seventeenth century. Unlike the authors of *Indian Conquistadors*, the Cooks are not consciously engaging in revisionist history—certainly their subjects do not appear as victors or conquerors. Indeed, their narrative trajectory is quite standard: we are told of the arrival of the Spaniards and their subsequent civil wars; the far-reaching impact of the Toledan reforms; the decline of the *encomienda* and the emergence of the *corregimiento* system; the struggles over *mita* demands; and the growing but still limited influence of the church. What makes the book worthwhile is its regional specificity, the way it conveys a sense of daily life as the valley's inhabitants become incorporated into an Atlantic, imperial system. The authors provide an incisive account of the contradictions of colonialism as experienced from ground level: persistence within change and alteration within continuity.

Spanish conquest had a transformative—and highly unfavorable—impact: “The disastrous pachacuti, or great turning of the earth, had come to the people of the Colca Valley” (49). Moreover, the forces of change definitely emanated from the outside, first from the conquistadores, then more dramatically from Viceroy Toledo, a disruptive whirlwind who implemented a vast and intrusive program of social engineering. His *reducciones*, and the epidemic disease they helped to spread, undermined and even destroyed local *ayllus*. Spanish economic demands, unrestrained by Andean norms of reciprocity, created a socioeconomic crisis as early as the 1560s. As the Spaniards leached human and material resources from the valley, production faltered and the very infrastructure that made the region fertile decayed.

Yet the authors do not offer a purely declinist narrative in which the Cabanas and Collaguas were simply dispossessed. They make the now-familiar claim that native peoples employed the weapons of the weak to resist on an everyday level. But their agency appears less in open resistance than in their continued adherence to a certain view of the world and its associated folkways. A substratum of Andean values remained beyond the Spaniards' reach, perhaps because it inhered in the landscape

itself. A full-fledged hacienda system did not develop in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the Andean subsistence strategy of exploiting different ecological zones continued to hold sway. Farmers, like their counterparts today, depended on terracing and irrigation systems, which are described in compelling detail. (The authors draw effectively on modern ethnographic work in this section, though they might have given more attention to the methodological problems of “up streaming.”) The high puna remained the home of llama herders, even though nervous authorities saw this as a roadblock to their plans for congregating and “civilizing” Indians. Natural forces regularly intruded into the lives of both rural and urban dwellers. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions had important if sometimes paradoxical effects: simultaneously checking the development of Hispanic society—Arequipa repeatedly had to be rebuilt—while increasing the state’s intrusion into the Colca Valley, as the damaged city required drafted workers by the thousands.

The natural world, the enduring material foundation of life, demanded the continuation of established Andean practices. The Cabanas and Colaguas could not afford to abandon their ritual relationship to an environment that they, in any case, considered alive. New religious concepts failed to supersede the established moral economy. The Cooks view indigenous Christianity as a thin veneer over more deeply rooted beliefs. Most strikingly, the Andean notion of duality, reflected in the division of communities into two *sayas*, came to permeate the church’s institutional structures: “In the village of Yanque, residents of the *urinsaya* entered [the church] by the door on the western end of the structure, while the members of the *anansaya* filed in by the large side door nearest the center of the plaza. During Mass they stood in separate parts of the church. Even the parish records were kept separately by *saya* until the end of the colonial era. The members of *saya* had their opposing religious brotherhoods, or *cofradías*. Each half celebrated its own special festive days in the Christian religious cycle” (106). In the end, Christianity was—literally and figuratively—overshadowed by the surrounding mountains, visible reminders of gods that had preceded and would outlast the invaders.

Yet villagers could not simply return to the past. In the second half of the sixteenth century, Ampato Volcano served as the locus for an “idolatrous” cult that promised to relieve the Indians of Spanish oppression by producing gold to pay their tributes. The authors believe this shows that native peoples no longer envisioned (if they ever had) the destruction of colonial rule. They instead sought to blunt its local impact, rendering the colonial project incomplete. Lolita Gutiérrez Brockington’s *Blacks, Indians and Spaniards in the Eastern Andes* supports this reading of the subaltern experience. Like the Cooks, Gutiérrez Brockington aims to document the uniqueness of a specific region—the province of Mizque in the audiencia of Charcas (modern-day Bolivia)—and its special contours, “networks[.]

and diversities" (4) as it developed over time, in this case, more than two centuries. Mizque's location on the eastern slopes of the Andes embraced both highlands and lowlands, with profound consequences for its integration into the colonial system. Spanish invaders cast greedy eyes on its economic potential. After a faltering start, they managed to establish all manner of enterprises in the region: haciendas, vineyards, sugar plantations, coca fields, cattle ranches, and mines. These efforts responded to growing market demand for a series of products; by the early seventeenth century, mule trains had established a regular route linking Mizque to La Plata and Potosí. Landowners faced multiple challenges and often struggled to gain a profit (or enough profit to support an honorable lifestyle). Turnover among hacendados was high, but this "did not prevent the emergence of a European propertied class, which . . . was able to exert its will over the majority" (7).

