

California Indians Dreamin': Formal and Aesthetic Innovations in Pacific Coast Native
Literatures and Arts

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Abstract

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“California Indians Dreamin’” examines how a sustained study of Indigenous aesthetics and creative cultural production in what is now California affirms longstanding Indigenous presence within a space violently overwritten by multiple waves of settler colonialism. Three primary concerns drive this work: first, to study how multiple colonial situations in California created both limitations on and possibilities for Indigenous survivance and creative expressions of identity; second, to refute the pernicious assumption that there is no such thing as California Native literatures; and third, to amplify the many twentieth and twenty-first century California Native voices that have labored toward political, cultural, and creative sovereignty for their tribal nations. Following these concerns leads to evocative possibilities for understanding the role that California Native literary and artistic production plays in reimagining California histories, lands, and waters.

Dedication

For my grandfather, Dr. David Ballesteros (July 3, 1933–August 5, 2021), for blazing the path
and opening the doors.

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Introduction: Piecing Together the Fragments and Shards: Mosaic as Methodology

An Island unto Itself: Cartography as Metaphor

In the Newberry Library in Chicago, a 1717 version of Nicolas de Fer's 1698 Beaver Map of North America hangs in the hallway leading to the special collections study rooms.¹ The Beaver Map is a provocative document that not only maps the natural resource for which it is named but serves as an early, and ambitious, geographic and ethnographic report on the natural and cultural features from New Zealand to the Americas to Newfoundland. The original 1698 map contains text written in French describing the mountains, rivers, oceans, and other natural features as well as descriptions of known places of habitation and peoples. In its scope, the Beaver Map is a compelling snapshot of the patterns of early settler extractive industry as well as of the geographical aporias where settlers had not yet traveled, mapping the vectors of discovery across North America and the Pacific at the turn of the 18th century.

De Fer's Beaver Map is rich for multiple levels of interpretation and analysis. But it stopped me in my tracks during my 2016 visit to the Newberry Library for a singular reason: on it, California is an island. I was just beginning this dissertation then, a project about formal and aesthetic innovations in twentieth and twenty-first century California Native literatures and arts. This project is driven by three main purposes: to make California Native literary history legible within the broader context of American Indian literary studies; to amplify the literary and artistic works of California Native writers and artists as works of survivance against a pernicious history of settler colonial genocide; and to create a teachable tool for (California) educators.² At the time of my 2016 visit I was working to articulate the stakes of my geographic focus on California within the context of my field of American Indian literary studies. As a settler with German and

Mexican ancestry born in California—whose maternal grandfather spent his childhood working alongside his parents as a farm laborer throughout the Central Valley, whose great-grandfather laid the electrical lines into Yosemite Valley—I know that the place I call home is simultaneously unique and deeply contentious. To many of us who grew up there, the exceptionalist response to “why California?”—“because, California!”—was both insufficient and understandable—it is a complex site of convergence for many peoples and many stories.³ As I stared at de Fer’s map, the “Isola di California” glared back at me, and the island became a compelling visual metaphor for the problem of California that this dissertation addresses. That is, California has always been somewhat adrift from the main continental body of thought and patterns of settler colonialism.

On de Fer’s original 1698 Beaver Map, only two facts are explicitly stated about California: it is the largest of the Pacific islands, and no one knows anything about it.⁴ California is rendered as an island, dislocated from the continental body by the narrow Mare Rosso Vermellio, or “the red sea.” Its coastline stretches from what is now known as the bottom tip of Baja California up to the northern border of Oregon, or to the mouth of the Columbia River, before the multiple and overlying settler colonial networks would suture it back onto the North American continent and render it in its contemporary form. In fact, in fifty short years the Spanish missionaries and soldiers would arrive and build the first mission in San Diego, forever transforming Indigenous lives in California.

The map is also a poignant visual representation of the way in which California is positioned in area studies across disciplines. That is, even in the twenty-first century California remains an anomaly, a geographical and ideological location differentiated by its distance from the origins of the United States and its patterns of settler colonialism. In some ways, California

continues to drift conceptually just offshore from the mainland. That is, it does not *quite* fit in with articulated area or disciplinary studies. In American Indian and Indigenous studies, California is contended with in historical, legal, sociological, and anthropological contexts, but remains an underexamined space in the Indigenous humanities. In American Indian literary studies, literatures that emerge from California are certainly recognized, but their contexts as “California” literatures remain undertheorized.

As in the seventeenth century map, Indigenous California remains dislocated, drifting in a liminal space between North America and the Pacific, beyond the contours of American Indian literary studies and Pacific Indigenous studies as a field of inquiry. This dissertation directly engages with these anomalies and aporias to map California Indian literary production and the field of American Indian literary studies. As my methodology and readings will show, this project is an exercise in learning to read the gaps, silences, absences, untranslatable recordings, and losses in between the fragments and shards of what is known. Doing so requires active and at times strenuous work on the part of readers, but the work is rich and rewarding.

Theorizing “California”

In California genocide is written on the landscape. It shaped not only the way the state and federal government continued to approach Native people as a ‘problem’ but also how generations of people *would come to understand Native cultures, histories, and futures*.

Cutchia Risling Baldy, *We Are Dancing for You: Native Feminisms & the Revitalization of Women’s Coming-of-Age Ceremonies* (58, emphasis added)

There is an alternate map of California—the original map of California—one excluded from the composited palimpsest of multiple colonialisms and imperial and popular imaginations: the stories from California’s first peoples that texture that richly diverse place with a vast constellation of lived relationships and responsibilities. As Wailaki and Concow historian William Bauer Jr. explains, “California Indians understood themselves as a people of place. Creators made the world for a certain People and a unique People for a specific place” (*Native Eyes* 28). For California’s original inhabitants, as with Indigenous peoples across the globe, relationship to place remains central to understandings of identity and tribal belonging. These stories, according to Bauer, connect people to lands and waters, establish relationships, and inform California Indians’ central beliefs about relationality according to a topographic, rather than chronological, narrative map of history (28). As this dissertation will more closely analyze, California Indian writers and artists in the twentieth and twenty-first century continue to imagine central aspects of contemporary identity and belonging through place-based narratives that affirm kinship and belonging.

These storied relationships to place have been dramatically altered by a series of three violent settler occupations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the Spanish occupation and missionization of California’s coastline from what is now San Diego to San Francisco from 1769 until secularization in 1830; the Mexican occupation which lasted briefly from 1830 until the Mexican-American War and the signed Treaty of Guadalupe in 1848; and the United States, which took California from Mexico in 1848 and made it a state in 1850.

The Spanish, the first to seize California Indian lands as part of a European empire, established the first of twenty-one missions at San Diego in 1769. These missions stretched north along the California coastline between San Diego and San Francisco and depended on enforced

labor from nearby tribal nations to build and operate. Spain's twin projects were to create religious converts and build an economy, but relied on violence, compulsion, and the dispossession of Native lands toward these ends. Jack Forbes (Powhatan and Lenape) writes that the missions were "instruments designed to bring about total change in culture in a brief period of time" (39).⁵ In his 2009 book, *Manifesting America: The Imperial Construction of a U.S. National Space*, literary scholar Mark Rifkin argues that the mission system became an anchor, or "topos," that became the footprint of Mexican and then U.S. settler administrations, which they utilized to continue disavowing "persistent native geopolitics" (174). He writes, "the figure of missionization anchors a narrative of California Indians as having lost, if they ever possessed, the political cohesion of native peoples in the east. Instead they appear as a dependent mass in need of guidance ..." (174). The occupation of California by Spain separates California from the trajectory of settler colonialism across much of the rest of Turtle Island. As mission historian Steven Hackel writes, "The chronology, geography, and teleology that have come to define what scholars term early American history have served to exclude colonial California from national historical narratives and larger fields of inquiry" (3).

When Mexico seized control of California from the Spanish in 1830, the government remained invested in an adapted model of the mission called the *rancheria*, primarily as a form of control of Indigenous labor. Rifkin argues that California native peoples were excluded from Californio/Hispanic territorial rights, as the Mexican government utilized the missions as a footprint for engaging California native peoples:

Consistent with the ideologies guiding policy across what had been New Spain, the refusal to engage with (sedentary) Indians as independent peoples helped validate not only the seizure of native lands but the use of native labor as the basis for agriculture,

ranching, and trade in the region ... Californio representations of Indians denied that they formed separate political entities, at most acknowledging Indian villages (or rancherias) as semi-municipal units but not their status as parts of autonomous polities. (152)

The Mexican policy of forming a laboring class out of California Indians was premised on the fact that some land was returned to California Indian peoples, particularly lands near the now secularized missions. These land grants, however, were not upheld by the United States when they took control in 1848.

The deeply important relationship to place is what makes the United States' occupation of California and failure to both acknowledge the Mexican land grants and ratify 18 treaties, creating no significant land base for California tribes, especially devastating. As historian James Rawls describes it, the US policy of removal, which had always been a policy since the arrival of the settlers but was championed by Andrew Jackson starting in 1830 and culminated in the devastating forced removal of tribal nations across the continent, failed in California, as it was "no longer possible to remove Indians further west ... because beyond California there was no more West" (140–141). The US was forced, as Rawls describes it, "to design an alternative method of handling its Indian population" (141). In 1851 a federal Indian commissioner report penned by Dr. Oliver M. Wozencraft, George, W. Barbour, and Redick McKee suggests that given that removal is no longer an option, either extermination or domestication were the only possible alternatives (Rawls 141). The three men negotiated the 18 treaties while US policy makers debated their options. These treaties established an agreement to stop all hostilities in exchange for "provisions, cattle, and large tracts of land" (Rawls 141). But the government received too much pressure from the settlers of California who were obviously opposed to reservations that occupied too much valuable land. Governor John Bigler, upon election in 1852,

drafted state legislation to remove all California Indians from the state's borders, but this recommendation hit a roadblock when settlers made the "realization that some of the state's Indians were useful laborers" (Rawls 144). These competing visions of Indian relations in California—as laborers or threats—along with the secret United States Senate session in 1852 that led to the rejection of California's 18 proposed treaties, led to unusual circumstances: the United States government rejected the treaties, but also rejected the state's proposal to remove the state's Indians (Rawls 147). The state then took matters into its own hands, creating a series of "modest reservations" without the formal negotiation of a treaty and "invited" California Indians to assemble there (Rawls 148). As Rawls emphasizes, California's reservation system "was a distinctly California product in several respects. In the first place, it was necessitated by the rapid migration of whites to California, a demographic that put an end to the 'permanent Indian frontier' and Indian removal. Secondly, [Superintendent] Beale had found the inspiration for his system in the California missions. He expected the reservations to be self-supporting" (149). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the traumatic violence of the mission experience for California's Native communities, which was still only twenty years in the past and so many who were still living *also* lived through missionization, this voluntary reservation system was unsuccessful, leaving whites and California's Native population in a gridlock over continued occupation of their homelands. The result was a series of "Indian wars" through the 1850s and 1860s that amounted to genocide, particularly in northern California. There is no way to overstate the tragedy of the precipitous decline in the population of Native Californians, which plummeted from 150,000 in 1845 to 30,000 by 1870. The federal government sponsored this genocide, reimbursing the state of California for the vigilante murder of its original inhabitants.⁶ Norton was the first California Indian scholar to name the historical events of the nineteenth

century as genocide, publishing a book in 1979 titled, aptly, *Genocide in Northwestern California: When Our Worlds Cried*.

As Hupa scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy writes in the epigraph at the opening of this section, by the twentieth century genocide was now written on the land, fundamentally shaping how “generations of people would come to understand Native cultures, histories, and futures” (58). And yet many of California’s tribal nations not only survived but have steadfastly rebuilt communities and cultures, and relentlessly pursue sovereignty on any terms. And central to the work of rebuilding is the work of narrative and expressive cultures, to, as Bauer argues, remind California Native peoples that they belong in this land, and as a bedrock for building new presents and imagining possible futures. As cultural and linguistic anthropologist Keith Basso writes in his 1996 book, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, “Remembering often provides a basis for imagining. What is remembered about a particular place—including prominently verbal and visual accounts of what has transpired there—guide and constrains how it will be imagined” (5). This dissertation centers the stories that remember and the stories that imagine through the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries, to better understand the relationship between narrative and expressive cultures and the ongoing work of Indigenous nation-building across Native California.

California (Indians) Dreamin’

Dreaming to me is the effort to make sense of relations in the world we live, dreaming and empathizing intensely our relations with past and present and the future without the boundaries of linear time. Dreaming is a communicative sacred activity. Dreaming often allows us to creatively sidestep all the neat little boxes that obscure larger relations and

syntheses of imagination. I also believe that dreaming, theory, narrative, and critical thinking are not exclusive of each other.

Dian Million, “Intense Dreaming”

California dreamin’, on such a winter’s day.

The Mamas and the Papas, “California Dreamin’”

As the above quote from Athabascan scholar Dian Million suggests, story is crucial to the understanding of “larger relations”—in this case, the relationships between California Indians, settlers, and place after two centuries of violent occupation. Million invokes dreaming as a radical act of possibility and imagination and situates stories as the space of dreaming. The role of dreaming and narrative is to create alternate space, or to map, the inhabited world, emphasizing temporal and spatial connectivity that “creatively sidestep[s]” the political and physical erasure of California Indians in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Dreaming is centered across this dissertation as a decolonial act that reaches past and through the violent legacies of settler violence and (re)maps California as an Indigenous space once more.⁷ Dreams can move between, through, and beyond settler-imposed barriers, through the legal and political restrictions that continue to dispossess twentieth and twenty-first century Native Californians. As much as California Indians continue to contend with structural erasure, there is also much vibrant and vital work being done across political, legal, linguistic, and material crafts traditions to assert ongoing survivance. And California Indian writers and artists are imagining new futures: Kumeyaay bird singers are making new songs. Languages are coming back. Ti’ats and tomols—California Indigenous seafaring canoes—are once more active in the

Pacific waters off the California coastline. This project is devoted to understanding the formal and aesthetic practices that California Indian storytellers utilize and engage to not only navigate the waters of survivance in twentieth- and twenty-first-century California but to imagine lively futures.

This dissertation also contends with the ever-present specter of extinction and elimination in the post-genocide era of the twentieth century. For as much as I set out to center the exciting and innovative works of contemporary California Indian storytellers, it was also necessary to sit with the heaviness of what it means to be survivors of genocidal settler colonialism. Risling Baldy writes, “It is necessary to explore the brutal and unrelenting history of genocide in California to grasp the importance of cultural revitalization as decolonizing praxis” (Baldy, *We Are Dancing* 52). It became clear in my work with Ishi’s archives, with Hopi and Miwok poet Wendy Rose’s poems, with Deborah Miranda’s memoir, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, and with N. Scott Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn*—the authors and texts centered in this work and described in greater detail below—that California Indians and American Indians living in California continue to contend with the ways in which discourses of erasure shape and orient the formations of sovereign identities.

The title of this dissertation centers the value and act of dreaming across the project and puns on the famous 1966 folk rock hit song “California Dreamin’” by the Mamas and the Papas. This song hooks into popular settler fantasies of California as a place of paradise (or paradise lost).⁸ The midcentury journalist Carey McWilliams describes California as “a temperament, a metaphor, a turn of mind” in his 1949 text, *California: The Great Exception*,⁹ and cements California exceptionalism into the settler imaginary with his hyperbolic representations of California as a place that, “has a meaning which is as clear today as when the word stood for a

place not yet discovered. It is the symbol of the mountain of paradise; the fabulous isle; the dream garden of beautiful black Amazons off the Asia coast; ‘the good country’—the Zion—of which man has ever dreamed” (3). The lyrics of “California Dreamin’” depict a nostalgic yearn for California during a drab and dreary winter:

All the leaves are brown

And the sky is grey

I’ve been on a walk

On a winter’s day

I’d be safe and warm

If I was in L.A.

California dreamin’

On such a winter’s day.

The singer aches for the sunny, gauzy image of Los Angeles, and juxtaposes the brown leaves and gray skies of winter with the idea of being “safe and warm” in LA. It is a catchy tune, and its haunting melody captures the wistful and yearning nostalgia encoded in the song’s lyrics; it implies that the dream of California has always been one of escape, warmth, and freedom from the drudgery of the winter season. The song locates California as the idealized paradise established within a series of oppositional pairings—winter and summer, responsibility and freedom, (religious) order and pleasure. None of these things are explicitly named, but in naming the opposite of the pair, the lyrics imply that California is a space of leisure, pleasure, warmth, sun, and freedom.

The title of this dissertation flips these tropes of the settler imaginary and centers instead California Indian ideals of a California paradise as they seek escape from the drudgery of

colonialism. Like the Mamas and the Papas, California Indians are weary of an unfavorable climate, and seek to (re)claim their own dreams. The place we know as California is storied first and foremost by the people who are Indigenous to the lands and waters here. Native Californians have a different dream of California, one that extends backward to their origin stories that affirm their belonging in this place and one that reaches forward to creative futures. The title is designed to center the work of dreaming in narrative production as a form of cultural production that (re)builds and (re)worlds Native California.¹⁰

Placing California in American Indian Literary Studies

In Indigenous literary studies, the turn to community and place as touchstones for American Indian literatures is a practice established and most commonly associated with Native intellectuals such as Osage scholar Robert Warrior and Creek and Cherokee scholar and writer Craig Womack, whose works *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (1995) and *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (1999), respectively, advocate for reading Native literatures through the lens of tribally-specific epistemologies and geographies. Both Warrior and Womack suggest that the creative expression of Indigenous intellectual sovereignty—ways of thinking and knowing and politics that are distinct from the U.S. nation state and Western traditions of knowledge production—grows out of situated, tribally-specific oral narratives, traditions, and lands. Intellectuals such as Abenaki scholar Lisa Brooks have further generated momentum for producing place-specific literary scholarship that foregrounds region and Indigenous specificity as a method for encountering Indigenous literary and artistic texts.¹¹ Brooks utilizes specific geography (the waterways of the US Northeast) to interpret literatures from the region in her 2008 book, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native*

Space in the Northeast. In organizing her argument and methods of interpretation around the relationship between key colonial-era texts written by Native writers and geography, she demonstrates the power of situating texts in region as a method for reclaiming space and identity. Her emphasis on writing as a colonial technology turned back on itself to decolonize people and places is carried forward into other Native literary interpretive methods.

Melanie Benson Taylor, scholar of American Indian and Southern literatures, published *Reconstructing the Native South: American Indian Literature and the Lost Cause* (2011), advancing Indigenous literary interpretive methods that center region. Taylor examines the rhetoric used in both Native American and Southern studies and how discourses tied to regional histories are deployed to situate communities in relation to that space as well as to the nation-state and global capitalism. In several ways, Taylor's project provides a framework for how one might approach a regional study of California. Most notably, her figuration of "relational regionalism"—a regionalism that "transcends tribal-nationalist narratives in favor of examining how outside influences imbricate communities' lives and interactions"—effectively articulates how the social construction of a region, especially regions where tribes have been removed, relocated, and wiped from the popular imaginary, wields the "power to capture the more productive lines of affiliation and solidarity" (Taylor 19). In this regard California is not unlike the US South: tribes in both spaces experienced particularly fraught and violent removals and erasures that prevented the continuance of tribal-nationalist ways of living and rendered them "virtually obsolete" (Taylor 12); the regions are rarely considered "active geography[ies] within Indian country ... even by Native scholars" (Taylor 11); and they fall largely outside the popular imaginary in U.S. culture. Yet, Native peoples "nonetheless abound in the region, often in invigorated tribal communities but just as frequently assimilated" into other communities (Taylor

13). Taylor's relational regionalism opens a productive way of imagining Native identities when the "usual" pillars of identity—an intact community and accessible traditional lands—are not readily available.¹²

Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman's noteworthy book, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping our Nations* (2013) intervenes on the fields of spatial, gender, and Indigenous studies by proposing that Native writers—and women in particular—enact a process of "(re)mapping," or decolonizing the Western, gendered technologies of mapping and spatial production that undergird the production of the nation-state. Goeman extends scholarship on spatial epistemologies that claim mapping has produced racialized and discriminatory access to space and citizenship into the field of Indigenous studies, where she proposes that colonial spatial logic has historically been utilized to promote narratives of *terra nullius* and erase, often violently, the presence of Native peoples from the land as the U.S. blazed its westward path. Goeman's central claim is that the creative work of Native writers, and Native women writers in particular, center the lives and experiences of Native peoples by (re)mapping spatial epistemologies, the result being that their stories "generate new possibilities" and "sustain vibrant Native futures" (Goeman 3). Her work on mapping and spatial epistemologies has become an important critical work in the field of Indigenous literary studies and establishes a helpful framework for thinking through literary and creative processes of (re)mapping that are linked to the spatial logics of specific geographies, such as those found in California.

But of course, as Dian Million suggests, narrative is also theory, and so this dissertation follows the stories of California by California Indians as a method of theorizing California Indian literary studies. This project largely allows the primary texts to serve as their own theoretical foundations, and each chapter lays out the methodological approach I take based on the set of

primary texts at work. While I engage with the theoretical works of Indigenous studies scholars across the field of American Indian and Indigenous literary studies, part of this project seeks to model what a responsible and relational approach to reading California Indian literatures and arts through their own cultural epistemologies and worldviews might look like.

Transforming Fragments and Shards: Methodology

There is one methodological approach that runs through this entire dissertation, and it is grounded in Esselen and Chumash writer Deborah Miranda's 2013 provocative mixed-media, mixed-memoir book, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. I offer a full reading of *Bad Indians* in chapter three of this dissertation, but for now it will be helpful to set up what about this book has been instrumental for my conceptualization of the project as a whole. Using what literary scholar Lisa Tatonetti calls a practice of Indigenous assemblage in the "construction" of *Bad Indians*, Miranda juxtaposes archival print, visual, and audio media alongside her own poetry and lyric essays to create what she terms a mosaic.¹³ Of making mosaics Miranda writes:

Sometimes something is so badly broken you cannot recreate its original shape at all. If you try, you create a deformed, imperfect image of what you've lost; you will always compare what your creation looks like with what it used to look like. As long as you are attempting to *recreate*, you are doomed to fail! I am beginning to realize that when something is that broken, more useful and beautiful results can come from using the pieces to construct a mosaic. You use the same pieces, but you create a new design from it. Matter cannot be created or destroyed, only transformed. If we allow the pieces of our culture to lie scattered in the dust of history, trampled on by racism and grief, then yes, we are irreparably damaged. But if we pick up the pieces and use them in new ways that

honor their integrity, their colors, textures, stories—then we do those pieces justice, no matter how sharp they are, no matter how much handling them slices our fingers and makes us bleed. (*Bad Indians* 135)

Within the image of the mosaic, Miranda acknowledges the heart-wrenching and irreparable loss experienced by California Indians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Risling Baldy articulates in the epigraph above, genocide has become embedded in the landscape, the culture, and the social geography of twentieth century California. And in the midst of the loss, destruction, and ashes, Miranda nonetheless asserts that it is possible to make something new out of what remains, to “create a new design.” Here is a vibrant example of what California Indian dreamin’ looks like: through the form and aesthetic of mosaics, Miranda constructs a new California out of the pieces of the past.

Miranda’s methodology of making mosaics strategically juxtaposes narrative fragments and shards, combines multiple media and genres, and formally unsettles a central settler discourse that perpetuates California Indian erasure: the fourth-grade public school mission project curriculum. Miranda focuses the power of making mosaics on the “institutional fantasy” of Mission Mythology so strongly supported in public education, and imagines a new Indigenous-centered figuration of California’s history as well as the present and future. Miranda’s creative temporalizing of the four major sections of her book dislocate chronological anchors used commonly in settler historical narratives and reframe California history through her family’s stories. *Bad Indians* is comprised of four sections that move chronologically from 18th century Spanish contact to the present and cover four broad periods of California Indian history. Although the framing sections move chronologically, the internal structure of each section unsettles linear understandings of time, what non-Native literary scholar Mark Rifkin calls

“settler time.”¹⁴ Both Miranda’s broader temporal frames and their internal narratives exemplify Miranda’s method of actively but not easily engaging her readers in re-creating a Native California world. And this is hard work, both in the sense of the difficulty in identifying how seemingly unmatched narrative fragments fit together and also in asking readers to enter into such violent and unfamiliar histories in order to re-create them with her. Miranda engages her readers in active participation in making sense out of the fragments by refusing to resolve the jagged transitions between stories and media. Like the process of making a mosaic, she believes that piecing the fragments together will—and should—make your hands bleed (135).

