

away from the one-directional subjectivation of users familiar from the literature to think of personalization as also a kind of anthropomorphic attitude toward algorithmic platforms themselves, which facilitates a social relationship between algorithms and users. In “Integration” and “Rituals,” we learn about a variety of ways that users actively integrate algorithmic outputs into their cultural lives, including through local rituals of interaction (such as watching Netflix at particular times or listening to Spotify to induce particular moods). “Conversion” examines how users translate their private experiences into an understanding of a broader public of users, despite the fact that personalization often seems to work against shared media experience. While most of the book focuses on the mutual accommodations made between users and platforms, a chapter on “Resistance” documents moments of tension and rejection, where users bristle at recommendations or interfaces.

Living with Algorithms is a model of qualitative research on media audiences and the dynamics of algorithmic recommendation in practice. It would be especially useful for graduate students developing projects on the users of algorithmic systems who want a map of the literature and a sense of the variety they might encounter when conducting research into cultural life in a world full of algorithms.

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Pilgrimage to Broken Mountain: Nahua Sacred Journeys in Mexico's Huasteca Veracruzana. Alan R. Sandstrom and Pamela Effrein Sandstrom.
 Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2023, 478 pp. \$34.95, paper.
 ISBN 978-1-64642-350-7.

Based on more than four decades of ethnographic fieldwork in the community of Amatlán (a fictional name of a remote Indigenous community in Ixhuatlán de Madero, Veracruz, Mexico), *Pilgrimage to Broken Mountain* discusses the ontological, ethical, political, and spiritual dimensions of five sacred pilgrimages of a Nahua village to restore and maintain balance and equilibrium in the region and the greater cosmos. These journeys to sacred mountains in the Huasteca Veracruzana, a cultural-geographic area in the northern part of the state of Veracruz, assert Nahua worldviews and world-making practices, functioning not only as spiritual manifestations but also as cultural and even historical records. Tracing back to Mesoamerican praxis, these pilgrimages constitute the most resilient public markers of Nahua religion of *el costumbre* (the “custom”), which is how Nahuas name the set of spiritual beliefs, behaviors, traditions, and embodiments of the sacred and cosmic force known as Totiotzin and its infinite manifestations—the Nahua spirit entities to whom the pilgrimages are dedicated.

Alan R. Sandstrom and Pamela Effrein Sandstrom meticulously document their participation in the pilgrimages to the sacred mountain of Postectli in Ichcacuatitla, Chicontepec, Veracruz, in 1998 and 2001 and to three other regional sacred hills in 2007, Palaxtepetl, Tres Pozitos, and Xomulco, accompanying Encarnación Téllez Hernández, “Cirilo,” the ritual specialist or *tlamatiquetl*, “person of knowledge.” In a region facing expedited conversion to fundamentalist Protestantism and increasing migration to urban centers, this timely work grapples with the complex ways Nahua religion and cultural praxis endure despite centuries of colonialism and more recent capitalist projects of extractivism. The Sandstroms foreground the persistence of Nahua rituals as acts of social exchange among Indigenous communities, including the Nahua and the Otomí, to show respect (*tlatlepanittaliztli*) for *costumbre* practice and ensure balance and order between human, other-than-human, and the sacred cosmos.

Framing Nahua beliefs as pantheistic and not polytheistic is one of the central premises of their study. For the anthropologists, *el costumbre* of contemporary Nahuas “centers on ontological monism as it relates to anthropomorphism in the context of a set of pantheistic beliefs and ritual practices” (p. 67). The paper cuttings they analyze embody spirit entities “best conceived as shifting or temporary manifestations of an encompassing presence that the people call Totiotzin, [which] is sacredness itself” (p. 51). Through highly elaborate rituals, these paper figures transform into embodiments of Totiotzin as the animating force of the cosmos, just like the *ixiptla-teixipla* (the “physical manifestations of deities”) in preconquest Mesoamerica (pp. 194–95).

Nahua pilgrimages are part of larger Mesoamerican expressions of a cosmic order and modular way of understanding the universe that must be maintained to avoid chaos, disorder, and ultimately destruction. As “rites of passage,” these sacred journeys enable Nahuas to engage in a reciprocal process of exchange with spirit entities who, once activated through the ritual sprinkling of blood, “possess a subjectivity and agency that allows them to be active participants in social interaction and reciprocal exchanges” (p. 285). The pilgrimage ultimately serves to ensure and reestablish “balance, harmony, and equanimity between the human and spirit worlds” (p. 279).

The book is divided into nine chapters, including a preface, a coda, a glossary, four appendixes, and a folding diagram of the spirit entities discussed. It features colorful illustrations, photographs, tables, and fragments of interviews, testimonies, and recordings of chants and *zanilli* or Nahua oral tradition. Throughout the chapters, the authors discuss Nahua cosmovision and the preparations of offerings, altars, and paper figures and describe the multiple sacred journeys, prayers, and even myths, particularly that of the maize spirit, Chicomechitl (Seven Flower), and the water owner, Zahhuan (San Juan Bautista). They also offer a historical and comparative discussion of contemporary Nahua vis-à-vis pre-Hispanic and other ethnic and mestizo pilgrimages in Mexico.

The authors critically engage with a plethora of scholarship in English and Spanish but also incorporate works by Nahua anthropologists and scholars produced in Spanish, English, and even Nahuatl. In their insistence to make Nahua spiritual and cultural

beliefs legible to US and non-Indigenous scholars, however, the authors at times risk replicating the colonial dynamics they astutely critique. Readers could have benefited from a more robust reflection of their social positioning and standing not only as *coyomeh* (non-Indigenous) but also as *compadres*—as US scholars and yet familiar foreigners. This was also a missed opportunity to attend to questions of relationality, academic extractivism, and coloniality, perhaps due to disciplinary imperatives.

Overall, *Pilgrimage to Broken Mountain* is a monumental study that helps its readers understand the historical, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions of the role of Nahua pilgrimages and ritual praxis not just in terms of sociocultural differences but also in terms of ongoing environmental and religious changes.

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Aztec Antichrist: Performing the Apocalypse in Early Colonial Mexico. Ben Leeming. Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2022, 314 pp. \$35.95, paper. ISBN 9781646422999.

Aztec Antichrist: Performing the Apocalypse in Early Colonial Mexico is a translation and study of some of the most striking Nahuatl texts brought to light in the twenty-first century: two sixteenth-century religious plays about the antichrist in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs or Nahuas of Mexico. The plays had been in a notebook held in the bowels of the Hispanic Society in New York City. This notebook was long thought to have only held Nahuatl manuscript copies of Christian texts. During research for his doctoral dissertation, Leeming discovered that the notebook also contained these unique and provocative dramas. As he explains, they are not simply unusual, but rather literally one of a kind. Though the antichrist was a common figure in early modern European religious writings, the character is nearly absent in the vast library of Christian texts from colonial Mexico written in Nahuatl. The plays also feature Mesoamerican gods such as Quetzalcoatl, as well as archetypes of Aztec social classes, roles, and occupations from “pagan” times, such as priests, diviners, and prostitutes. In the plays, all of these characters are in league with the antichrist to (unsuccessfully) lure Nahua Christians into returning to preconquest ways, which the antagonists describe in suspiciously graphic detail. The detailed depiction, let alone mention, of such figures and their “idolatrous” ways was virtually forbidden by colonial authorities, making these “illicit” works all the more strangely singular. As a result, the plays provide perhaps the most illuminating window into Aztec religion since the Florentine Codex.

Leeming renders these heretofore unknown plays, for all their strangeness, readily intelligible to the modern scholar. *Aztec Antichrist* contains both an extensive introductory