These entrepreneurs proved competitive and litigious, as elsewhere in Spanish America, yet they could also act in concert. Gutiérrez Brockington provides an illuminating account of how the town council and *vecinos* of Mizque efficiently raised funds for and managed the building of a bridge across the Río Grande to improve transportation. She concludes that such "regional leaders, when they deemed appropriate, seized the initiative and combined their collective efforts to achieve their own regional goals. Of equal importance, prominent curacas participated in that leadership, reinforcing definitions of a new hybrid, post-conquest world" (73). The drive for profit also manifested itself in less positive ways: the exploitation of indigenous labor—like the Cooks, Gutiérrez Brockington argues that Spanish demands in this area far exceeded those of the Incas—and the introduction of African slaves. One of the author's goals is to demonstrate the presence of Africans in Mizque and the implications this had for the province's socioeconomic character. While a relatively straightforward European-indigenous binary structures the Cooks' *People of the Volcano*, Gutiérrez Brockington takes miscegenation, racial complexity, and questions of identity as prominent themes.

Mizque, then, would seem a more Hispanicized terrain than the Colca Valley. Yet in other ways, it remained marginal. Spanish control, Gutiérrez Brockington repeatedly reminds us, was never secure. Mizque represented a frontier region subject to periodic attacks from Amazon forest dwellers. The king's writ did not run very far and often failed to reach the distant coca fields. Abuses multiplied and local curacas, rapidly losing their wealth, prestige, and mediating function, could do little to help. But subalterns had their own resources—above all, mobility. Gutiérrez Brockington makes superb use of a series of *padrones de chacaras* (censuses designed to identify and thus control agricultural workers) precisely to show how these attempts at control failed. Mizque instead becomes a study in volatility. Landowners moved entire labor forces from one enter-

prise to another, but individual workers also voted with their feet, shifting to different *chácaras* to join family members, for instance. Some fled the region for healthier climes or turned into cimarrons, becoming part of a “hidden” population beyond Spanish governance. Gutiérrez Brockington reports that “the verb *huir* [to flee] is so prevalent, the action so widely practiced, that the term and action, in my opinion, become the norm” (220). On the *chácaras* themselves, the labor force grew more and more racially and ethnically indeterminate. Census takers proved remarkably inconsistent in applying racial labels, particularly when it came to the children of mixed unions. The identifiably African population changed over time, becoming more *mulato*, less *negro*, and more likely to be free—in effect, they turned into another brand of *yanacunas*: hard to dominate, hard to keep in their place.

Blacks, Indians and Spaniards in the Eastern Andes is deeply researched in multiple archives and throws new light on a little studied region, thereby living up to the goal in its subtitle: “Reclaiming the Forgotten in Colonial Mizque.” Life on the frontier—the travails of landowners and majordomos, the frustrations of harassed military men fighting off Indian raiders, the unsettled social relationships in multiethnic households—springs into sharp relief in Gutiérrez Brockington’s pages. Like the Cooks, she shows a region that is shaped by Hispanic demands, yet not fully remade in the conqueror’s image, giving readers a more nuanced image of colonialism. But this portrait comes across as less assured and comprehensive than its Colca Valley counterpart. At times it seems to consist of a series of vignettes based on the specific sources that Gutiérrez Brockington has unearthed. Her portrait of Mizque offers flashes of illumination, but the overall conclusions are somewhat less clear. For instance, the presence and economic significance of Africans and their descendants is established beyond doubt. But what status did people of color hold, and what relations did they have with other sectors of society? Gutiérrez Brockington’s research does not suggest anything as rigid or organized as a racial hierarchy. She sees racial and ethnic mixing (which led to free offspring) as the region’s central dynamic. Mulattoes—generally the product of African and Indian unions—demonstrated both physical and social mobility; some even became landholders. Yet they lacked the legal protections afforded Andeans—and in the book’s final pages, the author notes that the local African community had at least partially assimilated negative stereotypes associated with blackness. The reader is left with unresolved complexities and uncertainties: do these reflect the state of research or the province’s instability?

Karen Graubart’s *With Our Labor and Sweat* is also deeply concerned with social complexity and deeply suspicious of the idea that the colonial world consisted of discrete racial strata. Unlike the Cooks and Gutiérrez Brockington, she focuses on urban centers—Lima and Trujillo—where