While each chapter of this dissertation centers the reading practices that derive from its primary texts, I apply mosaic-making as a formal and aesthetic practice and reading methodology throughout the project. I engage in the strategic juxtaposition of multiple, diverse creative works by California Indian artists and I examine how they fit together, navigating their sharp edges, working with the texts to learn how they connect and where they diverge. What emerges is a complex expression of California Indian individual, tribal, and trans-Indigenous identity and power.¹⁵

Relational Aesthetics

Making mosaics, or thinking with the strategic juxtaposition of multiple Indigenous works, relies on relational aesthetics. The title of this dissertation centers the work of Indigenous aesthetic innovation in the work of dreaming. My primary reason for centering aesthetics is to highlight and amplify the diverse range of expressive forms that California Indian writers and artists use in provocative ways to affirm survivance and express identity. Relational aesthetics rely on a process of collaborative meaning making between the art object and the viewer/reader. In 2015,

artist and scholar Landi Raubenheimer published an essay about the problem of the object in relational aesthetics.¹⁶ Raubenheimer argues that relational aesthetics unsettles Kantian aesthetics—that is, the study of aesthetics that centers “the spectator as unified subject, who is able to assert intellectual mastery over all he encounters visually” and who “asserts himself” as he “exercise[s] power over what he regards” (347). Relational aesthetics unsettles the privilege and subjectivity of the viewer/reader/spectator by creating a relationship or event between the viewer and the art work. Raubenheimer writes: “Ostensibly the contemporary art practice of relational art aims to allow the spectator greater participation in the process of art production, and subverts the authorial autonomy of the artist as creator of precious objects and meaning” (343). In this relational context, the role of the artist shifts: “Instead of manufacturing masterpieces, the artist sets up events and situations which allow for the relationship between people in the interaction to become artworks” (343). Importantly, “in the context of relational art, artists set up social situations that result in interactions between people who would not normally interact” (348). Raubenheimer argues that the role of art is to cultivate relationships, likely and unlikely, but warns against interpretations of relationality that remove the role of both artist and materiality from the relational context.

Relational aesthetics deconstruct the subject/object relationship between art and spectator, and emphasizes possibilities for making relationships that evolve, shift, and alter depending on the relational context of artist, art object, and audience. This aesthetic practice is and always has been encoded in Indigenous narrative and artistic forms. Heather Ahtone explains that Indigenous art objects “express individual artist and Native viewer identity within a complex sociocultural community,” “serve as didactic materials and mnemonic references to traditional cultural cosmology and values,” and transmit important cultural knowledge across generations

(1). Art and design historian Steven Leuthold writes, “As a means of expressing identities, the aesthetic emerges as an important aspect of self-representation to the larger non-native public” and argues that “an awareness of and willingness to participate in indigenous aesthetic expression increasingly signify belonging and accountability *within* native communities” (1). Leuthold states that aesthetic styles importantly represent Indigenous identity and belonging to various publics and that Native writers and artists who engage in these aesthetic systems do so as an expression of belonging and responsibility to those communities.

When literary scholar Susan Bernardin writes that “relational aesthetics” are both method and value system in Indigenous art, she builds on the scholarship of scholars such as Leuthold and Ahtone and affirms that there is ethical and political significance in how one engages with Indigenous aesthetics.¹⁷ Literary art and reading practices require their own methods for constructing this kind of relationality, which require the reader to enter into an active relationship with the author and the text to co-create meaning.

Relational aesthetics in California Native literatures and arts derive in part out of tribal systems of knowledge production and expressive cultures, but also partly out of the necessity of asserting survival in any way possible. Each of the writers and storytellers I discuss in this dissertation employs an aesthetics of fragmentation and broken shards—of histories, family stories, and material culture. To create something whole requires putting the pieces together and that requires the imaginative collaboration between writer, reader, and text. Miranda’s formal theory of the mosaic offers a productive frame through which to understand California Indian aesthetic innovation. Of California Indian communities and histories she writes:

Maybe, like a basket that has huge holes where pieces were ripped out and is crumbling to dust and can’t be reclaimed, my tribe must reinvent ourselves—rather than try to copy

what isn't there in the first place. We must think of ourselves as a mosaic, human beings constructed of multiple sources of beauty, pieces that alone are merely incomplete but which, when set into a new design together, complement the shards around us, bring wholeness to the world and ourselves.

We think we are too broken to ever be whole again. But it's not true. We can be whole—just differently. (Miranda 136)

Miranda's provocative imagery of making mosaics and piecing together new designs relies on relationality and a system of representing an identity that is grounded in a contemporary, dynamic, and relational sense of self and place.

Defining "California Indian"

In this dissertation I prioritize using tribally-specific names when possible, but often rely on the collective term "California Indians" to describe the many tribal nations whose stories connect them to the geographies situated within the current geopolitical contours of "California." Indeed, I see one of the primary interventions of this dissertation as identifying how California Indian writers and artists strategically pivot between personal, tribal, and inter-tribal forms of storytelling to simultaneously affirm the ongoing survivance of *all* California Indians even as each works to recover, reclaim, and dream up new tribally-specific narratives.¹⁸ The collective term combines the geographical specificity of place with the settler conception of the "Indian," a settler-constructed identity category used to contain and dominate the vast and diverse population of Indigenous peoples across the US. As Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor describes it, "the *indian* is an occidental misnomer, an overseas enactment that has no referent to

real native cultures or communities” (Vizenor, *MM* vii). Yet its usage even within tribal communities remains unquestioned.

The “Indians of California” was first used as a legal construction during the 1928 land claims cases, in which the California Indian Brotherhood sued the federal government “for failing to compensate them for lands taken in 1850 and 1851” and was initially seen by many California Indian peoples as a term that reduces the rich diversity of tribal nations to a singular entity (Bauer, *Native Eyes* 7). The claim to pay reparations for lost lands defined “Indians of California” as “all Indians who were residing in the State of California on June 1, 1852, and their descendants living on May 18, 1928” (Bauer, *Native Eyes* 25). Bauer explains:

In a sense, then, Settlers believed that Concoos were the same as Yukis, Wailakis, Pomos, and Paiutes. The sovereign political communities that signed the treaties in 1851 did not bring individual claims against the United States. In order to discern who was an ‘Indian of California’ and subject to the claim, the Department of Interior ordered a census. By creating a racialized and homogenized identity of ‘Indians of California,’ the claims case was one of many assimilation policies that began with the allotment of the 1880s and culminated with the termination policies of the 1950s. The federal government, and some state governments, attempted to destroy the corporate, tribal identity of Native People and create an individual identity. (25)

Cahuilla historian and activist Rupert Costo, who established the Indian Historical Society and the publication *Indian Historian* in 1964, was an early critic of the government’s reduction of California Indian tribal specificity: “[The term] ‘Indians of California,’ in the lawsuit, ignor[es] the tribal nature of the people, the tribal rights of the Indians and the culture and governance of the natives” (Costo, qtd. in Bauer, 25). As with Vizenor’s critique of the settler term, “Indian,”

California tribal members such as Bauer and Costo remained critical of the way the federal government used the term as an assimilation tactic to intentionally avoid engaging with the many individual sovereign nations it had failed to acknowledge in the nineteenth-century. In the mouth of the government, “California Indian” was “an overseas enactment that has no referent to real native cultures or communities” (Vizenor, *MM* vii).

On the other hand, California tribal peoples reclaimed the term and employed it to construct strategic intertribal alliances and coalitions for the sake of asserting a political, legal, and cultural presence in California, particularly through the twentieth century and into the present day. As chapter three of this dissertation will analyze, early publications such as the Federated Indians of California’s newsletter, *Smoke Signal*, employed the collective term “California Indian” to create an inter-tribal sense of presence and identity. Indeed, the *Smoke Signal*’s masthead proudly pronounced that this inter-tribal urban Indian publication was “The voice of the California Indian.” Bauer, despite his criticisms of how the term fails California tribal communities in the mouths of the government, nonetheless employs the collective term when arguing that it is the creation stories of tribal nations across what is now known as California that “established the foundations of identity and tribal sovereignty, situating law and leadership at the moment of creation” (*Native Eyes* 25).

In the introduction to *The Sound of Rattles and Clappers: A Collection of New California Indian Writing*, the first anthology of California Indian literatures, published in 1994, editor Greg Sarris (Pomo) defines the rubric of “California Indian” as “American Indians of California Indian ancestry” or “the original people of the place” (xiii). In centering the voices of the original peoples of the place, Sarris creates an anthology that reflects what Bauer calls “the foundations of identity and tribal sovereignty” (*Native Eyes* 25). Sarris’s central project in the first of what

are now three anthologies of California Indian writing is to affirm the many, diverse voices from across Native California that continue to sing out: “From this place called California, then, you have the voices of many California Indians. They are singing, telling stories, their voices echoing on the pages so you will know. Listen. This place, these rolling, oak-dotted hills, redwood forests, deserts and ocean shores are sounding” (xiii).

Twenty-eight years later, in their introduction to the third and most recent anthology of California Indian writing, *Red Indian Road West: Native American Poetry from California* (2016), editors Kurt Schweninger and Lucille Lang Day expand the rubric of “California Indian” to include “the entire range of Native American experience in California” (9): “With more than 720,000 Native Americans, California has by far the largest Native American population of any state and perhaps the most diverse. There are currently more than one hundred American Indian tribes nationwide now residing in California” (9). They locate the population growth in the policies of termination and relocation and explain that the poets “give voice to culture and traditions that intertwine with contemporary life in California” (10). In *Red Indian Road West*’s introduction, Luiseño poet and performance artist James Luna affirms the specificity of a California Indian identity while extending the identity to include Relocated Indians from across Turtle Island. Luna affirms that “We Natives are from a very special place called California in our bit of Turtle Island as there is no other Native place that has the variety of geography and abundance of foods to find, and thus the diversity of tribes who are part of our landscapes” (11). He continues, “We are a place now of many peoples, many tribes and visitors. We can’t ignore the new surroundings that have come with the tsunami of people, but this does not mean that our cultures cannot survive, and in fact many tribes are growing and finding ways to walk the two worlds. That is in part the energy that writers have brought forward” (12). This third anthology

recognizes the complex social and political landscape of Indigenous California and includes the many American Indians who relocated to California at different points through the twentieth century and now make up a large part of the social fabric of Indigenous life there. Chapter four will go into detail about the effects of Relocation, in particular, on California Indian communities advocating for political and legal sovereignty.

Deborah Miranda affirms that the shared experiences of missionization and genocide provide a foundation of experience that builds a collective identity for survivors. In her 2013 book, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, Miranda argues that the act of expressing ongoing survivance against the pernicious and pervasive myth that all California Indians have disappeared requires the efforts of the collective: “I say ‘we’ because my efforts here are part of a much wider circle of California Indian peoples and allies talking back to mythology, protesting, making waves” (xx). Chapter three will more extensively interrogate the relationship between California Indian individuals, tribes, inter-tribal communities, and their allies in the work of asserting survivance and sovereignty.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1, “Ishi Reframed: Storytelling as Social Act and Survivance” takes the story of Ishi—the famed and overly-mythologized “last wild Indian of North America” who survived a horrific state-sanctioned genocide leveraged against California tribal nations in the nineteenth century—and the stories Ishi told as an unlikely point of departure for beginning a study of California storytelling aesthetics.¹⁹ I confront the quintessential trope of the vanishing Indian that has been used to signal the inevitable disappearance of all California Indians and reframe Ishi as a living storyteller. Ishi methodically constructed relational contexts out of his storytelling events that not

only ensured the survival of his stories but also affirmed a Yahi ethic of being. In this chapter I reframe Ishi, signaling that, although he never penned a physical text, Ishi asserted the central role of relationships and the co-creation of meaning between storyteller and audience through his deliberate and careful narrative tactics. Ishi affirmed collaborative, or relational, aesthetic styles to ensure that Yahi stories survive, and he imagined future audiences for both those stories and himself.

Chapter 2, “‘California Moves My Pen’: Wendy Rose’s Poetry Beats Back Extinction” turns to the poetry of Hopi and Miwok writer Wendy Rose, with a focus on her relationship to her Miwok identity. The chapter navigates her personal journey toward understanding her complicated relationship to both tribal communities. Rose’s poetry is a powerful testimony to the enduring and resilient existence of one California Indian woman living in a place and time where she was, for *all* intents and purposes, never meant to survive. Rose relentlessly grasped at belonging and survival through any aesthetic means possible in a cultural and political context that would have her eliminated. And in her relentless grasping she became a remarkable poet, one whose poetry expresses Indigenous futurisms long before Grace Dillon coins the term, and one that was making incisive critiques of the entanglement of settler colonialism and environmental injustice alongside (perhaps even slightly ahead of) the burgeoning discourse of US environmentalism. This chapter argues that Rose’s poetry captures the interior geography of survival for a twentieth-century detribalized California Indian woman in a way that invites readers to imagine a more complex and non-“traditional” vision of California Indian identity.

Chapter 3, “A Much Wider Circle: Editorial Juxtaposition, Polyvocality, and Abundance in Trans-Indigenous California Indian Writing” situates Deborah Miranda’s 2013 *Bad Indians* within a longer tradition of editorial juxtaposition in California Indian periodicals, such as the

1947 newsletter for the Federated Indians of California, *Smoke Signal*; the American Indian Historical Society's periodical, *Indian Historian*, which began in 1964; and the popular quarterly journal, *News from Native California*, which began in 1987; as well as in the three California Indian anthologies, *Sound of Rattles and Clappers* (1994), *The Dirt is Red Here* (1999), and *Red Indian Road West* (2016). I argue that the editorial juxtapositions of voices, genres, and media in the periodicals and anthologies are particularly effective against the pernicious belief that all California Indians are gone, and that it takes the collaborative, polyvocal and communal chorus of voices to resonate loudly enough to intervene against that message. Miranda's provocative "memoir" follows the tradition of editorial juxtaposition in order to reconstruct a tribally-specific origin story. Further, her formal method and use of relational aesthetics tells a story not of scarcity but abundance. To support my argument, I include L. Frank's semi-regular column "Second Serving" and demonstrate further how formal innovation affirms cultural survivance and revitalization.

Chapter 4, "Grunion Running: Re-Locating California in *House Made of Dawn*" strategically juxtaposes a trans-Indigenous reading of multiple California Indian tribal stories about coastal places with Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday's canonical 1968 novel, *House Made of Dawn*. Doing so expands on scholarship about the multiple Indigenous aesthetic systems at work in the novel to include California Native narratives, which scholars have yet to contend with in a robust manner. I argue that the presence of the grunion in the novel invites readers to consider that while Abel may have cycled *out of* Pueblo structures of belonging, there is opportunity to see how he might be integrated *into* California Indian stories and beliefs. In activating a range of California Indian stories that establish intimate relationships with coastal landscapes, I simultaneously affirm ongoing California Indian presence rather than erasure and

argue that California Indian narratives are capacious and dynamic enough to integrate Relocated individuals such as Abel into new structures of belonging.

I conclude this dissertation with a reflection on the explosive growth in the field of California Indian studies, which, I argue, was catalyzed by the publication of *Bad Indians* in 2013. This concluding reflection centers the 2021 Netflix show *City of Ghosts* and the episode featuring Tovaangar to illustrate the energetic and dynamic new body of creative works that have burgeoned in the last eight years across Native California.

Chapter 1

Ishi Reframed: Storytelling as Social Act and Survivance

Deciphering a *human document*, with the key to most of the hieroglyphics lost, is the baffling but absorbingly delightful task which Dr. A. L. Kroeber and T. T. Waterman of the University of California have set for themselves. *The document is the Deer Creek Indian* captured recently near Oroville, who should by every rule and reckoning be the loneliest man on earth.

Mary Ashe Miller, *San Francisco Call* 6 Sept. 1911 (emphasis added)

He ventures to speak because he must; language is the repository of his whole knowledge and experience, and it represents the only chance he has for survival.

N. Scott Momaday, "The Man Made of Words"

Ishi, who never penned a text, is an unlikely subject of and point of departure for a project dedicated to twentieth century California Indian literary production. The last known living member of the Yahi tribal nation at the time of his emergence into California's settler society in 1911, Ishi survived a horrific period of state-sanctioned genocidal violence against California's Native peoples. His tribe, which actively resisted settler occupations of their lands, was the target of multiple, violent vigilante raids between the 1840s and 1870s, including the Three Knolls Massacre in which he and his mother escape but many from their family do not.²⁰ Ishi was born into genocide, and witnessed the near total murder of his family and community. He remained in hiding for over 40 years until, in 1911, he walked into the small foothill settlement of Oroville, California. Perhaps unexpectedly, Ishi was not killed by settlers upon his emergence, but rather

was taken to San Francisco by anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and T. T. Waterman, where he lived the remainder of his life under the constant gaze of Western popular and scientific communities at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. Ishi lived at the Museum, returning to his tribal homelands only once to lead an expedition of scientists, until his death from tuberculosis in 1916.

Why does this man—whose name is not a name but simply the word for “man” in his tribal language—belong in the purview of literary studies? He never learned more than a few words of English, never wrote a book, and never received a formal (Western) education. Ishi, who was around the age of fifty when he arrived in San Francisco, spent his time at the Museum demonstrating traditional Yahi material crafts, such as making bows and arrows, and recording Yahi songs and stories onto wax cylinders. He was paraded around to vaudeville and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West shows, living life as a spectacle; he did not write autobiographies or engage with the American Indian intellectual community of the era.²¹ Whereas Ishi’s more well-known contemporaries, such as Dakota doctor and writer Charles Eastman and Yankton Sioux writer and activist Zitkála-Šá (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), were educated in boarding schools and learned to master and manipulate not only the English language but the genre conventions of literary writing and more obviously belong in the realm of literary studies, Ishi’s fit in literary studies remains much less obvious.

Moreover, why is it appropriate to situate a study of Ishi at the beginning of a broader study on California Indian literatures and arts? In what ways does his story stand in relationship to, and frame, contemporary twentieth and twenty-first century California Indian writers, artists, and storytellers? It is popularly rumored that Ishi was the last surviving member of his tribal nation; his story remains more foundational to settler narratives of the “vanishing Indian”—the

notion that the continent's First Peoples would inevitably give way to the march of settler progress under the banner of Manifest Destiny, encoded in literary texts such as James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans* and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "The Song of Hiawatha"—than to narratives of California Indian survival and resilience. What, then, does the "last of his tribe" offer to living, twenty-first century California Indian communities and storytellers and, more broadly, to the discipline of American Indian literary studies?

The answer is two-fold. First, settler discourses about Ishi's lastness transformed Ishi from a living person into a myth, even during his lifetime. Ishi arrived on the scene of San Francisco at the turn of the twentieth century as a complex, untranslated and untranslatable figure whose performances, participations, and refusals within settler modernity raised provocative questions about California Indian survivance. By framing him as an untranslatable "human document," as reporter Mary Ashe Miller wrote in the *San Francisco Call*, quoted in the epigraph above, without the correct tools or "hieroglyphics" to interpret him, non-Natives such as Miller, Alfred Kroeber, T.T. Waterman, Edward Sapir, Theodora Kroeber, and others constructed a palimpsest *on* Ishi's body, saddling him with their own stories that affirmed a worldview of inevitable Indigenous disappearance. This transformation is a provocative transference of identity and embodiment: the stories erased the person and replaced him with a myth.²² Native writers and artists are not absolved of this impulse to mythologize him either: many similarly layered creative interpretations of Ishi into the broader discourses around him as well. The result is that few "documents" are as overburdened with mythmaking as the person of Ishi. Over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries Ishi has been framed as: a specimen and a spectacle, a harbinger of extinction, a literary foil, a "postindian warrior of survivance," an angry and sexually frustrated man, a defiant Geronimo as well as an obsequious

Uncle Tom, the first-ever “street Indian,” an endangered species, and a prelude—to name only a few.²³ Burdened with such a complex, contradictory litany of personas, Ishi remains a prolific and productive “document” for (re)reading.

Second, Ishi was a storyteller, producing his own narratives that testify to survival and resilience and constructing his own social contexts for storytelling and relationality in the process. In the midst of his negotiations with his new physical and social contexts, having survived a violent genocide, Ishi recorded five hours and forty-one minutes of stories and songs that were encoded onto wax cylinders and preserved for future communities. He never translated himself, and he never slowed down his storytelling practice so that his words could be transcribed. Rather, he inserted Yahi forms of relationship and oral storytelling into the Western process of wax cylinder recording. The result is both an existing archive of Yahi stories, songs, and knowledge that functions *like* an autobiography,²⁴ and a documentation of Yahi social relationships centered on narrative practices. A Momaday-an “man made of words,” Ishi used language and the art of storytelling, and incorporated Western recording technologies, to create a “repository” for his experience and as a method to ensure personal as well as cultural survivance. But more than this, Ishi used language and story to pull his culture in around him and speak his world into being. As acclaimed Laguna writer Leslie Marmon Silko suggests, the power of the spoken word births reality; speaking the evils of colonialism can conjure them into being.²⁵ In the crushing reality of colonialism, Ishi speaks back, conjuring a Yahi world in response.

In this chapter I take two approaches to Ishi’s wax cylinder archive: I examine Ishi’s storytelling social contexts as a form of refusal and agency, and I examine the archive itself as an autobiographical narrative and apply Native literary analysis methods to it. Scholars know very little about Ishi’s cultural protocol around storytelling, the significance of the stories he selected

to record, or why Ishi chose to record his stories at all. And, given the cultural and political context of California at the beginning of the twentieth century, in the catastrophic aftermath of a violent era of Indian genocide, so much cultural knowledge was destroyed along with the communities who held it. This also means that theorizing the fragmented and untranslatable stories that remain is a challenge for scholars and community members alike. Methodologically then, my approach to Ishi's archive, beyond thinking with the productive framing of "autobiography," which I will discuss in detail momentarily, is to interrogate the ruptures, silences, and gaps between what can be known and what remains unknowable about Ishi, his life, and his stories. These ruptures manifest in a few different ways—there is the very real fact that Ishi's recordings are entirely in Yahi and there are no contemporary Yahi speakers living to interpret them. His stories, then, are only partially translated by the limited work that the linguist Edward Sapir was able to do with them, as well as by the capabilities of the Yana informant, Sam Batwi, who was brought in to work with Ishi in 1911. Batwi's Yana was to Ishi's Yahi what Portuguese is to Spanish, so again, interpretation was limited. As a non-Yahi speaking scholar, I can only build my own analysis on the interpretive work of those who have engaged extensively with the primary source materials. Late-twentieth-century Berkeley linguists such as Leanne Hinton and Herbert Luthin took up Sapir's work and reconstructed some of Ishi's archive. Anthropologist Jean Perry and literary scholar Karl Kroeber (the son of Alfred Kroeber) have engaged in the most extensive interpretive work on the transcribed texts themselves. Anthropologist Ira Jacknis's work with the physical wax cylinder recordings offers perhaps the most provocative opportunity to think about the relationship between orality and textuality and how audio recordings of spoken word performances bridge those gaps.

And yet, like me, these are all non-California Indian scholars working with the limited translations of Ishi's archive, and so beyond the limited possibilities of knowing exactly what Ishi was saying and singing, the question of what they—and I—*should* know about Ishi begs asking. Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson's important work with anthropological refusal offers one helpful framework for thinking about and with Ishi's archive. Simpson argues that when Indigenous peoples speak for themselves it is an expression of sovereignty that refuses "anthropological portraits of timelessness, procedure, and function that dominate representations of their past and, sometimes, their present" (Simpson 97). The speaking Native person enacts "certain possibilities for the people they purport to represent," and redefines the relationship between themselves as the speaker and "those who read and engage with these representations as students, as the curious, as subjects, as those who might or might not govern" (Simpson 104). That is, when Ishi spoke, the act of speaking simultaneously unsettled the "discursive containment" used by settler audiences and redefined the relationship between himself and his multiple audiences (105).

Simpson invites scholars to consider how *our* analytical goals and aspirations might be transformed when our scholarship centers "the goals and aspirations of those we talk to" (Simpson 98). While a central argument in this chapter is that we cannot ever fully know in any kind of positivist manner what Ishi's goals and aspirations might have been in documenting his stories and songs, it remains productive to sit at the boundary of knowing and unknowing. In this regard Maidu scholar Mark Minch-de Leon models a helpful methodological approach to confront the complex entanglement of knowing and not knowing California Indian knowledges. As Minch-de Leon argues, scholarly pursuits of California Indian knowledges suffer from unproductive framings between "antirealist critique and realist assertions of positive knowledge"

(57). That is to say, he is critical of scholars who claim any kind of positivist knowledge about California Indian knowledge systems, as well as the forms of critique used by scholars to access this knowledge. His scholarship on Maidu artist Frank Day's paintings makes the argument that in order to know anything about Day's work one must approach it on its own terms—without engaging Western practices of assertion and critique—by listening to Day. In listening, one must then carefully consider both the information Day conveys through the mediated form of visual art *and* “the difficulties and interruptions he confronts” as a result of the ongoing catastrophe of genocide and its after-effects (59). One of Minch-de Leon's central concerns seems to be that scholars take for granted the accessibility of California Indian knowledges using forms of critique or analysis that do not derive out of the artist/storyteller's grounded experiences and knowledges. While this is hardly a new critique in the field of American Indian and Indigenous literary studies, his approach to Day's visual and oral archives is innovative in two regards: it explicitly accounts for the specificity of California's genocidal history and the ruptures, gaps, and silences that resulted because of it; and it centers Day's propensity for lying. Minch-de Leon focuses on the ways in which Day's paintings and oral recordings “transmit information and create the conditions for revitalization” against a recent backdrop of physical genocide and the end of Maidu life as it was previously known (59). But he draws Day's legacy of lying, or strategic miscommunication, to emphasize that California Indian knowledges are not nor should be easily accessible to non-Native scholars. The concept of lying as “a legitimate way to confront radically incommensurate forms of power, such as the forces that destroyed Day's world” raises provocative questions about truth and Ishi's recordings (58). What was the nature of Ishi's stories? Given that we can only have limited knowledge of the stories in English translation today, what are the stakes of the stories being “true” or lies?

Minch de-Leon's scholarship on locating Frank Day's paintings—and California Indian creative works more broadly—connects to Pomo literary scholar Greg Sarris's important work on literary interpretation in his 1994 critical work, *Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts*. Sarris's primary claim is that good California-based scholarship centers “a myriad of voices and narrative forms to show how criticism can move closer to that which it studies” (6–7). Sarris works extensively with the Pomo basket maker Mabel McKay and theorizes from his relationship with her. McKay was a well-respected storyteller, dancer, medicine woman, and basket weaver, and like Day her life bridged the post-apocalyptic twentieth-century to an older time and body of stories and traditions. Sarris writes: “What Mabel provokes and what I explore in my essays is a specific kind of dialogue, or conversation, that can open the intermingling of the multiple voices within and between people and the texts they encounter, enabling people to see and hear the ways various voices intersect and overlap, the ways they have been repressed or held down because of certain social and political circumstances, and the ways they can be talked about and explored” (Sarris, *Slug Woman* 5). While this method of engaging in a specific kind of dialogue in which multiple voices mingle, intersect, and overlap will become salient in the third chapter of this dissertation, I include it here because Sarris's statement underscores the importance of dialogue and conversation—that is, listening and responding in a dynamic and relational context—to theorizing California Indian stories. McKay states plainly, in fact, “when you hear and tell my stories there is more to me and you that *is* the story. You don't know everything about me and I don't know everything about you. Our knowing is limited. Let our words show us as much so we can learn together about one another. Let us tell stories that help us in this. Let us keep learning” (Sarris, *Slug Woman* 46). McKay's words encode a relational methodological approach to the

study of California Indian narratives: to approach them with the understanding that “knowing is limited,” that creating meaning depends on storyteller, listener, and the relational engagement between the two, and that the stories contain knowledges that “help us in this.” Her belief that “one party’s story is no more the whole story than a cup of water is the river” situates the ability to positively *know* or possess knowledge within a dynamic and vital ever-moving body of knowledge (Sarris, *Slug Woman* 40). This transforms the ability to approach knowing to a deeply relational one that acknowledges that knowledge is only ever partial at any given time.

I emphasize these methodological approaches to “knowing” anything about Ishi’s story to underscore that there is so much we cannot know about Ishi’s story and life. Without a Yahi tribal community with ongoing relationships to the stories Ishi records, it will always be impossible to fully understand their significance and meaning. Following the work of literary scholars such as Chadwick Allen and Christopher Teuton, who have expanded analytical frameworks around Indigenous alphabetic writing to include not only oral traditions but also non-textual forms and media, I argue here and through the rest of this project that Ishi serves as a model for future California Indian writers and storytellers. Similar to Ishi, these writers and storytellers have adopted creative formal strategies for recuperating tribal knowledges from settler archives, and for adapting a diverse range of narrative technologies beyond the written word for encoding, transmitting, and circulating tribal stories, old and new. Ishi may not have been a gifted storyteller within the Yahi community, and we have no evidence to suggest that his stories are even particularly representative of the Yahi cultural values and traditions; nonetheless, Ishi transformed “extinction” into survival through storytelling, imagined an unknown future audience for himself, and innovated literary technologies and strategies along the way to ensure both.

As I situate Ishi within the context of literary studies, I recognize that I am potentially contributing to the often problematic but also surprisingly rich proliferation of possible interpretations around him and his life. And I recognize that some California Native peoples, such as Wailaki and Concow historian William Bauer, Jr., have become frustrated by what they characterize as the perpetual “hunt” for—or pursuit of—Ishi that began with vigilante murderers in the nineteenth century and has not stopped.²⁶ Bauer argues, “As with many aspects of American Indian history, people often look for those things that tell them something about themselves, not about indigenous people. People have searched for Ishi not necessarily to learn more about Ishi, but to inform their own understandings of the world” (Bauer, Jr., “Stop Hunting” 50). In many ways, Bauer is correct: Ishi’s mysteriously “untranslatable” story has ignited the imagination of several settler writers seeking to locate themselves in relation to the continent’s original peoples.²⁷ Yet, with due respect to the views of Bauer and other California Indian intellectuals, I argue that continued curiosity about Ishi remains salient in the twenty-first century, especially in a project that seeks to make sense of and articulate the development of contemporary California Indian literary aesthetic traditions. The fact remains that contemporary works by California Indian writers and artists such as Maidu painter Frank Day, Hopi and Miwok poet Wendy Rose, Deborah Miranda, Luiseño poet and performance artist James Luna, and others continue to activate Ishi’s stories and legacy. My interest is not in knowing anything new about the secret life of Ishi, but understanding *why* Ishi continues to activate the imaginaries of contemporary California Indian storytellers. Are these writers and artists perpetuating the kind of hunting Bauer would prefer to see ended, or in integrating him into their contemporary stories are they keeping his stories and songs alive, carrying forward the memory and culture of the

Yahi community, in a kind of responsibility to what Ishi left behind and a refusal to let the Yahí memory go “extinct”?

I do agree with Bauer that any attempt to understand Ishi’s interior life—his motives or his mental or emotional state when he agreed to record the wax cylinders—participates in the problematic mythmaking and ignores the possible refusals Ishi enacted. That kind of speculative work does not actively benefit living California Indian communities. I argue instead that in an American Indian literary studies context, it remains productive to investigate how Ishi and his stories circulate among and interact with multiple audiences. In addition to gaining a more nuanced understanding of the contexts in which Ishi encoded his own survival, Ishi remains influential in the imaginations of contemporary Native California writers and artists and thus merits continued study. Lastly, and most importantly, Ishi took the time and care to painstakingly record himself; as literary scholars, community members, or relatives, we hold a responsibility to listen.

Foundational Myths: Twentieth-Century Anthropology, Journalism, and Biography as Mythmaking

The overwhelming majority of secondary literature about Ishi focuses on what can be known about the facts of his life as well as about his interior condition. This obsessive interest orbits around a settler desire for knowing, as Bauer Jr. points out, something about themselves and their own world. To understand the literature, it helps to understand something of how we have come to “know” Ishi in the first place—that is, to situate the dominant representations of Ishi in the contexts in which they were produced and first circulated. Ishi’s story is a product of multiply-constructed and interlocking discourses, popular at the turn of the twentieth century, that

emerged from three primary sources: the ethnographic works of the scientists who worked most closely with him during his life, Alfred Kroeber, T.T. Waterman, and Edward Sapir; the *San Francisco Call*, whose daily reportage on Ishi's social life sensationalized him as a spectacle and caricature; and, later, the 1961 publication of Theodora Kroeber's well-known biography, *Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America* (UC Press), which has since become the "principle source of knowledge about Ishi."²⁸ (Theodora Kroeber is the second wife of Alfred Kroeber. Although she never met Ishi, she drew from her husband's extensive body of scholarship and stories about him and became his principle biographer.) I will return to the role of the ethnographic work on Ishi in a later part of this chapter; this section focuses on the newspaper reporting and the biography. Each of these sources relies on discourses about American Indians born out of an era of salvage ethnography, literary sentimentalism, yellow journalism, and imperialist nostalgia, cementing Ishi as a static trope of what White Earth Ojibwe historian Jean O'Brien calls the "lasting" of Indigenous peoples.²⁹ Ishi entered the popular and scientific imagination as the "last of his kind," "the last wild Indian," and "the last man of the stone age."³⁰ O'Brien argues that stories of last-ness, such as Ishi's (although she does not write specifically about Ishi), were important at local levels and that the local stories of Indian lastness collectively undergirded the national narrative of Manifest Destiny and settler belonging. These very local settler narratives, such as the ones about Ishi, justify settler presence and affirm Indigenous disappearance, and are "leashed to a larger national narrative of the 'vanishing Indian' as a generalized trope" (xiii). Following O'Brien's argument, we can say that, first within California and then more nationally, Ishi was symbolic of the inevitable end of all California Indians. The ways in which he became locked in settler mythologies occurred through "the form of the written word [and] also in a rich ceremonial cycle of pageants,

commemorations, monument building, and lecture hall performing” (xiii). O’Brien articulates the ways in which a person such as Ishi becomes transformed into a monumental figure, inscribed and re-inscribed in creative, performative, and academic discourses alike.³¹

As Hupa scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy writes, “Many of those doing work in salvage ethnography were not only participating in a scholarly pursuit but also responding to the interests of their benefactors and the curiosity of the public.”³² (76). Alfred Kroeber, a student of Franz Boas, considered the father of salvage ethnography, certainly blurred the distinction between specimen and spectacle when it came to Ishi. Ishi’s San Francisco life was closely documented as a spectacle at the same time that Kroeber documented and recorded his songs and stories. That this documentation did not lead to a connection between Ishi and the vibrant contemporary American Indian intellectual community of the era affirms that settler culture at the turn of the twentieth century perceived Native peoples living “traditional” lives as objects of curiosity and relics of a past way of life that could not reconcile with modernity. Indeed, Ishi made a splash across scientific as well as popular cultures, and was heralded as “an international celebrity.” During the course of his life in San Francisco, the daily events and drama of Ishi’s life were documented in real time, akin to contemporary celebrity gossip, in the *San Francisco Call*, from the first reporting of his “discovery” until the paper transferred ownership in 1913. Reporter Mary Ashe Miller published the often-quoted article about Ishi’s discovery and arrival in San Francisco on September 6, 1911: “The man is as aboriginal in his mode of life as though he inhabited the heart of an African jungle, all of his methods are those of primitive peoples. ... Probably no more interesting individual could be found today than this nameless Indian.” The juxtaposition between Ishi’s aboriginality and the African jungle suggests a kinship in the tactics of racialization designed by settlers to dehumanize both Black and Indigenous bodies. But Ishi

remained alive, and his existence in the modern world forced settlers to confront his incommensurability with Natives in the settler imagination. If not a savage, Ishi would remain a spectacle.

Many writers, named and anonymous, contributed sensational articles, multimedia dramas, and daily updates on Ishi for the *San Francisco Call*. These articles relied on dominant assumptions about Ishi's lack of familiarity with settler modernity to make provocative pronouncements, such as "Ishi Hosts Girls!" and "Ishi rides an elevator!"³³ Such pronouncements transformed the everyday realities of settler modernity (women and technology) into sensational experiences. Indeed, settler writers, almost entirely male, have a long record of being fascinated with Ishi's sexuality. In January 1912, an anonymous "campus poet" ran a poem about a rumor of romance between Ishi and a woman in the local neighborhood, accompanied by a cartoon triptych sketch of Ishi falling in love with a woman with exaggerated large breasts. The reported rumor, the poem, and the cartoon sketch are equal parts absurd and offensive and derive their sensationalist effect from Ishi's implied savagery. The report intimates at Ishi's lonely life as a bachelor in the wilderness; the poem is a lyric about Ishi's newly-found matrimonial bliss; and the cartoon, juxtaposed alongside report and poem, undercuts both with its visual representation first of a lonely Ishi, then an Ishi being shot by Cupid's arrow, and finally an Ishi seated at "Mrs. Ishi's table." Although Mrs. Ishi sets a cooked turkey on the table, in front of Ishi sit two plates filled with decapitated heads. Ishi's implied savagery, juxtaposed with his sexuality, constructs a wild scene of settler imagination around the life and body of a Native man. The sexy speculative nature of the "campus poet's" contribution to the newspaper resonates throughout the twentieth century with writers such as Canadian playwright Henry Beissel who also center speculations around Ishi's sexual history. The topic recurs even in California Indian

representations, as when Luiseño performance artist James Luna, in his performance of Ishi in *ISHI: THE PERFORMANCE ARCHIVES*, exclaims “I AM A MAN!” as an assertion of masculine virility in response to settler narratives that emasculate him or render him sexless, or render his sexuality a parody.

Other articles from the *Call* report on Ishi’s progress toward civilization with tongue in cheek, such as an article in the January 15, 1912 issue, whose unnamed author claims Ishi has achieved civilization since he “has developed the commercial instinct until he has torn down all the false idols of his people and established in their stead as a thing of worship the standard of currency.”³⁴ Here Ishi is drawn into a fundamental doctrine of Western civility: that is, capitalism as a signature of modernity. A front-page article published September 6, 1913, two years to the day from the first article published announcing Ishi’s “discovery,” announces that with a customary gift of a handmade arrow, Ishi has declared Secretary Lane of the US Department of the Interior the “big chief” of the Deer Creek Indians.³⁵ Ishi’s submission to the inevitable dominance of the US settler state is reinforced by the inclusion of a cartoon sketch of an “Indian”—in this case, a moccasin-clad, headdress-wearing dancing figure. The juxtaposition of the cartoon with the article amplifies the intent to render Ishi as a spectacle and caricature rather than a diplomat networking on behalf of a sovereign nation.

The look on Ishi’s face in the printed photograph, however, is one of ambivalence and deep skepticism, and an invitation to defy such a reductive interpretation of parodic events. Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor has worked extensively to disentangle Ishi’s legacy from settler discourses about him. As a visiting scholar at UC Berkeley in the 1980s and again in the 1990s, Vizenor uses the apparatus of the camera and its framing technology as a way into this work. His essay “Ishi Obscura” draws the reporting of the *Call* into juxtaposition with the

purposeful framing of Ishi in photographs as a way to show that popular discourse produces an image of Ishi that is distinct from the reality of Ishi. Vizenor's investment in disentangling Ishi's legacy from settler stories as well as technologies leads him to interrogate the manner in which Ishi was photographed in his essay, "Ishi Obscura," This essay's central premise asserts that photography, a colonial technology, "creates an instance that never existed in tribal stories" (129).

In addition to reporters, Alfred Kroeber himself occasionally contributed articles about Ishi to the *Call*. Such was the case on December 16, 1911, in one of the stranger printed news articles about Ishi. The headline of the article, splashed in bold, large text across the top of the page, reads "The Only Man in America Who Knows No Christmas—Ishi." Yet the article's content, written by Kroeber, features an exposé on Ishi's process for carving arrowheads and making fire drills, which occupies the entire page spread. This extensive essay details Ishi's material craft and has nothing to do with Christmas. The dissonance created through the juxtaposition between headline and the article's content is bridged by a sketch of Ishi in the foreground demonstrating his fire drill in a snowy wooded area as Santa Claus drives his reindeer-led sleigh through the trees in the background. There is potential to read this as an unwitting critique of Christianity as a settler imposition, as St. Nicholas intrudes on a scene of traditional Yahi culture. It is possible that the newspaper wrote the headline to accompany the cartoon, completely separate from Kroeber's article and that the scientific nature of Kroeber's piece lacked the sensational (and seasonal) rhetoric that drove sales. Absurd as this is, the final product exemplifies how scientific and popular discourses made strange bedfellows in the *Call*.

Alfred Kroeber's contributions to the newspaper also demonstrate one way in which he retained control over Ishi's narrative, an impulse that one could argue became a Kroeber legacy,

as Alfred Kroeber's second wife, Theodora Kroeber, wrote Ishi's biography (which I will discuss below) and their sons, Clifton and Karl Kroeber, continued wielding editorial control over Ishi's legacy in a 2003 edited collection of scholarship on him. But in his time, Kroeber was Ishi's primary researcher and ally, and as a salvage ethnographer he produced a particular narrative around Ishi's life. Beyond Ishi's life, Kroeber was deeply invested in the collection and preservation of California Indian cultures. As historian Brendan Lindsay argues, Ishi was the prized object of pursuit for anthropologists of Kroeber's generation: "For scholars such as the anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, recovering the past and preserving it for future generations was a mission made omnipresent by the appearance of Ishi" (Lindsay 352). Lindsay further argues that nothing exemplifies "the way a social scientist thought about culture in 1911" than Ishi's emergence into the settler world.

After Ishi's death in 1916, he faded from California's public imagination. Between 1916 and 1961 California Indians continued the struggle against narratives of extinction, which had become part of the fabric of California's origin mythology. Many tribes began advocating for recognition through federal and state legal processes. In the 1950s a series of land claim cases went to Indian Claims Commission, and Alfred Kroeber was called as an expert witness to testify on behalf of the tribes. This period marked a new era in California Indian self-representation in which Alfred Kroeber's role shifted from salvaging culture to affirming California Indian survivance. In this moment, his second wife, Theodora Kroeber, decided to write a biography of Ishi, resurrecting and recirculating her husband's most notable accomplishment at a moment when Indigenous self-determination resituated the significance of, and narrative around, Alfred Kroeber's work with Ishi. The fact that Theodora Kroeber recuperated the story of Ishi at the moment when California tribes began re-asserting their political sovereignty through activism

reveals that, consciously or not, she may have been driven by an underlying tension surrounding the retention and control of the narrative about Native California. Theodora Kroeber never met Ishi personally: Alfred and Theodora married in 1926 following the death of Alfred's first wife, ten years after Ishi's death. The way Theodora Kroeber's book mythologizes Ishi arguably erases, or ventriloquizes, Ishi to fit her husband's vision of him and of the role of anthropology in salvaging crucial information about California Indian communities.

Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America synthesizes anecdotes told by Alfred Kroeber and the other scientists who knew and worked with Ishi personally and published works about him, including references to the news articles mentioned above, to construct a story about a man whom she had never personally met. Theodora Kroeber's biography is a complicated text, entangled in often competing rhetorics of salvage ethnography, the burgeoning discourse around sovereignty and the social activist movements of California Indians, and a sentimental romanticism for a (not so) distant past in which Indians lived harmoniously with the land before their inevitable disappearance. As an example of the sentimentality with which she reconstructs Ishi's life, interior as well as public, one may look at her description of the day Ishi took the train from Oroville to San Francisco:

Fearful and preoccupied with the new reality, Ishi started down Main Street, a myth already beginning to weave itself around him. It was a personal myth, powerful enough to replace the old one of the Yahi people as plunderers, murderers, and savages. From the moment he was locked up, the new myth took over, wavering at first in its direction, playing with imagined dangers and excitements if the prisoner was to be freed. ... He was spoken of as the Wild Man of Oroville. The professor who came on the train from San

Francisco said he was a Stone Age Man, the last in America: the myth had found its permanent, romantic direction. (T. Kroeber 117–18)

Engaging the language of myth, Theodora Kroeber acknowledges that Ishi's emergence excited a number of possibilities for what role he might play in relation to settlers. Theodora Kroeber refuses the mythology of primitive savagism in favor of both the myth of the vanishing Indian and the white savior.

Theodora Kroeber's persistent portrayal of Ishi's interior state of mind limits her capacity to situate Ishi within the social and cultural contexts of the moment in which she wrote. Her sons, Karl Kroeber and Clifton Kroeber, who participated in what seems to have become a family cottage industry of maintaining Ishi's legacy during the early 2000s, write that the more Theodora became "absorbed in trying to recover something of the uniqueness of Ishi's personality as expressive of a cruelly destroyed culture," the more the book revealed the limitations of its focus (Kroeber and Kroeber xvi). In fact, Clifton and Karl Kroeber argue:

Theodora Kroeber's attention to Ishi as active participant, whether his particular experience involved revulsion, bafflement, curiosity, or quiet pleasure, doubtless led to her ignoring possibilities of discovering current insights into Ishi's culture that might have been gleaned in the 1950s from Northern California native peoples. ... there would have been more to be learned about Ishi from living Native Northern Californians than Theodora Kroeber realized. (*Ishi in Three Centuries* xvii)

The emphasis on Theodora Kroeber's exchange of Ishi's imagined interior life for grounded cultural knowledge situated in the communities and social contexts of the moment in which she was writing underscores where her commitments lay in writing Ishi's biography. While she undoubtedly endeavored to represent Ishi as a whole person, her representation is complicated by

an entangled mythology of Indigenous erasure. As Clifton and Karl Kroeber aptly point out, there were likely living California Indians who could supplement Ishi's myth with fact. Nonetheless, Theodora Kroeber's book became the most popular source of information about Ishi from its publication in 1961 until the present moment. *Ishi in Two Worlds* has been translated into over forty languages. Ishi is locked in a frame as a romantic vanishing Indian.

Ishi's legacy was again revived in the late 1990s, in an era of California Indian activism in response to the 1990 legislation the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Ishi's resurrection as an unlikely, tokenized figure of resistance inserted him into a discourse of California Indian political and legal sovereignty. This time the spectacle centered on Ishi's body, which had been cremated and laid to rest while his brain had been removed and sent to the Smithsonian, where it remained lost in storage until resurfacing in the 1990s. Members of the Redding Rancheria from northern California campaigned for the return of Ishi's remains to his homelands near Deer Creek, which were finally returned, and laid to rest, in 1999.

I want to pause for a moment here and acknowledge that many from the California Indian community would prefer that everyone leave Ishi in peace now that his remains have finally been reunited and laid to rest. Ishi lived a tumultuous life and certainly deserves peace. I struggle with the ethics of pursuing the arguments in this chapter, as doing so disturbs him once more, and once more draws him into the sphere of observation and analysis. In finishing the research for this chapter, I am still not sure that I, as an ally scholar who does not come from a California Indian tribal nation, should have done this work. My response to the valid challenges that have been levied at me has been: As a literary scholar, I am interested in the narrative and textual aspects of Ishi's legacy—things like, how did Ishi come to be constructed as a mythological figure that upholds the settler belief that all Indigenous peoples will inevitably disappear? And

what are the texts that create such an origin story; how has this myth circulated throughout the twentieth century? What do other writers and artists—settler as well as Indigenous—do with Ishi’s legacy? In short: California Indian writers and artists continue to invoke Ishi’s stories and legacy well into the twenty-first century, and my work seeks to better understand why. With *all* due respect to those who would like to see Ishi remain at rest, I see the work in the following sections as central to understanding not only how the mythology of California Indian extinction was built, but how California Native writers continue to invoke Ishi’s legacy as they dismantle it. This is not work that seeks to know, in any kind of positivist way, something new about the secret life of Ishi; rather, it is to understand the complex role of myth and story that has been built up around him, to loosen the interpretive limitations of this settler myth with the tools available to me as a literary scholar, and think about his wax cylinder archive as a form of sovereign self-expression. The stakes of this work, as I see it, are grounded in the ways in which this disruption unsettles the bedrock settler belief about California Indians as gone—the legacy of “extinction” is intimately tied to Ishi’s story and California Indian writers throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries continue to bump up against its painful edges, from Hopi and Miwok poet Wendy Rose to Koyangk'auwi poet Janice Gould to Luiseño poet and performance artist James Luna; dismantling this myth is a crucial step toward creating better California histories. Reframing Ishi as an innovative and adaptive intellectual figure of resistance and survivance situates him in a vibrant network of California Indian storytellers who not only make use of similar narrative practices but continue to imagine Ishi and therefore help keep his story and tribal memory alive.