Spanish-indigenous integration had become visible as early as the 1560s. But like the previous authors, she sees the emerging Hispanic economy as the prime motor of change. Market demand emanating from the cities created a “gendered reorganization of labor . . . [that] had a profound effect upon social relations in rural areas” (30). In a nutshell, female labor—above all, weaving—became commercialized. *Ropa de tierra* soon constituted the single most important item of encomienda tribute, and curacas, government officials, and Spanish entrepreneurs competed—or conspired—to acquire these profitable textiles, which often meant organizing production through coercion or other extralegal means. But growing markets also offered opportunities to men and women willing to migrate to the cities. The heart of Graubart’s book is her examination of such indigenous servants, traders, weavers, and artisans in the first 150 years after conquest. Expertly combining statistical analysis (e.g., of the 1613 Lima census) with lively individual portraits based on testaments and other notarial documents, Graubart joins the growing list of scholars who have shown indigenous women’s profound engagement in the urban market economy.⁶ In this dynamic environment, flexibility proved the key to survival and success. Upward mobility was possible, though one often had to undertake multiple activities, either concurrently or serially. Even the classic occupation of domestic servant, while often exploitative, could serve as a stepping-stone to more lucrative endeavors. Graubart goes so far as to speak of an indigenous middle class, whose members managed to amass some cash and property.

Of all the volumes under review, *With Our Labor and Sweat* is the most attentive to gender and ethnic identities. Throughout the book, Graubart carefully contrasts the experience of indigenous men and women. Thus, men were more likely to be identified with a single profession and to have entered it via more formal channels. To take another example, Indian men typically provided for their widows when dictating their wills, while women exhibited greater variability in their bequests. They sought to solve family disputes, benefit illegitimate children, and more broadly, to assert control over the property they had accumulated in an often unfavorable social environment. Graubart credits the testators with considerable self-consciousness: “Most of the women discussed here felt it necessary to invoke legal instruments because they were keenly aware that they were doubly disadvantaged, as women and as Indians. . . . Although women recognized the limitations and constraints placed upon them . . .

6. For example, Jane E. Mangan, *Trading Roles: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Urban Economy in Colonial Potosí* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Kimberly Gauderman, *Women’s Lives in Colonial Quito: Gender, Law, and the Economy in Spanish America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

they also identified and utilized the institutions that could act on their behalf" (119).

Graubart's most impressive achievement is her in-depth analysis of what being *indígena* meant in seventeenth-century Lima or Trujillo. Indians interacted on a daily basis with Spaniards, *castas*, and Africans—some Indians even owned slaves—and so participated in the construction of a new, multiethnic social order. In this milieu, "Indian" was not an all-encompassing, stable identity. Indian women, as mentioned earlier, proved quite willing to use Spanish judicial institutions for their own benefit; they adopted aspects of Spanish religiosity, becoming enthusiastic members of *cofradías*; and they modified their dress and coiffure: their wardrobes increasingly featured Hispanic styles and material, including imported fabrics. Graubart's discussion is remarkably concrete: she keeps track of who did, and did not, list clothing in their wills (e.g., this was much more common among women than men); what kinds of clothing they mentioned (native or imported); the vocabulary used to describe specific pieces (indigenous or Spanish); and the relative importance of clothing compared to other items—while showing how all these things varied according to social status and over the span of more than a century.

Graubart does not classify this evolution in clothing as evidence of acculturation or syncretism, for this would downplay the agency of Indian women, who made choices from a complex, ethnically variegated menu that city living made available. In chapter 4—the most intriguing and innovative section of the book—Graubart explores the logic of these choices. Some upwardly mobile women who "had achieved economic success . . . now defined themselves without reference to rural communities . . . seeing themselves as simply a part of an urban colonial elite that required no marking adjective like 'india.'" Others deliberately combined Quechua and Spanish elements of dress, seeing the latter as "additive . . . rather than something that negated their past or disrupted their present" (156). Graubart's work demonstrates, in a striking way, that native peoples did not simply accept the definitions their new masters handed down, nor did they simply resist by affirming their pre-Columbian ethnicity. Instead, they responded actively and creatively to colonialism, seizing opportunities for self-imagining that the Spaniards had never anticipated.

Thus Graubart, in her own way, also attacks the victimization narrative. All these works contribute to a more complete, multilayered understanding of colonialism. Of course, Spaniards introduced new, exploitative rules and structures that caused real suffering. But their impact was uneven: indigenous men and women had different experiences; some native polities benefited at the expense of others; Spanish hacendados achieved a greater presence in Mizque than in the Colca Valley. Indians and Africans sought out loopholes, cracks in the colonial foundation, not just to defend their old

ways but to take advantage of new possibilities—as marketing women, as mobile laborers, as flecheros. They became colonial subjects, but in spite of the restrictions this entailed, they still had a say in determining their status. As a result, even as the invaders placed their indelible stamp on native societies—inventing the very category of “Indian”—the colonial order they had hoped to create proved elusive. Complex and changeable social interaction marked the emerging New World; as Gutiérrez Brockington puts it: “economic forces created conflictive sets of resistance/subjugation, victim/exploiter, and victim/protector, and the resulting myriad juxtapositions, ambiguities, and contradictions that became the colonial reality” (277). The case studies reviewed here are significant, not because they deal with exceptions but because they allow us more fully to explore the breadth and variety of this reality.