In the following section I lay out a review of literatures produced by settler as well as American Indian writers that grasp onto Ishi and his legacy in some fashion. These texts grapple

with the lingering effects of Ishi's spectacular life in the settler imaginary as well as his ongoing resonances within American Indian communities more broadly, and prove, I believe, my point that Ishi remains integral to twentieth-century American Indian expressions of survivance. As I mention in the beginning of this chapter, Ishi is activated as a diverse range of tropes to uphold many different beliefs about American Indians more broadly. The following section also sets up the central argument of the chapter, which takes "reading" Ishi in a new direction. In the work that follows I center his own storytelling practices and argue that engaging with Ishi's recordings through the rubric of autobiography opens new, productive possibilities for thinking with the content as not only personal narrative but an assertion of tribal identity. More than this, though, I argue that contemporary California Indian writers such as Deborah Miranda integrate Ishi's story/stories into her own story and therefore continue to honor and remember and build California Indian worlds on a foundation of his legacy.

Ishi in Literatures Across the Twentieth Century

Across these examples it remains possible to see that either in response to the dominant narratives about Ishi's life or in an overt attempt to reframe Ishi's life, twentieth and twenty-first century writers and artists contend with the pervasive myth of lastness and extinction. As Bauer Jr. suggests, the effort to catch, or frame, Ishi remains alive in a diverse range of imaginations, and continues to reveal more about those imagining Ishi than Ishi himself. As discussed in the previous section, the newspaper accounts and biography about Ishi frame him as a spectacle, a caricature, an inevitably disappearing trope. The broad circulation of both publications and their wide readerships ensured that Ishi would remain locked in the settler imaginary as a spectacle and specimen rather than as a complex figure of survival and resistance on the other side of a

physical genocide. The effects of the tabloid sensationalism and sentimental romanticism, what Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor calls “stories of dominance,” frame Ishi in a narrative of extinction that, with few exceptions, continues to circulate through settler and Native narratives alike in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

A handful of Ishi-inspired creative works perpetuate these stories throughout the twentieth century as well, as a kind of echo, or ripple effect, that resonates across time and space. One example is Canadian playwright Henry Biessel, who in 1978 wrote a play titled *Under Coyote's Eye*. Set in the butcher's corral outside the slaughterhouse in Oroville, California, the play centers an exhausted and lonely Ishi. Ishi is joined by the characters Rattlesnake and Coyote, who assume the (Western) role of moral consciousness, good and evil. Each contends with Ishi over whether he should maintain a traditional way of living or assimilate into the modern world. Ishi wrestles with the consequences of abandoning his traditional Yahi life for the sake of survival. The play flashes back to the crucial moments that led to Ishi's arrival in the butcher's corral, such as the vigilante massacre in the cave which he and his mother escape when he was a child; the moment his mother dies; and the (imagined) moment he refuses to have sexual relations with his sister. The play ends with linguist T.T. Waterman's arrival at the jail, and the moment when Waterman identifies a Yana word (“siwimi”) that Ishi recognizes. In addition to framing Ishi in a dualistic tension between good and evil Western moral consciousness, Beissel centers individual responsibility rather than structural complicity and burdens his character Ishi with the task of Yahi-settler reconciliation, in which Ishi must forgive and absolve the town sheriff of the guilt of the genocide of Ishi's people.

The play was performed at the Bernard Horwich Jewish Community Center as well as at The Field Museum of Natural History, both in Chicago. The production at the Field in 1979 sets

this imagined Ishi and his imagined interior struggle within the walls of another museum of natural history and anthropology, re-framing an exploration of his story in a specimen-spectacle complex and affirming that Ishi's "rebirth" or survival is contingent on remaining visible within these structures. *Under Coyote's Eye* is a morality tale about the American Indian struggle to navigate modernity, and their inevitable assimilation or disappearance. Beissel, as a Canadian citizen, exemplifies the Western (male) fascination with Ishi as the last "wild" Indian and the specter of sexuality and morality, a fascination we witnessed in the *San Francisco Call* article about Ishi's love affair with "Mrs. Ishi." It is also an example of settler guilt and how one reckons with the violence that produced Ishi's story. Beissel positions Ishi on the precipice between two ways of life and moralizes his decisions to fit legibly in the settler world.

Like Beissel, anthropologist Orin Starn grapples with his own fascination with Ishi's life and legacy. Starn published a book titled *Ishi's Brain: In Search of America's Last "Wild Indian"* in 2004, which blends personal fascination with Ishi with social scientific attempts to reimagine his legacy. The book is a celebration of the return of Ishi's brain to Deer Creek in 1999 and re-narrates the mythology of Theodora Kroeber's 1961 book to update and include these late twentieth-century events. Starn admits in the book's prologue that "For all the perils of romanticization, I was still drawn to Ishi and his story. I hadn't ever lost my little boy's curiosity about the mysteries of the Yahi" (17). He proceeds by taking creative license with the core tenets of the mythology as a point of departure to enliven Ishi's story and to share something of his enthusiasm with his readers. Animating Ishi through sentimental narrative, however, as Theodora Kroeber does, is a form of the settler move to innocence, a term coined by Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang that describes tropes developed by settlers around the concept of decolonization that "problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity"

(“Decolonization is Not a Metaphor” 3). Starn’s sentimentalization of Ishi, even if in pursuit of the “truth” behind an anthropological mystery (what happened to Ishi’s brain), bypasses “guilt and complicity” and naturalizes the ongoing anthropological gaze toward Ishi.

However, Native writers and artists similarly express ongoing fascination with the spectacular lastness of Ishi’s life. Geary Hobson, a Cherokee-Quapaw and Chickasaw writer, invokes Ishi’s legacy as a foil for his character, Thomas Darko, in the novella *The Last of the Ofos* (2000). Thomas is a member of a small and dwindling southeastern tribe called the Ofos and remembers growing up hearing his father read news stories about Ishi—who did make the national news—to him and his family:

I remember Mama and Papa talking about some Indian man out in California that had jist died and who was sposed to be the last person of his tribe. How he had got famous for being that and how he had lived in one of them museums and all. Hearing Papa read about it out loud from the newspaper, that sounded near-about like the end of everything. I remember Papa got a faraway thoughtful look on his face and said, ‘Well, pretty soon all us Indians gonna be gone. This ain’t our world no more.’ It was hard for any of us to spute his word, so we all jist changed the subject. (Hobson 12)

Thomas returns to these memories as an adult, after the rest of the Ofo people have passed on. The newspaper article becomes a kind of prophetic foreshadowing of both the Ofo’s and Thomas’s fates. In a narrative that deftly substitutes Thomas for Ishi, Thomas ends up as a subject of interest to the anthropologist Dr. Payne, who proclaims Thomas “the last of the Ofos” (89). Hobson cements the comparison by describing Thomas as a “lonesome pine tree”—the first word Ishi and Waterman share in common is the Yana word for “yellow pine.” Calling Thomas an “entire nation,” Payne, like Kroeber, ultimately narrativizes the demise of the Ofos (110).

Cherokee literary scholar Daniel Heath Justice refuses the representation of “lastness” as an indicator of cultural absence, arguing instead for survival as “a profound and powerful presence” (53).³⁶ Indigenous peoples are, Justice argues, “creative and visionary,” and therefore endlessly imagine dynamic possibilities for the past, present, and future (53). I see similarities in Justice’s analysis of Thomas Darko and the figure of Ishi. In the same way that Darko is a “dignified bearer of a living legacy, a nation of one carrying the memory of all those who came before” (53), Ishi also carried the memories of his tribal nation. This provokes a discussion of Ishi’s wax cylinder recordings and consideration of how his untranslated stories embody and encode the legacy of the Yahi nation.

Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan also draws on Ishi’s legacy in a short essay titled “The Kill Hole,” published in her 1995 collection *Dwellings*.³⁷ Using a tribal pottery tradition of a now-extinct tribal group called the Mimbres from the New Mexico region, Hogan suggests that the “kill hole” pottery design is the result of the Mimbres themselves breaking a hole in the bottom of their pottery to release the spirit of the pot so that it might join the people in burial (110). Her argument is that Ishi’s death is a symbolic kill hole, that his demise swept an entire culture’s spirit away to the land of the dead: “[Ishi’s] story ... speaks of loss and of emptiness that will never again be filled, of whole cultures disappeared, of species made extinct, all of these losses falling as if through a hole, like a spirit leaving earth’s broken clay” (Hogan, “The Kill Hole” 111). Hogan then makes a provocative pivot to juxtapose Ishi’s lastness with that of endangered species such as buffalo and the California condor. Such comparisons exemplify the impulse to mythologize Ishi even in the contemporary moment to make sense of loss. Hogan continues, “[Ishi] was the last of a kind of human being. His absence left us wondering about these lives of ours that unfold in the center of a tragic technology. When we wake up in the

night, full of fear, we know the hole is all around us, pulling at even our dreams” (115). Hogan makes the juxtaposition between Ishi as the last of a tribal nation and the condor as the last of a species, a juxtaposition that provokes angst over what is lost and what is almost lost, a cautionary tale that the same structures of capitalism and colonialism that led to the extermination of Native peoples continues to foster a biopolitical devaluation of lives. That said, Hogan also co-opts Ishi’s legacy in this cautionary tale against species extinction and continues the politicization of Ishi’s life.

Vizenor, perhaps more than any other figure, has worked extensively to disentangle Ishi from the complex mythology of Indigenous erasure and liberate him as a storyteller. In his 2019 book *Native Provenance: The Betrayal of Cultural Creativity*, Vizenor summarizes and condenses decades of his own creative and academic work that critiques the discursive, rhetorical, and disciplinary frames of Western academia that reduce Indigenous peoples to tropes and simulations—that is, falsified and reductive versions of Indigenous peoples projected from the settler imaginary.³⁸ He writes: “The dominance of discovery, sway of social science narratives, power of archives, and authority of government documents created a simulated sense of the familiar, a final ethnographic vocabulary about natives” (16). The dominance of settler narratives and the power and authority imbued in settler archives and documents creates, as he suggests, a “final ethnographic vocabulary” that delimits and contains representations of Indigenous peoples to the content of settler-produced documents and archives. Vizenor’s liberatory project is grounded in “the necessary deconstruction of the familiar” and leverages irony as a deconstructive tool against the infrastructure of the academy. In the case of Ishi, Vizenor focuses his deconstructive energy on the “familiar” mythology that frames Ishi as specimen and spectacle.

As both a creative writer and an intellectual, Vizenor constructs irony from the strategic and purposeful blending of literary form and genre to promote wonder and speculation in the reader, to create doubt about familiar beliefs, and to make space for the unfamiliar. Vizenor's theoretical innovation within the realm of postmodern literary fiction pretends to write the story of Ishi as "reporting" or "biography" or "ethnography" but instead doubles down on how the public persona we know as "Ishi" is a literary creation. His postmodernist literary style draws attention to itself as a construction and fabrication, as a play with language and signification, rather than a transparent window into the "real." Vizenor's approach is akin to, although it precedes, Athabascan scholar Dian Million's affirmation that story is *theory*.³⁹ As literary scholar Kimberley Blaeser writes, Vizenor's fiction "force[s] a reconsideration of the processes and powers of historical reckoning and thus, essentially, liberate[s] the reader from preconceived notions and incite[s] an imaginative reevaluation of history" (Blaeser, *Genre* v. 25:4 352). Blaeser's distinction is important here: Vizenor does not attempt to "re-possess history nor replace one historical account with another" but rather to "incite the reader to an imaginative re-evaluation of both the accounts and the processes of history" (Blaeser 357). By "relieving the reader of the burden of historical truth," Vizenor "makes a place in historical telling for imagination" (Blaeser 362). Vizenor wields the tools of literary postmodernism and applies them to the legacy of Ishi to demonstrate the liberatory possibilities of such tools.

Vizenor manipulates literary conventions, scholarship, and storytelling to liberate Ishi from the petrified role of the vanishing Indian. Moving from the claim that Ishi's name is "one of the most discoverable names in the world,"⁴⁰ Vizenor wrote two essays and a play that center Ishi as a subject and postindian warrior of survivance—that is, Vizenor argues that the "*indian* is the absence of real natives" while the postindian "waives centuries of translation and dominance,

and resumes the ontic significance of native modernity” (*MM* vii, viii). The works are: “Graduation with Ishi,” published in *The Trickster of Liberty: Native Heirs to a Wild Baronage* in 1988; the previously-mentioned “Ishi Obscura,” published in *Manifest Manners* in 1999; and his play, *Ishi and the Wood Ducks*, published in Vizenor’s edited anthology, *Native American Literature: A Brief Introduction and Anthology*, in 1994. Through this series of creative works Vizenor strove to liberate Ishi from the frames of spectacle and specimen and re-cast him as a figure of postindian survivance, whose contributions to the academy merited not only a degree (as he suggests in “Graduation with Ishi”) but the kind of monumentalizing typically bestowed on those who make lasting contributions to the pursuit of knowledge. Vizenor resituates Ishi outside the frames of salvage ethnography and social science discourses and repositions him within a framework of imaginative alternatives to the roles of specimen and spectacle, creating liberatory alternatives for him.

Ishi prevails as one of Vizenor’s favorite subjects for working such imaginative reframings. His fictionalized approach to re-framing Ishi not only liberates Ishi from the constricted representations of social science discourses, but liberates Indigenous representations through fiction, postmodernism, and genre blending. Vizenor takes issues with the limitations of the social sciences, finding them oppressively problematic for the way they reduce discourse about American Indians to tragedy. Vizenor became familiar with Ishi’s story during his tenure as a visiting professor at UC Berkeley between 1985 and 1993, which led to not only a seven-year battle with the Berkeley campus to rename a building in honor of Ishi but the publication of three creative works of which Ishi is the subject. Vizenor’s interests in Ishi as subject were grounded in what he viewed as the problematic ways in which the popular stories created through the newspapers and Theodora Kroeber’s book upheld the trope of Indianness.

In 1985 Vizenor, then a visiting professor at the Berkeley campus, attempted to disentangle these colonial narratives and petitioned the university's Space Assignment and Capital Improvements Group to change the name of Dwinelle Hall, which houses Berkeley's Native American Studies program, to Ishi Hall. In his essay "Courting the Stone Age: Native authenticity in Gerald Vizenor's *Ishi and the Wood Ducks*," Choctaw and Cherokee literary scholar Louis Owens notes that the proposal had the full support of Berkeley's student senate, but the Space Assignment and Capital Improvements Group "demurred" at Vizenor's request and counter-offered to name an extension of Kroeber Hall, home to the anthropology department, after Ishi instead. Vizenor vehemently rejected this counter-proposal, refusing to reinscribe Ishi's legacy into the physical structure of anthropology or "yield to anthropology and a new intellectual colonialism."⁴¹

The issue rested as Vizenor's visiting position ended, but seven years later he returned to a permanent position at Berkeley and "raised the banner of Ishi's cause once more."⁴² Owens writes that this time Vizenor "cleverly made sure that his proposal coincided with the hullabaloo surrounding the quincentenary of Columbus's 'discovery' of America" (Owens, "Courting" 138). Vizenor's deployment of the surge of American Indian activism and creative energy around the 500 year "anniversary" of Columbus's arrival enmeshed Ishi's story and local California Indian politics into the pan-Indian political surge of activism happening across the settler state. Denied by the Space Management and Capital Programs Committee yet again, Vizenor maintained increasingly direct pressure on the university until the subcommittee agreed to dedicate the courtyard adjacent to Dwinelle Hall as Ishi Court in August 1993.⁴³ Vizenor's seven-year campaign to honor the intellectual contributions of Ishi to the institution's reputation

“dramatizes the continuing power of Ishi’s story to evoke passionate feelings and complex moral questionings” (Kroeber and Kroeber xiv).

In his speech at the dedication of Ishi Court, Vizenor incitingly declared: “There is a wretched silence in the histories of this state and nation: the silence of tribal names. The landscapes are overburdened with untrue discoveries. There are no honorable shadows in the names of dominance” (Vizenor 139). Vizenor’s critique of the university’s reluctance to interrogate its own complicity in the erasure of violence against California’s Indigenous peoples echoes broader criticisms about the role of the university industrial complex in perpetuating new versions of that violence against Native peoples both in California and beyond. The “wretched silence” of both the state and the nation is emphasized in contradistinction to a land “overburdened” with untrue stories: Vizenor pits settler silence against settler fantasy. In doing so he creates new ground from which Ishi might be reimagined. The silencing of settler fantasy—the silencing of the myths of Ishi as spectacle and specimen—evokes a new form of silence into which Native voices might emerge. Ironically, in the case of Ishi silence is met with the silence of untranslatability. That is, to hear Ishi requires a more complex process of literary interpretation. Whereas Vizenor calls out settler silence regarding projects of Native elimination, the conditions of Ishi’s silence are the conditions of possibility for his survivance and production of new and innovative social contexts that ensure his survival. Upon the return of Ishi’s brain to his homelands, Vizenor writes, “Ishi was not his sacred name, but the return of his stolen brain and his imagic presence in our memories are measures of a native survivance” (*MM* xvi).

Even with the extensive work by Vizenor to resituate, or reframe, Ishi, American Indian writers still imagined Ishi as a mysterious and disappearing figure. In the opening prelude of a 2016 poetry collection, *Red Indian Road West: Native American Poetry from California* (Heyday

Books) a poem titled “Ishi’s Hiding Place,” written by Lakota writer Kurt Schweigman, repeats the refrain “What was your name Ishi?” as it recounts, without challenging or disrupting, the popular version of Ishi’s story: “One of the few of your tribe who survived / the Three Knolls Massacre” “you willingly emerged to a group of butchers / at a nearby slaughterhouse corral” and lived life “under house arrest of the city / and the new civilization / employed as janitor / in the San Francisco Museum of Anthropology.” Schweigman closes the poem: “after your final breath / no Indian could ever go back” (13–14). The irony of the closing line is that it depicts Ishi’s final breath as the closing off of a particular pre-settler past. Yet the anthology itself projects forward into a future that is inclusive of a broad range of Native American experiences that have emerged out of that particular legacy and that establish a hopeful foundation for a vibrant California Indian future. Although he does not upset the dominant narrative around Ishi, Schweigman’s invocation of the prelude provocatively suggests that a collection such as *Red Indian Road West* exists in explicit relation to and because of Ishi.

Ishi’s name and story remain activated in California Indian literary and artistic communities as well. Two recent examples are Luiseño performance artist James Luna’s performance piece, “ISHI: The Archive Performance,” and Costanoan Ohlone Esselen and Chumash writer Deborah Miranda’s found poem about Ishi, which is part of her 2013 mixed-media, mixed-genre memoir, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. While Luna revives Ishi’s legacy through a contemporary performance of his life as spectacle, Miranda uses found poetry—the act of taking an original document and refashioning it and turning it into a poem—to critique, like Vizenor, the limiting frames around Ishi. As twenty-first century California Indian peoples, they are descendants of survivors of the same genocide Ishi experienced, and their works grapple with the proximity of extinction that the mythology about Ishi upholds. I will discuss Miranda’s work

with her found poem, “Ishi at Large,” toward the end of this chapter. For now, I want to finally turn to the center of this chapter: Ishi’s wax cylinder archive as autobiography.

Speaking His World into Being

We cannot ever know what role Ishi played in his tribal community, whether Ishi was a skilled singer or storyteller, whether the stories he recorded were carefully selected with a future audience in mind, whether he engaged in a trickster tactic of lying or purposely mis-telling stories.⁴⁴ Locked in the reality of genocide, Ishi and his intentions ultimately remain unknowable. Nonetheless, and for whatever specific reason, Ishi recorded five hours and forty-one minutes of tribal songs and stories onto wax cylinders. In so doing he simultaneously recreated his own world through language and left an imprint of that world encoded in a series of 148 wax cylinders. A closer examination of the archive and recording contexts reveals a man whose act of storytelling resisted pernicious narratives of extinction in favor of survivance. I apply the methodological tools of American Indian literary studies to the historical narratives about Ishi, the Yahi man and so-called “last wild Indian of North America,” in order to relieve and reclaim him from the responsibility of upholding troublesome settler myths of Indigenous disappearance and reframe him as a compelling storyteller who upholds California Indian presence and futurity instead.

The songs and stories, the technology involved in producing them, and the social act of the recording sessions, about which there is some documentation, comprise a rich site of inquiry. According to anthropologist Ira Jacknis, Ishi’s recordings can be grouped into three broad categories: “mythological texts, discursive narration, and music” (Jacknis, “Yahi Culture” *Ishi in Three Centuries* 247). The myths include the Story of Wood Duck, Coyote and Old Quail

Woman, Coyote Rapes his Sister, Creation, and Panther and Coyote. The discursive narratives include “the fate of souls after death, the ceremony for adolescent girls, the nature and causes of earthquakes, and a description of fishing” (247). Ishi additionally recorded sixty-five songs, some of which were repeats, for a total of fifty-four unique songs. Scholars have spent the most time working with Edward Sapir’s translations of the Story of Wood Duck, the Story of Lizard, and Coyote Rapes his Sister. Scholars who have worked with this archive over the last century make various assumptions and arguments about translation, meaning, and cultural knowledges. What we know about the production context of Ishi’s recordings is further refracted through the writings of the settler scholars working with him, namely Edward Sapir and Alfred Kroeber, as well as through the secondary scholarship of those who have studied the cylinders, specifically UC Berkeley anthropologist, and settler scholar, Ira Jacknis. Jacknis argues that in recording this archive Ishi “was sending off a personal message to the future” (Jacknis, “Yahi Culture” *Ishi in Three Centuries* 261). Linguist Jean Perry argues that Ishi’s stories, traditional rather than personal narratives, present a complex cosmology (Perry, “When the World Was New” *Ishi in Three Centuries* 276). Linguists Herbert Luthin and Leanne Hinton, who worked with Ishi’s archive for more than ten years, call Ishi a “touchstone figure” in California anthropology and his stories “eccentric to an amazing degree” (“The Story of Lizard” *Ishi in Three Centuries* 294). Literary scholar Karl Kroeber insists that Ishi’s words establish his “unique individuality” and “frees him from the equally falsifying stereotypes of archetypal victim or archetypal ideal natural man” (“Ishi’s Stories” *Ishi in Three Centuries* 234). Kroeber paid close attention to the nuances in Ishi’s storytelling that establish him as a careful storyteller, and argued that Ishi’s intentional narratives preserve something of the “life-giving rhythms” of Yahi daily life and social relations (“Ishi’s Stories” *Ishi in Three Centuries* 233).

Scholars Leanne Hinton and Herbert Luthin, who have extensively worked with Ishi's "A Story of Lizard," the most complete translated piece of Ishi's archive, analyze the complex literary form of Ishi's oral narrative practice. They write that his style is "often demanding ... thanks to [his] stripped-down, elliptical approach to telling a story and the short, bulletlike bursts of his delivery." The Story of Lizard, they continue "is more of a suite than a story. Rather than a single overarching plot, it contains a series of episodes and situations, each with its own interior form, all of which combine to form a larger whole" (295). The episodic narratives include arrow-making practices, pine nutting, encounters with grizzly bear, and the night dance for restoring order and balance. Hinton and Luthin have carefully studied the structures and rhythms of each episode and conclude that Ishi's storytelling demonstrates "a carefully controlled narration of great balance" (298). Hinton and Luthin originally believed Ishi's stories to be a tedious, repetitive, and bleak account of survival. But as they became familiar with the form of his storytelling—the episodic nature of each narrative fragment—they learned how each episode worked to form a collective whole. As their work on Ishi's stories advanced, they came to see that Ishi's storytelling style encoded "the essence of a Yahi cultural hero," who embodies the qualities of survival in his "unvarying routines" and "unflappable reliability in a crisis" (296).

While Jacknis categorizes distinctions between myth, discursive narratives, and music, he also suggests that Ishi's recordings constitute a complex multi-genre, multi-media autobiography.⁴⁵ In its collective entirety, the archive reflects a Yahi world creatively expressed through multiple forms and genres. A multi-genre, multi-media composite text that includes oral performance, song, myth, instruction, phonographic and wax cylinder technology, Ishi's potential autobiography relies on the collaborative interpretive work of listeners to create meaning and significance. Reframed in this way, Ishi's recorded materials express a form of

personal sovereignty.⁴⁶ “Reading” Ishi’s recordings through the rubric of autobiography opens productive possibilities for thinking *with* the content, not only as personal narrative but as an assertion of tribal identity. I use the phrase “thinking with” intentionally here to signal a particular kind of relational approach to an archive of stories in antiquated form and in a language no one understands; I am curious what it means to situate ourselves as learners and listeners as we confront multiple forms of unknowability with this archive. As a literary genre the autobiography serves as a capacious container for the creative expression of Native identity. In their introduction to the 2006 special issue on American Indian autobiography for the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, American Indian literary scholar Michelle Raheja and anthropologist Stephanie Fitzgerald state that autobiography functions as “a powerful means of constructing tribal identities; a form of cultural preservation; a mode of surveillance in the hands of reservation and government agents; a springboard for thinking about issues of sovereignty, nationalism, and historiography; and a therapeutic tool to help deal with historical and personal trauma” (1). Further, personal narratives were documented through a diverse range of pictographic, oral, and multimedia modes of storytelling. Offering examples such as “personal artistic representations on buffalo robes and naming ceremonies,” the authors argue that the English language and the written word became tools that expanded the creative capacities of a longstanding Indigenous literary tradition rather than a colonial substitution for them. Raheja and Fitzgerald build on a robust genealogy of scholars, from Garrick Mallery in the nineteenth century to twentieth-century Native literary scholars such as Arnold Krupat, Hertha Wong, Chadwick Allen, and more, who have produced rich scholarship on each facet Raheja and Fitzgerald identify in the passage above.⁴⁷

Framing Ishi's recorded stories as autobiography further reimagines his influence on early twentieth-century American Indian literary production. American Indian literary scholars have, intentionally or not, given preference to scholars and writers who influenced literary production by writing an English language text. This is in spite of a robust American Indian political and intellectual community, active in the same moment as Ishi lived in the Museum.⁴⁸ Particularly interesting to consider alongside Ishi is the literary legacy of Dakota doctor and writer Charles Eastman, in part because Vizenor has written extensively about both storytellers as equally complex thinkers and subjects, yet perhaps ironically never makes them explicit interlocutors. His work on each man's life and creative works creates a productive conversation, and invites readers to not only see the two men as similarly positioned as intellectual peers, but to imagine the role of literary storytelling and autobiography as tools of survivance. In *Fugitive Poses: Native American Scenes of Absence and Presence* (1998) Vizenor reimagines Dakota doctor and writer Charles Eastman as a subject who "created an aesthetic native world" through his writings and storytelling (19). Eastman, who lived from 1858 to 1939, wrote two autobiographical texts: *Indian Boyhood* (1902) and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916), and develops a literary identity grounded in a relational network of family, community, and nation. Vizenor writes that "the foremost sources of the native self as a personal identity, and a sense of presence, are visionary; the presentations are families, communities, contrariety, and the politics of nations. These, the most obvious associations, are the public references to a personal sense of presence in the world" (Vizenor, *Fugitive* 19). Vizenor suggests that Eastman constructs this sense of native presence—an "aesthetic native world"—in response to the horrors he witnessed at Wounded Knee in 1890: "he encircled the horrors of that massacre in stories of native course and survivance" (18). Continuing, Vizenor writes, "The doctor enunciated his

visions, memories, and totemic creations as an author. Clearly, his autobiographical stories are native survivance not victimry” (18). Vizenor argues that in spite of witnessing colonial horrors Eastman nevertheless created an aesthetic world by authoring his autobiography. As readers we understand Eastman through his relational constellation of family, community, and nation. Educated as a Christian and a medical doctor, Eastman creates an autobiography of “stories, traces of discourse, and the tease of presence” grounded in but not limited to a historical self that risks being caught in “Indian” discourse (20). In representing Eastman’s story as such, Vizenor affirms that to “misrecognize” Natives as “Indians” “is both oppressive and a prison of false identities” (21).

Eastman employs Native aesthetics in the way he contextualizes his journey into “civilization.” At the beginning of *From the Deep Woods* Eastman believes his father has been killed in the Minnesota Massacre of 1862, but as it turns out he lived and returns to his community after serving a jail sentence and becoming missionized. His father proselytizes that the white man’s religion and education are the new war path and sets Eastman on this journey. But Eastman’s insistence on using the framing of “war path” affirms Sioux ways of knowing and being. In arguing about this choice with his grandmother he turns her own teachings on her, saying that it is his responsibility to follow this new path to its end. Contextualizing missionization and education in this way centers Sioux world views and does not compromise his Indigenous sensibilities. Effectively reframing assimilation, Eastman aesthetically re-presents his experiences through Indigenous perspectives.

Like Eastman, Ishi’s stories create an aesthetic narrative world. Whereas Eastman wrote books, Ishi recorded oral performances onto wax cylinders. The oral tradition, according to Teuton, “emphasizes a relational and experiential engagement with the world through sound-

based forms of communication. Although oral modes of communication are not inherently more ‘present’ than [written forms], they offer the potential for a more direct social engagement, if only because a speaker and a listener must be within earshot of one another” (Teuton xvi–xvii). This question of listening to Ishi and entering into a form of social engagement with his stories is expanded when we consider that the orality of his stories was captured and encoded into material objects, the wax cylinders. A kind of bridge between orality and textuality, the wax cylinders transformed the immediate relational context of Ishi’s storytelling by transforming the stories into artifacts that could be preserved, conserved, and recirculated to future audiences. Ishi’s wax cylinder recording sessions actually innovated the entire technology of audio recordings in 1911. At the time of his first recording session he recorded the Story of Wood Duck, the first ethnographic recording to surpass 30 minutes. That year, the only other recording of that length was produced in a commercial recording studio in Germany, and it was a recording of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.

One helpful way of thinking about Ishi as a storyteller and figure of survivance is to think with Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday’s provocative figuration of the arrowmaker, which he relays in his well-known keynote address, “The Man Made of Words,” to the First Convocation of American Indian Scholars in 1970. Delivered one year after winning the Pulitzer Prize for his 1968 novel, *House Made of Dawn*, “Man Made of Words” meditates on the relationship between language, experience, and literature for American Indians. In the story of the arrowmaker, a “nameless and unlettered” tribal man (62) sits with his wife inside a tipi when they hear the noise of an unknown person approaching from the outside. To determine whether the unknown person is friend or foe, the arrowmaker speaks in his language, asking the visitor to respond whether they are a fellow tribal member and therefore a friend. When the visitor does not respond, the

arrowmaker knows that they are not from the same tribe, and shoots the intruder with an arrow through an opening where the tipi's hides came together (60). Momaday emphasizes that the arrowmaker uses the spoken word to negotiate safety and therefore survival. In Momaday's story, the arrowmaker represents "a link between language and literature" who "tells us of his life in language, and of the awful risk involved" (62). Literary scholar Robert Warrior writes that the story of the arrowmaker is a story that "brings together the idea of the human fashioning of something as important for survival as an arrow (both in hunting and in defense) and the idea of the fashioner of literature through words as sharing a vital, moral positionality" (Warrior, *The People and the Word* 170). He continues by affirming that for the arrowmaker, the "belief in words as being wrapped up in the risk of life and death becomes more and more clear as the story unfolds" (Warrior 170). In linking language and arrow making as technologies of survival Warrior affirms that the capacity to speak is an act of survival.

Momaday asserts that "in a certain sense we are all made of words," by which he means "our most essential being consists in language" (49). Momaday's argument that the oral tradition and "Literature," with a capital "L," are linked through the act of imagination, or the ability to imagine one's self and therefore one's identity in relation to people and place. He claims that the story of the arrowmaker is "a link between language and literature" because the telling of the story, and the story, are the same. The arrowmaker's request for a response positions him in a liminal space of existence: he exists only in relation to an unknown stranger who may or may not understand him in his own language. This imagined relationship solidifies the existence of the arrowmaker; when the stranger does not reply, the arrowmaker receives the silence as the answer and can newly imagine his identity in relation to the stranger: they are enemies. Interestingly, the arrowmaker's bid for recognition is dependent on the presence of the arrowmaker's wife, who

stands in for the role of audience. When the arrowmaker notices that there was someone outside the tipi, he continued speaking to his wife as if they were talking normally.

Like the arrowmaker, the storyteller survives by word of mouth, establishing a relationship with others through language, and that identity and existence and imagination hang on whether or not the storyteller and the audience share a common language and a common imaginary. Perhaps this is what Ishi lacked—a knowledgeable audience (such as the wife in the story). Like the arrowmaker, Ishi negotiates the limits of his reality and the relationships he builds through language. From the moment of his capture in the Oroville butcher’s corral, the settler world uses language to impose an identity on Ishi; language likewise remains a crucial tool for Ishi to renegotiate such impositions. Whether or not he believed that “language represented the only chance of survival” or that he would ever survive “in our own time ... over a period of untold generations” (62), his stories survive, preserved and encoded in wax cylinders.

The recordings were indeed preserved, conserved, and recirculated. Jacknis explains that after undergoing preservation repair, the cylinders were transferred to cassette in the 1970s, which enabled a moment of commercial distribution. The Lowie Museum at Berkeley commercially released the tapes in 1977; in 1992 Bernie Krause of Wild Sanctuary Communications released a new version. Treated as an edited collection or an as-told-to autobiography, these cleaned up recordings of Ishi’s songs were released as remastered “samplers.” Coming in at twenty-five and thirty-five minutes, respectively, the tapes conserve some of the best preserved of the otherwise precarious wax cylinder archive. I wish I knew more about who purchased these tapes or that I could track sales and circulation, but as with much of Ishi’s archive, information was either undocumented or not saved. Yet these tapes function as a

form of “publication” that creates new social forms of engagement with Ishi’s stories and invite us to take seriously the idea of Ishi’s archive as a text worth close analysis.

Certainly we cannot fully understand the stories and songs themselves: although some have worked on translation and many have worked to preserve and conserve the cylinder artifacts themselves, the stories remain partly translated, at best. Without knowing Yahi, and without being able to fully translate the stories or think with them in a contemporary Yahi community, we are left to consider the gaps and silences—what we *cannot* know about Yahi peoples and about Ishi specifically—as well as the social contexts of production and the resonances of the recordings themselves across multiple communities, including a literary scholarly one. The invitation to understand Ishi’s fragmented materials and sit with what *cannot* be known sets a crucial precedent for any study of California Indian literatures and arts.

California Indians Reframing Ishi

What excites me the most about thinking of Ishi’s recordings as an autobiographical text are the ways in which this reframing opens possibilities for genealogical connections between Ishi and contemporary California Indian autobiographies. For the remainder of this chapter I juxtapose Ishi’s stories-as-autobiography with Esselen and Chumash writer Deborah Miranda’s own provocative 2013 mixed-media, mixed-genre autobiography, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Miranda’s tribal memoir is a form of autobiography that recuperates her personal, familial, and tribal histories from fragmented stories and documentation. In arguing that Ishi’s wax cylinder recordings function as their own kind of provocative autobiography I am drawing a line between the literary and intellectual traditions of Ishi and Miranda. This comparative reading establishes new frameworks through which we might understand Ishi—ones constructed by survivors of the

same histories, politics, and legal structures designed specifically to reduce the California Indian population to a vanished myth. And ones that center the role of storytelling in the precarious work of survivance. This genealogical connection between storytellers and storytelling practices creates compelling relational networks across tribal communities and time that affirm survivance and construct what Miranda articulates as a “much wider circle” of California Indians and allies speaking back against the evils of colonialism.

Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir constructs a gripping story about Miranda’s personal, family, and tribal history that extends back to Spanish missionization and flows up to the present, to her own experiences as a descendent of mission survivors, and forward toward imagining rich California Indian futures. Like Ishi’s story of Lizard, *Bad Indians* is episodic, divided into four sections that move chronologically, from missionization starting in 1769 to post-secularization to early twentieth century and finally from the year of her birth, 1961, through the present. The second section of *Bad Indians*, titled “Bridges: Post-Secularization 1836-1900,” grapples with the intense period of violence that includes the complex processes of land dispossession between Mexican and US regimes of power, the racialization tactics used by settlers to dehumanize California Indians and legitimize a period of legal and US-sanctioned genocide, and descriptions of the violence against California Natives as a result of the extermination-style policies of the era. Also like Ishi, Miranda incorporates diverse forms of knowledge production, such as poetry, photographs, archival excerpts from settler writers, newspaper clippings, collages, and essay-style writing into this section. Her purposeful juxtaposition of each piece of media and of each genre creates a composite representation of the precarious nature of surviving such intense violence. Similar to Ishi’s Story of Lizard, Miranda’s *Bad Indians* relies on the collaborative interplay between episodic narratives to construct meaning.

I want to point us to the moment Miranda integrates Ishi into her own tribal autobiography, merging the two stories and narrative forms. Miranda creates a found poem that she titles “Ishi at Large.” A found poem takes another text, such as a newspaper article, and refashions and reorders it and presents it as a new poem. The ways in which the poet transforms the original text into poetry—the changes, omissions, or additions—opens up diverse interpretive possibilities. In this case, Miranda fashions “Ishi at Large” from a Reuters article dated December 8, 2004 titled “Strange-Voiced Whale at Large in the Ocean.” The original article reads,

A lone whale, with a voice unlike any other, has been wandering the Pacific for the past 12 years, American marine biologists said Wednesday.

Using signals recorded by the US navy to track submarines, they traced the movement of whales in the Northern Pacific and found that a lone whale singing at a frequency of around 52 hertz has cruised the ocean since 1992.

Its calls, despite being clearly those of a baleen, do not match those of any known species of whale, which usually call at frequencies of between 15 and 20 hertz.

The mammal does not follow the migration patterns of any other species either, according to team leader Mary Anne Daher.

The calls of the whale, which roams the ocean every autumn and winter, have deepened slightly as a result of aging, but are still recognizable.

Miranda’s version of the found poem reads as follows:

A lone whale,
with a voice unlike any other,
has been wandering

the Pacific for the past
twelve years,
singing at a frequency

of around 52 hertz. Its calls
do not match those of any
known species of whale,

which usually sing
at frequencies of between
15 and 20 hertz.

The mammal does not follow
the migration patterns
of any other species either.

The calls of the whale,
which roams the ocean
every autumn and winter,

have deepened slightly
 as a result of aging,
 but are still

recognizable. (*BI* 54–55)

In Miranda's poetic translation, she makes five provocative changes: 1) she omits all references to experts or citations to Western knowledge-making practices; 2) she omits all references to the military and military craft; 3) she removes the identifying category "baleen," which locates the whale's identity within a particular sub-grouping of whale species; 4) she removes references to specific dates, such as the year 1992; and finally, 5) she changes the verb "call" from the third paragraph of the article, to the verb "to sing." Additionally, her strategic choice of line and stanza breaks as she literally refigures the text on the page places emphasis on certain words and images. For example, she leaves the word "wandering" hanging on its own at the end of both a line and stanza break, causing the reader to linger there momentarily. Similarly, the final word of the article and poem, "recognizable," inhabits its own isolated solitary line, the white space between it and the rest of the poem placing the potential of the poem's meaning on this final word.

Without the advantage of knowing the title of the poem, one might see Miranda's strategic refashioning of this Reuters article as an attempt to poetically center the story of the whale without the dominant framing of expert narratives or military interference. Without these citations, the whale becomes the subject of his or her own story and challenges the limits of scientifically-grounded inter-species knowability. One could read Miranda's transformations as a

method of unsettling Western forms of knowledge production, especially knowledges about “others,” be they human kin or other-than-human kin. Further, her omission of the word “baleen” to categorize the whale can be read as a refusal to catalogue species within a taxonomic rubric that separates and differentiates and relies on a system of difference, rather than kinship systems of connectivity and belonging.

Miranda’s removal of the specific reference to the year 1992 further renders the whale’s story as timeless. Her tactical refusal to locate the story within a particular, knowable temporality invites readers to consider time within the cyclical pattern of seasons, since references to fall and winter remain. And lastly, in the transformation of the verb from “to call” to “to sing” Miranda invites readers to consider the subtle shift in meaning from the purpose of calling—to elicit a response from someone or something, ideally—to singing, an act of creativity, pleasure, and self-expression that does not require an audience, although having an audience certainly enriches the experience of the song, and a direct invocation of Ishi’s song-based archive.

The juxtaposition of Miranda’s found poem with the Reuter’s article demonstrates the power of Indigenous poetry—and expressive cultures more broadly—to be an activist space with the potential to unsettle colonial formations of knowledge that limit, contain, and overdetermine their subjects. Miranda has arguably liberated this whale—a real whale, by the way, who continues to be an object of scientific and popular obsession.

Miranda’s aesthetic activism takes on a new and specific valence when the poem is re-situated within the framework of its title, “Ishi at Large.” The title links the content of the found poem to the provocative history of Ishi, re-framing the poem’s meaning. Miranda invites her readers to reimagine the whale as Ishi and amplifies the stakes of questioning colonial forms that limit, contain, and overdetermine their subjects. By then placing that poem within the broader

section of *Bad Indians* about the nineteenth-century violence against California Indians, Miranda's work opens exciting possibilities to reimagine Ishi's life and story through the framework of another California Indian person's storytelling practices.

This is only one example of how California Indian writers have animated Ishi's stories and it raises provocative questions about translatability (the whale's song is unlike any other and yet "still/ recognizable"). As Kumeyaay tribal member Jacob Alvarado Waipuk (San Pasqual Band of Kumeyaay Indians) suggests, California tribal peoples do not only remember the old songs but make new ones (personal correspondence). If, as I argue later in this dissertation, *Bad Indians* is a new tribal creation story, Ishi's legacy is integral to the construction of the new stories. As he recreated his own world through language, story, and song, Ishi laid the groundwork for future storytellers, singers, and artists to similarly (re)build their own tribal worlds. Perhaps unexpectedly, yet significantly, contemporary California Indians have taken up Ishi's stories, integrating not only his memory but his songs and legacy into their own innovative songs and stories, carrying his memory and his legacy forward. Ishi did not have a tribal nation to remember him. Instead, the wider California Indian community has stepped in to carry that memory and those stories in a relational and responsible way.

Conclusion

Situating Ishi within the context of Native literary studies provokes exciting new interpretive and relational possibilities for continuing to think with Ishi and his story. I've demonstrated the stakes of dismantling the settler mythological architecture created around and about him as a myth that perpetuates the harmful stereotype of California Indian extinction. This myth has continued to hinder the pursuit of political, legal, and cultural sovereignty across Native

California, and the work of many California Indian writers, artists, and scholars continues to confront the boundaries and limitations of this pernicious lie. I've offered samplings from Ishi's own narrative archive and argued that by situating the stories captured on wax cylinders as a form of expressive sovereignty rather than ethnographic data we can put those stories into new conversations and contexts that build relational genealogies between Ishi and future audiences. And lastly I've offered one reading of how a contemporary California Indian writer not only continues to activate Ishi's legacy, but utilizes it as an integral aspect of her own tribal memoir, the effect of which is that both storyteller's stories remain dynamic, active, and open to continuing vital relationships between storytellers and audiences. Ishi seeded his world with the rich imagery and texture of his spoken language and created a home within the sounds of his Yahi language. That world resonates in today's California Indian stories.

Chapter Two

“California Moves My Pen”: Wendy Rose’s Poetry Beats Back Extinction

I hate it when other people write about my alienation and anger. Even if it’s true, I’m not proud of it. It has crippled me, made me sick, made me out of balance. *It has also been the source of my poetry.*

Wendy Rose, “Neon Scars” (emphasis added)

I have struggled to write this chapter about Rose and her poetry. I haven’t yet felt like I’ve struck the right tenor or tone, zeroed in on the exact analysis of her poetry that performs the academic rigor required of a dissertation as well as, and more importantly, the respect and gratitude I want to express for all Rose shares after all she’s endured. There is a profound tenderness permeating through her poetry that refuses easy scholarly analysis, that refuses being interpellated into academic language at all, a tenderness that doubles as a fierce assertion of survival. The weight of her words draws readers into the precarity and the beauty of California Indian survival in the twentieth century.

In drafting and re-drafting this chapter I realized I was taking Rose’s complaint in the epigraph above seriously: out of respect, I had tried to avoid writing about her alienation and anger. She is right to complain that anyone who stops at her pain and rage stops short of a full understanding of her creative works. A focus on the psychological and affective conditions of her poetry alone centers the heaviness of what Deborah Miranda describes as “[f]ive hundred years of colonization and its many painful wounds” that “have resulted in many Native women living basic survival-level emotional lives.”⁴⁹ This emphasis, however, misses Rose’s fierce

assertion of futurity. To only engage with Native women's works with a preoccupation on a woman's pain and anger and through the lens of historical trauma is an "injustice" to the works and to the writer. In her compelling 2016 essay, "'They were tough, those old women before us': The Power of Gossip in Isabel Meadows's Narratives," Miranda elaborates on these limitations by explaining that "while [a historical trauma framework] draws attention to violent crimes against vulnerable communities and individuals, it also delegitimizes Indigenous survivors as agents of our own lives, and simultaneously traps us inside narratives of victimhood and brokenness that must be 'fixed' ... before we are worthy of sovereignty."⁵⁰ In other words, a sustained focus on trauma, historical and immediate, delimits the possibilities for the poetry to *also* fiercely express sovereignty and resilience.⁵¹

Rose, however, immediately follows her complaint with a confession: that her alienation and anger are also "the source of my poetry" (253). I hear in this coupling of alienation, anger, and creativity an interlocking intimacy and an encoded methodology for approaching any analysis of Rose's poetry. Pain and alienation may be the origins of her poetry but they are not the endpoint. Rose's poetry is a powerful testimony to the enduring and resilient existence of one California Indian woman living in a place and time where she was, for *all* intents and purposes, never meant to survive. Rose relentlessly grasped at belonging and survival through any aesthetic means possible in a cultural and political context that would have her eliminated. And in her relentless grasping she became a remarkable poet, one whose poetry expresses Indigenous futurisms long before Grace Dillon coins the term, and one who was making incisive critiques of the entanglement of settler colonialism and environmental injustice alongside (perhaps even slightly ahead of) the burgeoning discourse of US environmentalism. It also expresses an innovative and early affirmation of trans-Indigenous kinships and belonging.

In much the same way as we saw Ishi, as the last known living member of his tribal nation, pull his world around him through story and song in the last chapter, we observe in this chapter Rose navigating a similar process through similar storytelling methods, decades later.

This chapter argues that Rose's poetry captures the interior geography of survival for a twentieth-century detribalized California Indian woman in a way that invites readers to imagine a more complex and non-"traditional" vision of California Indian identity. Rose defies, in many ways, notions of belonging and Indigeneity that ground Indigenous belonging in who claims you and what tribal community claims you. Rather than waiting to be claimed, Rose claims tribal identity for herself through the language and structures of her poetry, a way to resist detribalization and extinction through writing and through relationships. Inspired, perhaps, by Momaday's assertion that "an Indian is an idea which a given [person] has of himself" Rose mobilizes language to construct an identity that she can then inhabit ("The Man Made of Words" 49).

Central to Rose's expression of identity is her blended tribal identities—a woman with Hopi ancestry through her father's lineage and Miwok ancestry through her mother's, Rose self-identifies as a "half-breed." As she inhabits the tension between these two lineages and navigates the exclusionary social and cultural politics that relied on a discourse of "purity" grounded in both a logic of blood quantum and salvage ethnography, Rose builds a world through her poetry where she and other "half-breeds" belong. Her relentless inclusion holds compassionate space for relations from diverse backgrounds and models a radical inclusivity that contradicts the racial and Indigenous politics of mid- to late twentieth-century California.

While her poetry career began out of the energetic inter-tribal activism happening within the urban Relocated community in Oakland and San Francisco in the 1960s, and while Rose

found her voice as a spokeswoman for the urban Indian community, the arc of her poetry eventually bends away from urban Indian collectives, and away from her Hopi lineage, and toward the geography of Bear Valley and her Miwok relations. As with her exploration of what it means to be a half-breed Native woman, Rose dives deeply into her own examinations of her ancestral connections. For a majority of her public life she identified strongly with her Hopi relations and identity. Yet her later poetry slowly drifts toward a speculative curiosity about what she could know about her Miwok ancestors, whom she believed to be gone forever. In a 1983 interview for the journal *MELUS*, Rose explains that when she thinks of her Miwok ancestors, “I think of confusion, tragedy, death, fragmentation, bones, and things that are gone forever. I look *back* at my mother’s heritage ...” (83). And yet those “things that are gone forever” drew her back to their homelands, and they remained a specter within and throughout her poetic career. Rose describes being called back by the “muted voices that I have always heard, Miwok ghosts who remain around the redbud branches, following the Merced River to the sea and back, as they search for what they are searching for” (*Bone Dance* xii). Only a few years after this interview, Rose returns to her ancestral lands. In the introduction to her 1994 collection *Bone Dance: New and Selected Poems, 1965-1993*, Rose describes how she came to return home: “It is not a casual thing that I live in Coarsegold. I am only thirty-five miles from Mariposa, the county seat in which or near various ancestors lived. ... I am the first generation to return to these hills, and I didn’t even set out to do it. It just happened. That is, of course, if anything ever just happens” (xi, xii). Rose expresses a belief that this move was part of a deeper compulsion to return to the place of her Miwok relatives, and her poetry grapples with their absence, their erasure, and her subsequent presence.

To analyze Rose's poetry as a body of work that illuminates what it looks like to be a surviving California Indian in the twentieth century without beginning with the tender and precarious nature of her survival misses the heart of her poetry and is, in my opinion, an injustice to the work. Rose's poetry is complex, and part of that complexity orbits around how to think with and attend to the narratives of a living survivor of genocide in the twentieth century.⁵² Although her body of poetry is vast, and addresses a broad range of topics and themes, I have selected three of her poems to analyze for the remainder of this chapter. These three poems, I argue, best illustrate the core aspects of Rose's explorations of a California identity and emotional geography. The three poems are: "Notes on a Conspiracy," written in 1977 and published in *Going to War With All My Relations* in 1993; "Margaret Castor," first published as "Margaret Newman" in *Going to War* and republished nine years later in the 2002 collection *Itch Like Crazy* with the revised title; and "Urban Breed, Go Get Your Gun," published in *Now Poof She is Gone* in 1994. Each of these poems reveals, in its own way, Rose's commitments to unsettle California settler colonialism, refuse extinction, and affirm her own belonging and presence as well as that of a collective. Her writings are deeply shaped by both place and history and reflect the pain and trauma of survival.

I tried to center early drafts of this chapter on the ways that Rose's work can be considered "California" poetry while diminishing the difficult aspects of the poems; that did not work. Rather, I learned that I needed to write a chapter-long meditation on the tenderness and precarity of twentieth-century survivance in California, that I needed to hold Rose's poetry close, and hold you as my readers close to her poetry, too, so that together we can sit with the difficulty *and* complexity of her words. So, alongside the work of holding difficult content in close proximity, I focus on a small through-line in her poetry, which is the ways in which she imagines

herself in relation to the place of California and to her Miwok ancestors. Wendy Rose maps a California that is urban, intertribal, “halfbreed,” and still on the brink of extinction. The California that emerges across Rose’s poetic archive contradicts the California Story; it is richly populated with ghosts, ancestors, and Native stories. As she works across the fragmented elements of her life, she constructs a social geography that she can imagine herself in; in the process of stitching together this fragmented map, she reimagines and addresses the violence of the California Story. As Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman argues, Native women writers such as Wendy Rose do not *remythologize*, but rather perform a “(re)mapping that addresses the violent atrocities while defining Native futures” (Goeman 13). Rose’s poetry draws the past into the present and imagines future possibilities for herself and her readers. But she arrives there through a period of exploration of and grief over the “enforced distance” from Hopi culture as well as a complex navigation of mid-century urban and activist pan-Indian California.⁵³

Biographical Details

Rose was born in Oakland, California on May 7, 1948, most likely to a Hopi father, or at least this is the story that she grew up with (and is the basis for much of her poetry) and a Miwok and Western European (Scottish) mother. It was not until Rose was an adult that she learned that her step-father, a descendant of “Bidwell’s Indians” of Northern California, may have actually been her real father.⁵⁴ What she knew growing up was that her father’s Hopi tribe is matrilineal, which meant they would not claim her. Her mother’s tribal connections are traced back to her great grandmother Margaret Castor’s liaison with a Bear Valley Miwok man in between white husbands. This history was neither discussed nor affirmed by her family, and her mostly white-passing family lived white-passing lives and cultivated a vehement racism against Rose for her

appearance as an undeniably brown woman. Rose experienced physical and emotional violence in her immediate family, the root of such violence being her visible Native identity. Rose ran away from home, experienced homelessness and an abusive first marriage, until she began school and earned her degrees in anthropology and archeology at UC Berkeley. Rose joined in with the Red Power movement in San Francisco during the Alcatraz era, becoming an activist poet and for the first time identifying with the burgeoning pan-Indigenous community. Because her father, a Hopi man, had ties to his Hopi community Rose strongly identified with her Hopi lineage early in her life and poetry. Her poetry contains Hopi aesthetics and imagery that imagine a strong sense of identity. This backwards and forwards engagement with her parents' ancestries would prove to be unhelpful for Rose, and her poetry reveals an eventual reversal of how she comes to think particularly in relation to her mother's people.

This feeling of exclusion and isolation is further amplified by growing up in the city, as both an urban Indian and a "halfbreed"—her term for being not only from multiple tribal nations but both Indigenous and White as well. Rose had few spaces to seek belonging in the city, or in her father's matrilineal tribe, or in her detribalized mother's family. Her nuclear and her extended family resented her for *looking* Native in an era of intense hostility against non-White citizens in California—her poetry reveals a sensitivity around her appearance, her skin, hair, and features, and her autobiographical essay states explicitly that her relatives "threw me away—so, I do not have them" (Rose, "Neon Scars" 255).

Rose's poetry expresses a serious struggle to anchor a sense of self in any concrete terms or community. This precarity and delicate uncertainty about her own existence is expressed throughout all of her poetry and shows that this uncertainty extends back to birth. For example,

in “Newborn Woman, May 7, 1948,” published in *Hopi Roadrunner Dancer* in 1973, Rose writes apologetically about her lack of agency in this decision to come into the world:

There was nothing i could do,
 Massive shoulders, massive weepings,
 i could not help it.
 My mother wept tears more petite;
 my father was not there. i could not help it; massive shoulders
 (oh my mother hurt!) i pushed my way, dictator,
 steel hands clasping already alien world
 i could not help it (Rose, *Hopi RD* 9).

On one hand, the use of the lower case “i” diminishes the value and significance of the speaker. Refusing the capitalization of the self-referential pronoun has the appearance on the page of reduction, devaluation of the speaker’s sense of self. This grammatical choice, when paired with the repeated use of the word “massive” to refer to her body, represents the body of the speaker as an unwelcome and unavoidable intrusion. And her use of the descriptor, “dictator,” carries heavy significance in the post-war era, as if the mother giving birth does not want, or value, the “i” being birthed. The absence of the father further supports the feeling that this child is not welcome in their lives. The repetition of the word “massive” in contrast to her mother’s “petite” features, the aggressiveness of the phrase “I pushed my way” and the term “dictator,” and the repetition of “I could not help it” all suggest a feeling of helplessness at being born, and a recognition that she felt unwanted, monstrous, alien, other-than-human in her largeness, in her “black hair” and “red-brown skin crinkled paper-like into dusty patterns” and her “stark iron hands, red mineral” body. Her birth was violence against her mother’s petite White body.

And yet, this is as much an assertion of strength and a reversal of the stories of Native weakness and death: in this scene, Rose's brown body is strong, powerful, and gripping while her mother's body is weak and fragile. As much as Rose's mother and her family desired to uphold the supremacy of the White body, "Newborn Woman" refuses this dynamic and places her newly birthed body in the position of strength and power. She emerged "clasping an alien world," a settler-dominated California already, at birth, in her clutches. The repeated phrase "i could not help it" sounds apologetic yet also suggests an inevitable and persistent survival: she could not help but be alive. The poem's concluding two lines affirm a reading like this:

Dreams of my mother i shattered, i arrived i indian,
i desert, i newborn woman. (9)

Wendy Rose portrays herself arriving in this world and shattering the dreams of white passing women, an act of dreaming that embodies and affirms the ongoing survival of Native peoples.

These tenuous explorations of identity and belonging extend into her early activism poetry as well. Poems such as "For My People," published in her 1973 collection *Hopi Roadrunner Dancing*, also express a precarity around survival: "i was myself blown/ two leafs apart/ (seeing the ground swim within/ sliding and slipping together/ and apart)" (3). This conveys the gravity of genocide and the intimacy of survival in poem form. Her refusal to capitalize "i" again expresses a formal expression of her own self-diminishment. In the deliberate misspelling of the plural form of "leaf," she emphasizes two singular entities (a leaf, and a leaf: leafs) rather than the grammatically correct collective body, "leaves." This might suggest that her Hopi and Miwok and Scottish ancestry do not form a unified collective. Or, it may be a refusal of the homophonic infinitive verb form, "to leave," of leaving entirely, of extinction. Further, the unsteady, tectonic ground of settler California, slipping and sliding as she moves,

offers no steadiness, support, or guaranteed grounding. The word, “apart,” repeats on line two and again on line five, a word that hangs, in both cases, over the edge of a line, unpunctuated yet punctuating with the plosive harshness of both the “p” and “t” consonants, as the winds of colonialism separate bodies and communities.

“For My People” does, however, offer early insight into how Rose forges connection between herself and San Francisco’s urban Indian community through writing. The second stanza emphasizes a new sense of connection, a “growing closer” and a “finding,” as well as the use of the collective “our” versus the stand-alone “i” of the first stanza. Even as an unnamed threat is “biting at our shadows” and as the people are “losing one another ... / losing ourselves” the final line, set apart in its own stanza, hangs the act of “finding” as the final gesture. In both “I, Newborn Woman” and “For My People” Rose uses stanza breaks and white space to emphasize existence and hope.

Rose consistently engages an aesthetics of fragmentation and shards, pieces of a whole rather than the whole, perhaps in part because of her training as an archeologist—she digs for fragments—but also because as an Indigenous woman in California she scrambles for pieces of identity that remain intact for her to locate, access, and make meaning with. The trauma, the abuse, the complete disavowal of her right to exist at every turn, conveys a dark and relentless aggression against Rose that may not culminate in her physical destruction or death (although it comes frighteningly close) but certainly remains genocidal nonetheless. This embodied split between father and mother, Native and white, becomes a source and foundation for Rose’s poetry career. She confesses that she never feels wholly human, that wholeness as a feeling “never congeals into truth./ You are one thing but another as well,/ inside/ one kind of woman,/ outside a different kind/ and perhaps there is a place/ with no woman at all” (“Urban Breed, Go

Get Your Gun,” *Now Poof She is Gone* 28). Cultural and social, if not physical, genocide do so much damage to her that Rose is left wondering “of what value is my survival?”⁵⁵

In *Bad Indians*, Miranda describes the destructive potential of stories on Native peoples’—and California Indians’ in particular—sense of self worth: stories of extinction have “done more damage to California Indians than any conquistador, any priest, any *soldado de cuera* (leather-jacket soldier), any smallpox, measles, or influenza virus. This story has not just killed us, it has taught us how to kill ourselves and kill each other with alcohol, domestic violence, horizontal racism, internalized hatred. This story is a kind of evil, a kind of witchery” (Miranda, *Bad Indians* xix). To be a reader of Wendy Rose’s poetry is to be a witness to the effects of such witchery. As a child she is told she is ugly. She is forced to watch her step-father violently break her toys as a symbolic act of what he would like to do to her: “her father/ meant to kill her/ .../ Remembered how he broke/ her china horses/ on the piano’s edge/ and she knew it was a symbol/ for breaking her” (Rose, “Murder of the Girl” 62). She runs away and starves. She wonders of her mother and step-father:

“Would you have liked me better

if I had been cute

If I had been the teenybopper

dancing on TV?

If I had tried to shrink

back to infancy

or lift the flesh from my bones,

or cut out my tongue?

...

Was there anything about me

you could call your own?” (“Mom, Dad,” Now Poof She is Gone 52)

This wrenching imagery is the kind of violence and witchcraft one wishes they could call back. Rose had no community to claim her; in “Neon Scars” she states, “I am without relations. ... When my family threw me away, every human on earth did likewise” (255). So she claims all relations with relentless inclusion—seeds, rocks, and ancestral ghosts alike.⁵⁶ She breathes life into extinction and, in the process, maps a complex cartography of the living and the dead, the urban and the tribal, in twentieth-century California.

Literature Review

Wendy Rose is the author of nine poetry collections, one of which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1980. She also authored three critical essays, a dissertation, and a scholarly monograph on the tattooing practices of California tribal communities.⁵⁷ Her creative works examine themes of identity such as being an Indigenous archeologist, activist, woman, urban Indian, and “halfbreed,” or a Native person whose parents are from diverse backgrounds that include non-Indigenous ancestry. Her dissertation at UC Berkeley, a contentious project in its era, was to produce a comprehensive annotated bibliography of the literary works written and published by Native authors in the United States since 1700.⁵⁸ Rose’s works, academic and creative, raise awareness of *living* Native traditions and cultural practices, in contradistinction to the formal aspects of her training in the anthropological studies of Native traditions, which center the study of bones and material culture decontextualized from their living communities. Her robust publication record and the number of highly regarded Native studies scholars who have engaged with her work across time suggest that for as much as her work depicts a personal

struggle to negotiate survival in an atmosphere of extinction, and for as much as her interior geography remains haunted and unmapped, from an outside perspective her work has generated substantial excitement and remains formative for readers and scholars alike. She has been widely anthologized, widely taught, and held in esteem as a female Native poet, an activist poet, and an intellectual. Her work has been the subject of critical scholarship by many highly regarded Native studies scholars, such as Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday, Laguna poet and scholar Paula Gunn Allen, Osage literary scholar Robert Warrior, literary scholar Chadwick Allen, and Osage poet and scholar Carter Revard.

In his preface to her 1980 collection, *Lost Copper*, N. Scott Momaday describes Rose's poems as songs of protest, as a celebration of the earth, and as a matter of spirit (ix). He heralds the ways she brings the English language to bear "upon a *native* sensibility, a *native* landscape, a *native* experience" and celebrates the dexterity of her poetry as it "moves from one frame of reference to another with remarkable facility" (ix). Momaday's celebration of Rose's poetry as something distinctly and complexly "native" is an astounding affirmation of Rose's belonging in the wider inter-tribal and American Indian literary community.

Laguna scholar Paula Gunn Allen understands that extinction is a place from which Rose's poetry emerges. And her poetry unites fragments and shards toward a metaphoric place of belonging and wholeness. In her 1986 study *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, Allen writes, "Perhaps the knowledge of the real possibility of total extinction spurs one to perceptions that transcend the usual political, sociological, psychological, or aesthetic responses to pain or rage" (157). As she positions Rose as a poet whose perspectives "transcend" the typical responses to pain or rage given her proximity to extinction, Allen upholds her as a writer who "exhibits the greatest polemical tendencies of contemporary Indian women"

(175). Allen asserts that Rose's poetry is informed by her "enforced distance" from her Hopi culture, the material of her poetry comes from her "ethnographic knowledge," and the spiritual content of her poetry derives from growing up in the Roman Catholic church. Lastly she asserts that because Rose "was a dropout into the mad, hippy world of Berkeley in the 1960s, much of her work is informed with a militant, radical polemic" (175). Allen writes,

In poems that speak to her dispossession, as in most of her work, Rose maintains a clear, steady, spiritual basis. She often furthers her point with spirit-based imagery, so that the thrust of her work moves steadily toward a nonmaterial, nonsocial, and nonpolitical significance. The social, political, interpersonal, and personal images and statements she forms become metaphors for spirit-infused consciousness—a thrust toward uniting fragmented elements in her life that she shares with the other Indian women writers.

(177)

Osage scholar Robert Warrior argues that Rose's poetry refuses essentialized form, demonstrates the living tradition of American Indian poetry, and opens the door to a conversation around abuse, racism, and processes of colonization. In his seminal work *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (1995), Warrior writes that as American Indians recover and identify their own intellectual traditions Rose's poetry refuses a popular kind of essentialism of the period within which she writes, and demonstrates its own tradition of naming her personal experiences as a detribalized, or urban Indian. He situates his analysis of her poetry in a larger argument that American Indian poets and poetry express "a raging beyond nobility that calls for recognition of the humanity and nationality of Indian existence" (116). Making the point that "we need to learn from the poetry ... that we do not have to wait to discover some essentially Indian form of writing before we can begin to try to

make some critical sense of our past, present, future,” because the poetry of contemporary American Indian writers demonstrates how “tradition is able to live in new written forms” and that “it does not have to dress up in beads and feathers in order to be powerful” (117). And he continues, “From the experience that she and others have articulated so clearly and courageously, we can confront a set of issues that rarely appear in academic discourse—the vast numbers of Indian people who are invisible victims of racism, domestic violence, homophobia, and the process of colonization” (122).

Literary scholar Chadwick Allen situates Rose as a poet with a global activist imagination in his provocative 2002 scholarly work *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts*. Allen analyzes her poem “The Long Root,” published in her 1994 collection *Bone Dance: New and Collected Poems, 1965–1993*. The poem links US imperial violence in Asia in the 1970s to nineteenth- and twentieth-century settler colonial violence at the site of the Wounded Knee massacre. “The Long Root” places American Indian activist protests (such as the Pacific Northwest fish-ins starting in 1964) in conversation with the Vietnam War, and Allen argues that this juxtaposition embodies “the parallels many American Indians saw between the contemporary Asian conflict in which they were being asked (or compelled) to participate and the ‘Indian wars’ fought against their own nations in the nineteenth century” (121). Allen’s reading of “The Long Root” affirms Rose’s compelling and insightful understanding of trans-Indigenous relationships that span the globe; long before the discipline or field of global Indigenous studies, Rose was weaving careful kinship relationships worldwide.

Osage poet and intellectual Carter Revard argues that Rose’s poetry is its own canon without the tradition of God or any tradition behind it: her poetry appeals directly to readers. In

his 2003 essay “Herbs of Healing: American Values in American Indian Literatures,” originally published in Dean Rader’s edited collection, *Speak to Me Words: Essays on Contemporary American Indian Poetry*, and re-published in the edited collection *Native Voices: Indigenous American Poetry, Craft, and Conversation* in 2019, Revard juxtaposes Native poetry alongside the canonical works; in the case of Wendy Rose he compares “I Expected My Skin and My Blood to Ripen” with John Milton’s sonnet, “On the Late Massacre in Piedmont.” Whereas Milton’s poem is “apostolic in its looking toward an ultimate triumph of the despised and suffering minority to which the writer belongs,” the speaker in Rose’s poem “is defeated and lacks the tacit consolation apparent in Milton that for each of the martyred persons there will grow a multitude of ‘descendants’” as well as “any sense that this painful death will allow her people to gain some sort of paradise” (14, 16). Revard writes: “Behind Rose’s poem, no scripture looms; it forms its own canon. Milton called on God; Rose’s unvoiced appeal is to her readers, to do the right thing to those who acted and still act against her people” (16). Rose’s poem features the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890, on the eve of the 1973 Red Power Movement events at Wounded Knee that end, once again, in gun violence and imprisonment.

Less central, or visible, to the reception and circulation of Rose’s work has been her identity as a California Indian poet. Rose’s works have been included in all three anthologies of California Indian literatures (see the next chapter for an expanded analysis of these anthologies), signaling a remarkable claiming of Rose on behalf of the California Indian literary community.⁵⁹ But within the terminologies we typically use as literary scholars to discuss Rose’s works, “California Indian” or “California poet” is not widely considered, perhaps most obviously because she does not identify this way herself. I argue that in part this is because centering California in her poetry and her identity requires readers and scholars to confront not only the

legacies of violent settler colonialism in California that produced such conditions but also Rose's "alienation and anger" that derives out of the complex, violent California structures that have produced her. Instead, it remains easier to focus on the rich aesthetic activism of her work and its impact on broader Native and trans-Indigenous communities. And indeed, Rose's poetry brilliantly maps an Indigenous California cartography of survival that expands outward to create global Indigenous and future oriented relationships. But without attending to how she represents her interior emotional landscape, we lose the intimate connection between it and the complex California Indian historical landscape.

"California moves my pen": A Frame for Reading Wendy Rose's Poetry

In a 1986 interview with Abenaki scholar Joseph Bruchac, Rose claims that the settler California poet Robinson Jeffers inspired her early love of poetry. Specifically, she credits him as her earliest influence for showing her the centrality of place to poetry. She explains, "some of the first published poetry I was ever exposed to was [Jeffers'] and that was important to me, and I think it was my first sense of being able to think in terms of putting a poet in a landscape that's familiar, because the area that he was writing about was where I grew up—the northern California and central California coast" (253).⁶⁰ Rose connects her early exposure to Jeffers's poetry to a personal realization that not only could familiar landscape be set down in language, but that the poet was himself a part of that landscape. Take his poem "Continent's End," for example, published by the Book Club of California in a collection of California poets that ended up being titled *Continent's Edge*. In it, the speaker stands, embedded, in a specific coastal geography: "I gazing at the boundaries of granite and spray,/ the established sea-marks, felt behind me/ Mountain and plain, the immense breadth of the continent,/ before me the mass and

double stretch of water” (ll. 5-8). Here the reader clearly sees the speaker’s location, not only in an immediate sense—the elements directly surrounding him—but within a larger scale that situates him between continent and ocean. For a reader like Rose, who admits to feeling adrift and without the anchoring comfort of relations, Jeffers’s poetry offers a compelling imagery of groundedness and presence within a California cartography. A few stanzas later, Jeffers shifts from a continental locale to a map of the body: “The tides are in our veins, we still mirror the stars,/ life is your child, but there is in me/ Older and harder than life and more impartial, the eye/ that watched before there was an ocean” (ll. 25-28). Jeffers reverses the relationship between the speaker and the ocean—in this stanza, the ocean is inside the speaker, who *also* is positioned in relationship to the stars. The complex mapping of the speaker into multiple locations and systems of relationality uses geographies and natural phenomena as reference coordinate points. Despite the fact that poems such as “Continent’s End” naturalize the presence of settlers within an otherwise uninhabited California geography, and the pursuant issues underlying environmental literatures, Rose finds a connection with Jeffers and his place-based poetry that deeply shapes her own poetry. The connection between poet and place represented in Jeffers’s works—that is, the mapping of a speaker into a California geography that Rose was already intimately familiar with—provides a productive pathway for thinking with her own poetry. Perhaps more significantly, it represents a moment when Rose refashions the language and poetic practices of settler writers who have historically erased Native presence from place-based and environmental writing to re-insert herself into the land.

California is clearly a bedrock of her thinking and the centrifugal point around which much of her criticism and activism orbits. Take, for example, her poem “Colonial Adventure,” written in 1980 in New York City and published in *Going to War With All My Relations* in 1993.

Its four stanzas are an incisive contemplation on the enduring violence of colonialism as colonizers evolve and expand their weaponry and technological reach over time, raising the provocative question of whether or not any of us, Native or not, are meant to survive it. The poem links twentieth-century nuclear war, exploration technology, and settler politics with nineteenth-century iterations of the same, demonstrating that nothing is new under the colonial sun, only transformed. Each stanza opens with “November/ and ...” so that the poem is grounded in a sense of imminent ending, in an understanding of November as the penultimate month of the year and central to a season marked by decay and transformation. Rose deftly links the pending sense of doom to markers of colonial progress, or “adventures,” as the title suggests. Take for example, the two middle stanzas:

November
 and our metal eyes fly
 past Saturn’s rings
 learnedly clicking
 to steal strips of heaven
 computer-enhanced
 for magazine covers.

November
 and the robots line up
 slip into the polls
 throw money at the hand
 twitching on the Pentagon,

its finger suspended

at the bomb's red button

(it never mattered what face he wore). (38–39)

Her criticisms of space exploration as theft, of photography as propaganda, of voting as a mechanical process rooted in capitalism, which is linked to militarism and destruction, are incisively anti-colonial.

On the other hand, the poem also demonstrates an unusual perspective on the global effects of settler colonialism by anchoring the opening and closing stanzas in California landscape and California history. The opening stanza describes the Eureka coastline after an earthquake, an unsettled geography of sandstone bluffs and tectonic fault lines:

November

and up near Eureka

the highway has tumbled

with what may be

the last earthquake

of the year. Offshore

jade water chops holes

in yellow sandstone. (38)

The speaker in this stanza describes a damaged highway following an earthquake, setting an ominous tone for unsettledness from the opening episode of the poem. The image of a tumbled highway is juxtaposed with the oceanic chaos of the coastline nearby. An explicit echo of Jeffers's "Continent's End," here the speaker describes the liminal zone between cliff (sandstone, not granite in this case) and ocean. These specific images, of highways tumbled by tectonic

forces and oceanic erosion, evoke specific California geographies and situate readers in an unsettled poetic space informed by the geologic conditions of the northern California coast.

Similarly, the closing stanza provides a closing framing device by linking notions of progress and advancement to the fate of Ishi:

November
 and we wait like Ishi
 chipping arrowheads
 uselessly
 from blue beer bottle glass
 onto the earth
 rising to swallow him. (39)

A kind of harbinger in this poem, Ishi's presence is a spectral figure from the past, a reminder to late-twentieth-century readers of both the violence and futility of progress. Ishi's presence in the poem suggests that his own entrée into modernity gave way to a form of "waiting" for an inevitable end. Ishi's arrow making, for which he is famously known in popular narratives, is represented as a "useless" performance. But to say that arrow making is useless is to underscore the transformation of a technology that was fundamental to his survival in a different context into something futile in the wake of "colonial adventures." Set against the legacy of Ishi, the previous three lyrical episodes take on different meaning, and hang the specter of inevitable uselessness and loss over it all and affirm that twentieth-century colonial adventures lead to the same fate as earlier adventures. Her inquiry around the destructiveness of global precarity is anchored in a California story, Ishi, the defining image of American Indian extinction, and constellates outward as she wonders about the global capacity to withstand any of it.

This is a common theme across her poetry—an anchoring of the vast and unevenly distributed effects of colonialism in California geographies, histories, and peoples. “Colonial Adventure” extends the idea of colonialism into the late twentieth century. California emerges as an integral aspect of her ongoing work to understand her personal identity as well. In her 1980 collection, *Lost Copper*, Rose includes a four-poem sequence called “Builder Kachina Home-going” that depicts a road trip from California to Arizona that she describes as “A journey from my mother’s land to my father’s land” in August of 1977 (117). Again, in Jeffers-ian style, the speaker anchors herself firmly within the geographical space of that journey. Each of the four poems opens with an epigraph that identifies the location from which the poem is being written, from San Joaquin Valley toward Third Mesa, Hopi, Arizona. In the fourth poem, the eponymous “Builder Kachina: Home-going,” Rose writes from Third Mesa, utilizing kachina imagery to make sense of how she, “one lone Hopi,” comes to be living in California, how she “made it to the sea” (l. 6, 7).⁶¹ Of note in this poem is one stanza in particular:

Must I explain why
 the songs are still and shy?
 Like this: too much voice
 about me already
 to shuffle in with my tuneless noise.
 California moves my pen
 but Hotevilla dashes through my blood
 like a great and
 crazy dragonfly. (126)

Through the course of this journey, and the poem sequence mapping it, the speaker seeks an origin story, a place with roots, a cartography of belonging. Within Rose's poetry, the capacity for song is linked to identity, place, and belonging and so this stanza is provocative because her song eludes her even after she arrives in a place she presumes would contain her roots. Rose struggles to locate her songs because there is "too much voice/ about me already," a phrase that could mean that the discourses *around* her and *about* her—of extinction, of worthlessness, of Native erasure—are too noisy to map or make sense of her interior cartography.

Here a provocative phrase emerges: "California moves my pen," (l. 19) which she sets up in contradistinction to "but Hotevilla dashes through my blood" (l. 20). The speaker has made this journey to Hotevilla because she feels compelled by a belief that she belongs there, which manifests as an energy in her "blood,"⁶² and yet the energy that moves her to *write*, her act of self-creation, emerges out of California. "California moves my pen" is a confession, an admission, an acceptance that, for Rose, an affirmation of belonging can come from many places and has to be created and energized by diverse sources and communities. The final lines of the final stanza in "Builder Kachina" affirm, "What we can't find/ we'll build but/ slowly,/ slowly" (ll. 36–39). This poem links the act of building with the act of writing, and grounds those acts in California's historical, cultural, and geographical cartographies of dispossession, extinction, violence, and relocations. As I argue further along in this chapter, Rose comes to engage with California as a home with roots, slowly making, through the course of her career, a poetry of place that maps Rose into spaces of connection and belonging. I turn now to the poetic innovations in Rose's works. She creates an ambitious and unusual cartography of belonging that is relentlessly inclusive and remains an important roadmap for other California Native writers to this day. I read three of Rose's poems, "Notes on a Conspiracy," "Urban Breed, Go Get Your

Gun,” and “Margaret Newman”/ “Margaret Castor.” Each of these poems is representative of three themes that emerge repeatedly in Rose’s poetry over time. “Notes on a Conspiracy” emerges out of Rose’s positionality as both Indigenous poet and Indigenous archeologist and applies both of those lenses to a California context. “Urban Breed, Go Get Your Gun” grapples with Rose’s own identity as an urban Indian and the violence she experiences as a young Native girl. “Margaret Newman”/ “Margaret Castor” is the same poem published in two different collections with a title change, and examines Rose’s own California identity through an imagined conversation with her settler ancestor, Margaret. These three poems embody the core themes of Rose’s work and struggles with identity, and they map a pathway through twentieth-century California life.

Rose’s Archeology Poems

Rose is both an Indigenous poet and an Indigenous archeologist, and she draws both identities onto the page. As a graduate student in the department of anthropology at University of California at Berkeley, Rose studied in the department founded by Alfred Kroeber just a few decades earlier. As chapter one described in detail, the field of anthropology relied on what historian Jean O’Brien calls “lasting” discourses of California Native peoples, narratives of inevitable Indigenous disappearance, and made liberal use of the term “extinction” in reference to the genocidal violence and eradication of many California Indian peoples in the late nineteenth century. Rose inherits the intellectual legacy of this form of invisibilization in her training to be an archeologist, and poetry becomes the means by which she confronts the intellectual violence of invisibilization and extinction at Berkeley.

Rose has written an extensive collection of poems that grapple with her time in graduate school, learning how to be an archeologist, and especially with her field work.⁶³ She also writes multiple times about the auctioning or sale of Native remains. These poems share several formal and aesthetic features: each opens with an epigraph quoting an auction or museum catalog that documents, and commodifies, Native remains, circulating bones as commodity and acquisition; each is written as free verse lyrics; and each allows the speaker to interrogate colonial forms of knowledge production by animating the commodified remains. Two of these poems are widely-known and often analyzed and anthologized: “Three Thousand Dollar Death Song” and “I expected my skin and my blood to ripen.” Both were published in *Lost Copper* (1980) and grouped in the same subsection titled “protecting the burial grounds.” In both poems the epigraphs juxtapose the sale of Native bones and material artifacts against the violent history of Native massacre and death. As subject matter both poems grapple with violent histories across the United States; “I expected my skin and my blood to ripen” unsettles and renarrates the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 by enlivening the objects for sale, by making the speaker of the poem the original owner of these objects, and the one who wore them at the time of the massacre. The poem gives voice to the imagined wearer and owner of the moccasins and leggings listed for sale in the poem’s epigraph. Rose links the speaker’s narration of the massacre to the ongoing pursuit of Native peoples into the twentieth century via the processes of archeology and museology. “Three thousand dollar death song” similarly interrogates the violence of museum collecting, cataloguing, and commodifying of Native remains by animating the collections. Both poems establish a pattern in Rose’s poetry of critically examining the irreconcilable disjunctions and violence of anthropology and Indigenous cultures.

I expected my skin and my blood to ripen

“I expected my skin and my blood to ripen” is a provocative 38-line free verse poem that moves from terror and trauma to the body, material culture, taking up space, documenting the body, enlivening the body and the culture; to condemnation and critique “not enough magic” to stop the evil—to resurrecting ghosts, and new songs. Here history, present, future are wrapped in one poem. An epigraph frames the opening: an excerpt from the *Plains Indian Art Auction Catalog* in 1977, advertising, for sale, leggings and moccasins found at the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre. The description states that these items were “gathered” from the site of the violence, as if gathering food or supplies, underscores the way scientists profit from the extraction and circulation of Native remains, and highlights how the violence of nineteenth-century war transforms into a different form of violence in twentieth-century sciences. “I expected” is a poem of profound loss, rage, and grief, a difficult poem that invites readers into the horrors of colonialism. The speaker speaks as a victim of Wounded Knee, as the poem opens:

I expected my skin
and my blood to ripen
not be ripped from my bones;
like fallen fruit
I am peeled, tasted, discarded.
My seeds open/ and have no future.
Now there has been no past (14).

Invoking historical knowledge about the massacre, the speaker describes the violent removal of material artifacts from frozen corpses, the same material artifact on sale in the poem’s epigraph—feet frozen to leather moccasins, “bits of flesh/ on the moccasins,” and “paper

deerhide/ on the bones” (14). Embodying the artifacts in this way amplifies the violence not only of the event itself but of the ongoing violence of circulating such artifacts as commodities with a price tag.

Rose juxtaposes the cold and calculated language of the auction catalog in the epigraph with rich reproductive imagery as a way of refusing the objectification of the material culture for sale. Invoking images of seeds, ripened fruits, and birthing animates the poem and brings to it the kind of magic the speaker desires more of as she yearns to resist tragedy. As the speaker mourns for the loss of what children might have been born if not for the massacre, she expresses a fierce lament that there was not enough “magic” to stop not only the violence of the massacre but also the ongoing violence against Native peoples:

Not enough magic
 to stop the bullets, not enough magic
 to stop the scientists, not enough magic
 to stop the money. Now our ghosts dance
 a new dance, pushing from their hearts
 a new song. (15)

The repetition of the phrase “not enough magic to stop” underscores the repeated waves of violence directed at Native peoples in succession. Bullets, scientists, and money are all technologies of violence leveraged against Native peoples toward the goal of their eradication. Osage poet Carter Revard argues, “the only word Rose has for the Indian side of the encounter is MAGIC” (Revard 17). Magic, as a non-substantive entity, is the immaterial nature of resistance, he suggests. And yet Rose’s repetition of the word magic, even within the phrase “not *enough* magic” (emphasis mine), places emphasis on the repeated *presence* of magic, which in turn

actually makes magic abundant within and despite the repeated waves of violence. Rose's choice to let "magic" hang off the end of each line in this stanza further places weight and emphasis on its presence. I argue that her affirmation of the presence of magic, paired with the "new dance" and "new song" that emerge out of the struggle between violence and magic, transforms the tragedy of the poem into an assertion of presence and vitality.

Three Thousand Dollar Death Song

"Three Thousand Dollar Death Song," published in *Lost Copper*, opens with an epigraph announcing the sale of "Nineteen American Indian skeletons from Nevada ... valued at \$3000" and centers the critique of commodifying Native remains in its opening lines: "Is it in cold hard cash? the kind/ that dusts the insides of men's pockets/ lying silver-polished surface along the cloth./ Or in bills? papering the wallets of they/ who thread the night with dark words. Or/ checks? Paper promises weighing the same/ as words spoken once on the other side/ of the grown grass and dammed rivers/ of history. However it goes, it goes" (26). Describing "a universe/ of stolen things" (27) Rose examines through poetry and on the space of the page the ways in which archeology continues to enact genocide on Native communities everywhere.

This 52-line poem follows a similar narrative flow as "I expected my skin and my blood to ripen," in that both poems follow a trajectory that amplifies colonial violence, creates space for a Native voice to speak back to the processes of Native elimination, and transforms death and destruction into life and resistance. In the first stanza of 26 lines, or the first half of the poem, the speaker narrates how bones are assessed, "invoiced," "catalogued," and "numbered" (ll. 11, 16, 21). It links nineteenth-century violence to twentieth—military occupation and violence to

scientific violence, under the manipulation and cataloguing by white hands: “As we were formed to the white soldier’s voice,/ so we explode under white students’ hands” (26).

The speaker in the second stanza, comprised of nine lines, speaks as part of a collective “we,” as distant observers of the work of the soldiers and scientists: “From this distant point we watch our bones/ auctioned with our careful beadwork” (ll. 27–28). She then directly addresses the soldier-scientist: “You: who have/ priced us, you who have removed us: at what cost?” (ll. 31–32). The move from cash to cost signifies that the price cannot be measured in colonial currency. Time has turned “our dead into specimens, our history/ into dust, our survivors into clowns” (ll. 33–35) thereby signaling that a new form of payment is necessary to pay reparations for these atrocities. The third stanza depicts a transformation, the activation and enlivening of the invoiced, catalogued, and numbered. The “mortars, the arrowheads, the labrets/ ... suddenly awake to find the seasons have ended/ while they slept” (ll. 37, 39–40). They “march out the museum door!” as the speakers’ “bones rise/ to meet them and mount the horses once again!” (ll. 41, 43–44).

The cost, then, will be paid
 for our sweetgrass-smelling having-been
 in clam shell beads and steatite,
 dentalia and woodpecker scalp, turquoise
 and copper, blood and oil, coal
 and uranium, children, a universe
 of stolen things. (27)

This provocative move from US currency to forms of Indigenous currency reorganizes the systems of commodification—of what can or should be commodified—and reframes things that

can be purchased as objects that belong in community and have been stolen rather than rightfully bought.

Rose relies heavily on an aesthetics of bones throughout her poetry and writing. More than symbolism, imagery, or iconography, the recurring presence of bones—from the title of her collection, *Bone Dance*, to her work as an archeologist—grounds the creative energy of Rose’s poetry in the realities of settler violence and Indigenous loss. And in her work, bones are always doing interesting things, never dead, never passive. In her essay, “The Bones Speak: Excavation and Reunion,” Chumash and Costanoan Esselen Ohlone writer Deborah Miranda reads Rose’s poem “Excavation at Santa Barbara Mission” along with a companion essay. Miranda writes of the agency of the bones in “Excavation,” that in the short line, “A feature juts out,” “the agency here is in *the bone itself*, the way it penetrates *the anthropologist’s* world. As if the bone is somehow still alive” (291). Miranda continues, “The bones, like the speaker, have a complicated genealogy. Not just anonymous bones from a dead past, they are a vital part of transformation, the cycle which death allows” (291). And:

Rose shows us those bones within that very moment of transformation as the speaker touches them ... Still in anthro mode, the speaker at first sees the people buried here as weak, unable to adapt, disappearing before her eyes. It’s as if the word ‘extinction’ is on the tip of her tongue, and the inevitability of it allows her to speak of their remains in the most decrepit of terms.

But the bone dust mixes ‘with the blood of my own knuckles,’ and the poem quietly explodes.

... Ancestral remains reach out to the speaker’s hands, do the mixing. The Ancestors claim her by blood. The boundaries that the speaker once believed in—linear

time, us and them, science and spirit—collapse in this intimate encounter. Or is it a reunion? (291–292)

Miranda situates “Excavation” as a moment of reckoning for Rose’s speaker: “Is she going to choose as her livelihood a future based on a mass murder in which she, herself, is a victim? Will she ignore what her blood tells her, and continue to dig for the benefit of Western science?” (293). The concluding stanza in “Excavation” proves to be a powerful response. Miranda reproduces it in her essay, and I reproduce it here to convey the visual effect of the stanza:

They built the mission with dead Indians.

They built the mission with dead Indians.

They built the mission with dead Indians.

They built the mission with dead Indians. (293)

Miranda’s powerful observations about this stanza: “This stanza stands on the page, in shape and intention, like an adobe brick. Seen against the sparse, lyric stanzas before it, the speaker and her reader literally run into a brick wall that does not allow for metaphor or erasure. ... Wendy Rose says it: dead Indians are the foundation of the poem, of Mission Santa Barbara, of the entire mission system, and of this country” (293).

Notes on a Conspiracy

A third poem of this particular genre, “Notes on a Conspiracy,” published in *Going to War With All My Relations* in 1993, performs similarly to “Three thousand dollar death song” and “I Expected my Skin and my Blood to Ripen” in form and narrative pattern, as lament, refusal, and transformation. “Notes,” however, is anchored in a rhetoric of extinction and specific California imagery and references. The opening epigraph is an excerpt from a 1977 auction catalog:

“Collection of aboriginal Indian skulls exhibited by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia; 44 skulls from 35 tribes found in graves and on battlefields. Many from extinct tribes ...” Unlike “Three Thousand Dollar Death Song” and “I expected my skin and my blood to ripen,” no monetary value is listed in the epigraph, but as an excerpt from an auction catalog the reader can assume that the 44 skulls are for sale.

“Notes” is a 48 line, five stanza free verse poem, although all the lines hover around 10 syllables per line, and a freeform loose iambic pentameter poem. The poem’s speaker opens, saying “I knew those diggers would find a way,” and immediately readers familiar with the history and context of California are hooked by Rose’s punning with the term “digger.” The speaker’s use of the word “diggers” to refer to archeologists immediately calls to mind the racial epithet leveraged against California Indians throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which was used to dehumanize California’s Native peoples as primitive. By calling the archeologists rather than the Native bodies the diggers, however, the speaker in “Notes” flips, from the outset of the poem, the relationship between the scientist and the Native bodies.⁶⁴

The subsequent imagery in the poem is that of the speaker’s skeleton body being violently handled by the scientist diggers: “I knew those diggers would find a way/ to rack the willow twigs of my arms/ tied as they were behind shovel-cracked ribs/ sticking into the sky where the sand sloughs away” (ll. 1–4). There are multiple levels of violence against this Native body encoded in these lines. The poem suggests that the body was buried with the person’s arms tied behind their back, a signal of captivity and an allusion to the likelihood of a violent death in captivity. Laid to rest in the posture of captivity and bondage, the body continues to experience violence at the hands of settlers, as scientists’ shovels cracked her ribs. The verb “rack” in these lines could mean that the scientists find a way to “rack” the bones—frame them, organize them,

and contain them—cause pain or stress to them. The interplay of both of these definitions underscores the harm of the scientists’ work to excavate and organize Native bones, from the violence that laid them there to the violence involved in digging them up.

The “I” of the poem’s speaker is disembodied from their remains, raising provocative questions about death, “extinct” tribes, and survivance. As we saw in the first chapter with Ishi, the question of whether or not one is the only survivor of genocide compels the speaker to seek out relations and hope that she is not truly the last remaining member of her tribal community:

I wander lost in an antelope’s dream
 searching for relations beneath every rock,
 pray that I will not go to war alone
 with eyes open for the great old visions (5–8)

The speaker looks for relations buried in the earth, anticipating a war, eyes open for a “great old vision” to guide her.

The second stanza opens with a provocative question, “Who would have thought we could be ended?” (l. 11). This question is addressing the issue of “extinction” found in the epigraph, and grammatically encodes an ambiguity around the concept. On one hand, the speaker reflects, from a present moment to past events, on an end that has already occurred. The rhetorical speculation of the first phrase of the line—who would have thought—expresses surprise, disbelief, perhaps casual ambivalence. Yet the question embodies a paradoxical hypothetical: the “we” presumes an Indigenous collective, while the phrase “could be” is a past participle that refers to something in the past that either came to pass or did not. The “could be” in other words carries ambiguity around whether the verb, “ended,” occurred. Ending a “we,” on the other hand, conjures the specter of genocide and extinction. Yet how could there be a

speaking “we” if they had been ended? The conjunction of the “we” with the past participle resolves the ambiguity: the existence of the we, among whom the speaker counts herself, refuses the ending. And yet, California Indians have been ended by the mid-twentieth century, rhetorically, scientifically, and imaginatively. The speaker’s question, posed as such, unsettles the scientific certainty of extinction.

The next lines are similarly provocative: “Betrayal is as real as the acorns in my spine./ Extinction whips overhead in the storm,/ constant threat to break the fishbone charms” (l. 12–14). The simile in line 12 materializes betrayal as acorns, a traditional source of food and nourishment in California Indian communities but links this symbol of vitality, birth, and nourishment to an embodiment of betrayal. On one hand it most obviously places an emphasis on betrayal as a real experience. Whereas in life the acorns nourished the body, in the scene of this excavation, betrayal upholds a new kind of reality. In life, acorns are a primary source of nourishment and provide strength for Native bodies. In this regard they, with the spine, uphold the body. The spine, however, is also the supporting structure for the human body, and the image of acorns holding up a body is a powerful invocation of California Indian aesthetics—acorns, as a primary source of nourishment and health, indeed support Native bodies in health and strength. In the context of “Notes on a Conspiracy,” it is possible that scientists located acorns at the dig site alongside and within the skeletal frame of an ancestor, and metaphorically acorns support the speaker’s posture as they nourish her. In either reading, Rose captures the complexity of past and present in the embodied form of a skeleton.

The looming threat of extinction, like a storm, breaks the charm. Extinction is the physical condition, it is in the atmosphere, it permeates and electrifies and creates barometric

pressure and causes rain and wind. In this provocative imagery Rose bears down on the concept of extinction to illustrate the atmospheric reality of such a pernicious myth.

The third stanza opens by calling scientists “skullmongers,” continuing the assertion that scientists are neither benevolent nor objective but extractive and driven by capital gain, and operating as if extinction were fact rather than a structure of settler colonialism. “Skullmongers” alludes to other terms such as “warmonger,” linking the extractive nature of scientific work to acts of war. It also alludes to common terms such as “fishmonger,” a commodity trader whose livelihood depends on the production and sale of a particular good. Read either way, the term “skullmonger” evokes the violence of both war and the commodity market. The term is also a refusal of the benevolence of scientists. In relation to the term “digger” in the first stanza, Rose explicitly names the extractive and violent nature of anthropology and archeology.

There is also a built-in compassion or retrospective contemplativeness around how the Native-settler relationship might have been different in this stanza. The speaker establishes a sense of responsibility on behalf of the colonized Natives, claiming, “We should have asked/ where is the dust of your mothers?/ What happened to your own land?/ Why did you come so far from your homes?/ What sacred gifts do you carry? What of your humor?/ All this talk of money and estates!” (ll. 18–25). Here the speaker speculates on what shifts might have taken place if Native peoples had held settlers responsible according to a particular set of ethics and standards. This series of questions shifts value away from “money and estates!” to relationships: what dust, what land, what mothers, what homes did you leave to be here?

The fourth stanza opens: “And we” (l. 26). The speaker directs her series of questions back on her own people:

And we. Where is our strength that was acorn and bluejay,

tules laughing in the afternoon wind?
 When will we dance—you remember the one—
 where we bring up the sun with a shout?
 They blame us for their guilt.
 They say we are now a privileged few.
 They say we gamble too much
 we who changed faster than anything,
 who gambled with a snap, a glimmer
 of vanishing light, eclipse of the moon,
 and felt our joints twisted apart,
 our hands forced empty of memory. (ll. 26–37)

In this stanza, certain California references are encoded. The acorn reappears, this time as a source of strength. The references to acorn, bluejay, and tule construct a California ecology that, as the speaker says, is a source of strength.

The fifth and final stanza returns from speculation to reality and describes the decay of the Native body, the return of the speaker to her bones, the scientist's return to his excavation:

We felt our eyes melt from their sockets
 As we spun away from the world and now
 The scientist wonders at the bullet he lifts
 From the tiny soft place where my daughter slept.
 Look—how like a furious gun
 He finds himself drowned
 In the blood of dead nations.

Look—how he suffocates

In his own poisonous air.

He cannot hear the sound of my teeth in his bucket.

He does not feel the point of his own probing trowel.

The scientist (he is now, once more, a scientist) finds a bullet in the excavation site and finds himself “drowned” and “suffocated” by the violence of his own doing. The repetition in “He cannot hear” and “He cannot feel” reveals the inability of the scientist to feel or hear Native voices, enlivened, or the violence of his own actions. What makes this a provocative “California” poem, I argue, is the way Rose hooks into a specific set of aesthetic markers, such as “digger,” “acorns,” “tules,” and links the violent processes of archeology—of digging up the fragmented remains, to an earlier era of colonial violence. These two tactics of oppression—war and anthropology—converge in the body of this ancestor and collapse time, experience, and memory.

“Urban Breed, Go Get Your Gun” and “Neon Scars”

In her autobiographical essay “Neon Scars,” published in the anthology *I Tell You Now:*

Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers, edited by Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat in 1987, Wendy Rose confesses, “Writing this autobiographical essay has been the most difficult, most elusive task I have faced as a writer. ... *Everything I have ever written is fundamentally autobiographical*, no matter what the topic or style; to state my life now in an orderly way with clear language is actually to restate, simplified, what has already been said” (253, emphasis added).⁶⁵ A somewhat sardonic introduction, it makes an incisive critique of the form and genre of the autobiography, and a complaint against the editors who restricted the genre to a particular form. Rose asserts that her body of poetry *is* her autobiography, and in doing so provokes a

question for not only literary studies but particularly California Native studies: what is the work of poetry? How might scholars of Native California better understand poetry, or creative arts more generally, as a form that complexly theorizes genocide and survivance in the twentieth century? What role does audience play in understanding and interpreting poetry *as* autobiography, as a creative form of survivance? As I argue in chapter one, the relationship between form, comprehension, and knowledge production is entangled, and few scholars see Ishi's wax cylinder recordings as narratives of survivance; they are neither legible nor accessible and so they are largely sidelined in literary studies. This extends to a conversation about Rose's creative works and life writing: accessibility, legibility, and dominant assumptions about what knowledge and story are deeply affect one's ability to see her poetry as a vital and dynamic creative expression of her world as a California Native woman. Yet both wax cylinders and poetry are powerful refusals of the extinction narrative, even as both Ishi and Rose were immersed in the pernicious belief that they were last survivors of otherwise extinct peoples. In this section I compare "Neon Scars," the essay Rose eventually produces for Swann and Krupat, with her poem "Urban Breed, Go Get Your Gun," which was written in 1971 and published in 1994 in her collection *Now Poof She Is Gone*. This comparative reading analyzes the possibilities and limits of poetry in theorizing survivance and raises the logical question: how do other scholars read Native poetry in relation to survivance?

Rose proceeds, if a little begrudgingly, to write a wrenching narrative essay for Swann's and Krupat's autobiography anthology. "Neon Scars" bears testimony to the violence Rose experienced through her life as a visibly Native child in a racist family. She writes in two voices, a dominant voice and a second, interior voice, which are made visually distinct on the page through her use of larger and smaller fonts. Her dominant voice maintains the sardonic tone that

opens the essay and queries the presumed validity of the form as somehow more true than poetry as she perfunctorily addresses the conventions of an autobiographical essay. For example, to cover the events of her birth and childhood she makes a list, as if actually checking off criteria: “Facts: May 7, 1948. Oakland. Catholic hospital. Midwife nun, no doctor. Citation won the Kentucky Derby. Israel was born. The United Nations met for the first time. It was Saturday, the end of the baby boom or the beginning. Boom. Stephen’s little sister. Daughter of Betty. ...” (254). The list continues from birth to her current moment and never once utilizes an “I” statement. This list of “facts” addresses the basics of autobiography: here are the events of my life. The dominant voice maintains its observational distance from the emotional intimacies and scars that map her interior life. A trained anthropologist, she turns the discourse of objectivity and calculated speculation on her own life and, in doing so also critiques the autobiographical essay form as a genre that presumes a certain kind of knowledge about a person. Her essay exposes a politics of accessibility and presumed knowledge about what information is or should be accessible to readers, audiences. This subject-less list of facts and events conveys a series of information unrelated to the speaker.

Rose also allows herself to give in to expectations of an autobiography by weaving the smaller voice (physically, the text on the page is smaller but also reflects the sense that this interior, intimate voice is indeed the smaller voice) with the objective and anthropological. The interior voice is visually distinct on the page in smaller font than the main narrative thread, a smaller font reflecting the voice’s more vulnerable contemplations which emerge as small and less valued by others in Rose’s life. The distinction indicates that there are some things she should not share, say out loud, confess, some pains she should not feel, some scars that should not burn as brightly as they do. The juxtaposition of the large and small print on the page is

subtle, a difference of perhaps one or two font-sizes. It is not visually obvious in the way that Momaday's distinct voices in *The Way to Rainy Mountain* appear on different parts of the page, for example. Rose's ingenuity shows through here: there are two voices, to the perceptive eye. They are noticeable but the reader must work with the text to understand why.

Rose uses the form of the essay, the distinction between the two voices, to say something beyond the words on the page, beyond the text. She conveys the tension between inside and outside, observer and observed, and grants the interior, observed person agency, autonomy, a range of ability to freely express tender feelings. Such formal practices encode resistance as a form of survivance and model the complex interiority of a California Indian woman who lives, against all odds. The essay is difficult to read on an emotional level because Rose describes her experiences with childhood abuse and domestic violence explicitly and directly. It is difficult to write about as well. (I have avoided writing this section, tried to write around it, but, here we must confront the realities of Rose's life). Rose was painfully rejected by her family for the way she looked. Her step-father was physically violent with her. She writes:

I recall that every dirty word I ever knew was first heard from my father's lips, from the man who raised me as he struck over and over. As an adult, I take this apart and study it. I suppose it was a kind of rape for him to talk like that in the middle of his violence, to name the parts of my body he intended to mutilate or cut away. I recall lying in my bed, hearing him scream at my mother that he wanted to kill me; and I recall that he tried, more than once. Symbolic of what he wanted to do to me, he smashed my toys. (259)

Written in the dominant voice, in larger text, this description of her step-father's violent intentions towards her is written in the sobering objective, analytical voice. Yet the reality she describes is deeply emotional and even as readers we have to stop, pause, breathe, and hold the

profound grief of what she describes, at least formally—textually and visually—disassociated from the intimacy of such pain and violence, perhaps a mirror of her own emotional disassociation.

“Neon Scars” documents her ancestors’ lives as a genealogical foundation for her own. Rose grapples extensively with her mother, and with the barriers her mother’s family creates that prevent her from knowing anything about their Miwok ancestry. In the essay Rose recounts an expository history of her mother’s ancestors, writing:

Clare [her mother] was born thirty years after the Gold Rush, in Bear Valley. Bear Creek branches from the Merced River near there, just down the mountain from Yosemite, rippling through oak-wooded grassy hills and bullpines. Her mother and father were born there also; he was raised in a house that had belonged to John C. Fremont. Their people had ridden wagons west across the plains or had sailed around the Horn to find prosperity in a land newly claimed from Mexico. Clare’s father, Maurice, was the son of German immigrants who had traveled from Missouri in a wagon train ... (256)

She continues to trace her mother’s family back to Scotland, the Crusades on the Irish, to William the Conqueror, the Normans. She documents the processes of colonialism that occur on the British Isle, noting that she comes from families who “fiercely colonized Ireland and settled on stolen land” (256). She writes, “This is not the heritage I would have picked—to be the daughter of the invaders. It is not where my sympathies lie” (258). Rose grapples with the mingling of not only Hopi and Miwok blood in her veins, but also of a European ancestry that unites colonizer and colonized histories in her body.

“Urban Breed, Go Get Your Gun”

Rose's poem "Urban Breed, Go Get Your Gun," on the other hand, conveys much of the same content as "Neon Scars," but in the form of an 87-line free-verse poem written in 1971. Like the essay, "Urban Breed" contains many of the core themes that appear in the autobiography and throughout Rose's poetry: belonging, identity, fear, halfbreedness. It conveys a similar range of emotions—the precarity of existence, the pain of domestic violence and child abuse, of what it looks like to be an urban California Indian. To her point in her introduction to "Neon Scars," she has written her story before, many times, in poetic form.

"Urban Breed" is similarly difficult to read because of its representation of Rose's grief and alienation. In many ways this poem is in intimate conversation with "Neon Scars," as it repeats, in poetic form, the core questions from the essay. Many of the questions that appear in her work appear here: "You have told yourself/ you fear for your people/ but just exactly/ who are your people?" "There is no ancestor/ dancing on your tongue, is there?" Contained within both these questions is a tender precarity around Rose's sense of self. She is asking, who are my people? Do I have ancestors? Am I lovable? Who will claim me?

The title of the poem combines two identity categories she typically self-ascribes—"urban Indian," and "halfbreed." The title suggests that the poem will explore themes of identity and belonging, as both categories evoke possible configurations for kinship. The title's second part, "Go Get Your Gun," is a directive and an invitation to a fight, or a foreshadowing of violence to come, an ominous suggestion to prepare to fight (back). The insinuation of a fight to come prepares readers to enter into the poem ready to encounter conflict. As readers we are positioned as observers of the poem's interior conflicts.

In the preface to *Now Poof She Is Gone*, Rose writes, "The following poems are the ones that were safely tucked away so that no one would see them. ... The message we are given is that

the world is not interested in the private pain of women” (Preface). Rose kept the most personal, intimate poems about identity out of public view and scrutiny for decades. She says she realizes that the poetry she enjoys the most is the poetry that invites her as a reader into the intimate experiences of the poets, and so made the decision following a legacy of courageous women to share her intimate feelings about identity with her public. “Let us empower ourselves through the ritual of sharing burdens. I offer these poems, written during the past twenty-five years, in the spirit of women’s voices laying along the ground like a magic mist” (Preface). These are published late in her career, although many of the poems in the collection were written decades earlier. The precarity of publishing representations of her “private pain” is grounded in the structures of settler colonialism.

The poem opens, “The feeling never congeals into truth./ You are one thing but another as well,/ inside/ one kind of woman,/ outside a different kind/ and perhaps there is a place/ with no woman at all.” The unsettledness or inability to “congeal” feelings into a sense of groundedness is reflected in the following lines as well:

You are nameless but inevitable
 having run the gauntlet of denial
 and surfaced with your mouth full of salt.
 you have choked on your songs
 As you sang them.

Afraid of being a parasite
 or even accused of it
 you willingly starve

but no one is there to notice,
 no one keeps track
 of the ones who survive.

On one hand, Rose writes in “Neon Scars” that she suffers from literal starvation for a moment in her life. On the other, the idea of being a parasite could mean being a parasite on tribal cultures, or communities, as the preceding lines suggest a hesitancy about belonging. That there is no one to keep track of the ones who survive also is a provocative image for a detribalized California Native woman in the twentieth century. There is no one to notice her survival, evoking the question she raises in “Neon Scars”: “is my survival of any worth?” (254). In the absence of a “someone” to notice her survival Rose underscores the lack of tribal community and belonging: no one to bear witness to her survival, to be in relationship with. What is a living California Indian woman to do without a community to bear witness to her survival? Rose’s response is to write about her experiences. This is only one half of the equation though, as it were: keeping track is also on the side of the dominant culture, whose mythology allows for only a limited range of sanctioned survivors. There are political and economic, as well as philosophical and moral, reasons for the dominant culture to refuse to acknowledge survivors, perpetuating the erasure of survivors through complex systems of racialization, discrimination, and criminalization.

She also (re)turns to archeology but not in the same way that she evokes it in “Notes on a Conspiracy.” She writes, “There is no archeology/ to the levels of life” and turns the science of discovery and identity against itself, suggesting that archeology does not work on the complexities of life, that it fixates on “levels of death” instead. And, reading beyond the line

itself, perhaps arguing that there is no archeology that adequately grapples with the stratigraphy of past lives as well.

Reading this poem in conversation with an autobiographical essay supports the development of a reading practice that affirms Rose's poetry as autobiography and offers a guide for doing so. As an activist poet we know Rose's writing consistently exists at the intersection between creative and lived experiences. Very recently, Maidu literary scholar Mark Minch-de Leon has published analytical work on the Maidu painter Frank Day and similarly argued that, given the complex particularities of the California Indian experience in the twentieth century, it is best to "take Day's words and images at face value" and "attempt to listen to how he frames problems" rather than getting caught in the "false dilemma between antirealist critique and realist assertions of positive knowledge" ("Atlas for a Destroyed World" 57). That is, for scholars thinking with California Indian writers and artists representing their own "unknown and unsayable" experiences, it is preferable to listen to the writers and artists as they guide readers and viewers into and through their works.

The lines "As for love, you are too white/ for the red, too red for the white,/ you are no color/ or every color/ or a crazy mosaic/ and heyyyy-eee-ee!/ you will never have/ a fullblood baby" (ll. 29–36) underscore the anxiety of the speaker for the way in which identity is racialized. What is provocative about this section of the poem is her invocation of the concept of mosaics, which resonate with Miranda's creative and formal method of making narrative mosaics. The idea of the mosaic transforms the sentiment in these lines that it is not enough to be too much of one or the other, and suggests the possibility of making something whole out of the pieces of what exists.

In the concluding lines of the poem: “Everyone is forever/ different from you/ but you are the same/ as you always were.” “Your chromosomes abandon you./ You are disowned by your face./ There is no ancestor dancing on your tongue, is there?/ A centaur/ lives in your heart.”

The core identity issues that this poem invokes are the struggle with being mixed identity without a family or a people to claim her. The speaker expresses grief at being abandoned by her own chromosomes, genetic family, and kin. Centaurs, half human, half horse, embody the duality of being mixed breed, but are also fierce fantasy characters of strength. Rose is constantly innovating a future, a path, a way through extinction, rejection, toward belonging, toward relationality.

The title of the essay, “Neon Scars,” invites readers to consider how the essay documents the scars she carries and in what ways they continue to burn, brightly. Neon lights are highly visible, red in color, and glow brightly. In this sense, the scars Rose bears from the trauma of her childhood continue to burn and radiate. In her interior voice, she writes, “When I speak of bruises that rise on my flesh like blue marbles, do you understand that these are real bruises that have appeared on my flesh? Or has the metaphor succeeded in hiding the pain while producing the fact, putting it in a private place just for those readers and listeners who know me well enough to have seen the bruises?” (253). Rose asserts that the metaphor masks the reality and that metaphor is actually fact. That the pain she describes is real, that the metaphor makes that pain accessible only to those who read past the metaphor. Literary form is both gatekeeper and confessional method, metaphor as a mask and bare truth. She puts literary conventions to work to unsettle and reveal, convey and veil: Here is your exposé, if you can read it.

Neon, however, is also the chemical element, Ne. As an element, it is a noble gas, meaning its properties are colorless, odorless, and low in reactivity, or inert under normal

conditions. It emits bright red in color on the emission spectrum. Its name derives from the Greek word meaning “new.” Wikipedia reports, “During cosmic nucleogenesis of the elements, large amounts of neon are built up from the alpha-capture fusion process in stars.” Given Rose’s propensity to look to outer space as a site of Indigenous futures, the use of the term “neon” here suggests that she is making something of a “cosmic nucleogenesis”—that is, the creation of new atomic nuclei from pre-existing nucleons. The ambiguity in the title between the chemical element and the vibrancy of light and color opens up exciting possibilities for reading her essay as a work that transforms pre-existing elements—of trauma, pain, rejection, and abuse—into something new, neon building up and bursting bright red in the process. I love thinking about the pain and difficulty of this essay within the context of a term that derives from “new.” On one hand, this stable, inert, invisible gas that permeates the cosmos but is rare on earth is a powerful metaphor for Indigenous survivance. It also works in reverse, that the invisible stable inert gas that thrives on earth is *not* survivance, that the conditions for visibility and existence here are difficult for California Indigenous peoples. Another way of thinking about the title is to see Rose trying to figure out ways to “glow red,” to be seen and recognized as Native.

Interrogating “Margaret Neumann” / “Margaret Castor”: A Settler Colonial Critique

Rose’s poem, “Margaret Neumann,” later “Margaret Castor,” is a significant piece of writing because it centers the ancestor through whom Rose is Miwok and signals her exploration around this part of her family’s history. “Margaret Neuman” was first published in 1993 in *Going to War With All My Relations*, although it had been written in 1989. Rose republished the same poem with significant changes as “Margaret Castor” in *Itch Like Crazy* in 2002. It is an incredibly rich and provocative poem, and reading the two versions together produces great

insight into the evolution of Rose's poetry as well as her own perspective on California settler colonialism and genocide.

Reckoning with Margaret allows Rose to negotiate formally, in language and on the page, the ways in which settler and Indigenous are reconciled and brought to bear on each other. The entire collection, *Itch Like Crazy*, is a reckoning with the fragmented family secrets she has and an attempt to establish a network of kinship relations, a relational and ancestral mapping that affirms a genealogy. In the same way, Miranda describes the act of writing her name, "D E B Y," as an act of survivance and a refusal to disappear in *Bad Indians*. Miranda writes: "All my life, I knew I would disappear. ... So from the time I could hold a crayon, I scribbled. I scrawled. ... Couldn't stop, because if I did, I would disappear. Everyone I loved had disappeared. I was next" (119). Similar to Miranda's assertion that writing was an act to beat back disappearance, Rose's *Itch Like Crazy* is a meditation on invisible ancestral relationships that make visible the contours of her own life.

The poem is broken into twelve stanzas of varying length that alternate between perspectives, and this is true for both versions. This alternation is indicated by every other stanza being indented and set toward the right side of the page. Some of the stanzas are indented more than others. The stanzas' location on the pages establish a conversation or a convergence between two relatives across time. The left-justified stanzas describe and recount Margaret Neumann's migration from Germany to California. The center-justified stanzas set apart from these ones in alternating order reflect California-rooted or Miwok-centered perspectives. They converge at the center of the page in an imagined convergence zone, a formal placement of stanzas on the page that reproduce the imagined conversation between past and present, Indigenous and settler relations. In one stanza where Rose draws Margaret and herself into a

single conversation she asks Margaret, “Are you the astonished one/ or am I? that we meet like this/ between the sailing ship/ and the silver jet/ crossing the sky?” (78).

There are several notable changes between the 1993 and 2002 versions of the poem. Perhaps most obviously, Margaret’s name changes. In an essay Rose explains, “In early versions of the long poem about Margaret, she was called Margaret Newman because I had been told it was her name and that it was just a coincidence that she had married a man whose name was also Newman. It turned out that her family name was Castor, and so I hope no one gets too confused by the correction in the title of the poem” (*Itch* 105). Rose underscores the evolving nature of genealogical knowledge, and how to piece the accumulated fragments of knowledge together over time. As she has learned, Margaret “fraternized with the Natives” and gave birth to a Miwok son. She writes, “Miwok people today in the Mariposa area tell me that they have heard stories about the Newmans and their own people, but no one can tell me the name or the clan of my biological great-great-grandfather (*Itch* 105).

In the 2002 version Rose adds many new details to the history of colonialism. As a result, it is much longer. The 2002 poem is 27 lines longer than the 1989 version. The 1989 poem is 86 lines and the 2002 version is 113. The increase of length has to do with two main factors: one is a difference in line breaks; Rose breaks lines from the 1989 version. For example, in the 1989 poem, the opening stanza reads:

The dangerous dreams of a wild girl, they said,
 who goes to meet her husband beneath
 the twisting serpent and eagle
 of Mexico’s flag. (ll. 1–4)

The 2002 version breaks the same lines differently:

The dangerous dreams
 of a wild girl, they said,
 who goes west
 to meet her husband
 beneath the twisting serpent
 and eagle
 of Mexico's flag. (ll. 1–7)

The only change in content in the opening stanza is Rose's addition of the directional adverb "west" to line three (bolded in the reproduced lines above). The expanded 2002 stanza shifts emphasis away from the idea that Margaret meets a husband "beneath" the Mexican flag and onto her move west.

The other reason the poem is 27 lines longer is because Rose adds substantial new content to the 2002 version. For example, in the second stanza, the 1989 version states:

... and the sun
 glimmers from a thousand swords
 ankle-deep already in Miwok bones. (ll. 7–9)

In the 2002 version, Rose adds:

... and the sun glimmers
 from a thousand Spanish swords,
 fire from the mouths of muskets,
 ankle-deep already
 in Miwok blood and men. (ll. 4–8)

The 2002 version adds weaponry, specifies who wields the weapons, and replaces “bones” with the fleshy materiality of Miwok bodies—“blood and men,” enlivening this history, whereas “bones” perpetuates the historicized context of missionization and colonization.

The third stanza similarly reorganizes line breaks and adds detail that concretely illustrates the violence of colonialism for Bear Valley Miwok people. In the 1989 version, the stanza opens:

The rivers Merced and Mokelumne,
 San Joaquin and Fresno,
 feed great pastures of blood
 and secret shining crops—
 Bear Creek blood, blood of Mariposa,
 Yosemite blood, Awhahnee blood,
 places made bad in the night of red water. (ll. 19–25)

The 2002 version, however, adds significant details:

The rivers Merced and Mokelumne,
 San Joaquin and Fresno,
 Feed great pastures, tules amid
 The streams of blood, secret shining crops
 That moan and tremble at night, Bear Creek blood,
 blood of Mariposa,
 Yosemite blood,
 Ahwahneechee blood,
 Places dark and toxic

From the rain of red water that will never end,

The blasting apart of the mountain's bones. (ll. 25–33)

The details added and rearranged in the 2002 version reveal a confidence in her critique that is not as explicit in the 1989 version. From corrections such as “Ahwahneechee” for “Ahwahnee” that signal an expanded and corrected knowledge of tribal names and places in the Miwok world, to more substantial alterations, Rose's 2002 version of this poem is an incisive critique not only of settler colonial bloodshed and violence but of violence against a personified land. The blasting of the mountain's “bones” enlivens land as place. These are places rendered “toxic” by a relentless “rain of red water,” evoking parallel imagery of acid rain and polluted waters common in discourses about environmental pollution and climate emerging around the same era. By expanding the imagery of the rivers feeding pastures of blood, Rose gives flesh and persona to the historical violence that occurred at these places. It is actually unclear whether the blood is spilled from Miwok bodies or if the land itself is bleeding, or if the lack of distinction is meant to provoke both possibilities. The inclusion of the tules rooted in streams of blood and secret shining crops (of gold) link an indigenous plant to an adapted life in an altered ecology that accounts for the bloody past. Naming tules in the 2002 version concretizes Rose's efforts to allude to Indigeneity and the historical violences between colonizers and California Indians. Tules are central plants to the material and spiritual culture of many California tribal nations.

Rose in fact consistently invokes imagery of indigenous plant life that plays central roles in California Indian material and spiritual life. In her poem, “Buckeye,” Rose writes:

Buckeye endures on this land
where oak and screwbean bend
blackened into human hands.

Other native bones
 swell into mountains,
 run red with the story
 of their Christian death;

other native tongues
 drop in the sand
 thick with Spanish,
 trilling with hymns.

Survivor

Singer

Feeder

Doctor

Buckeye endures on this land. (*Lost Copper* 19)

The imagery in “Buckeye” makes plant life supplicant to the effects of colonization in the same way human life becomes transformed—both experience the violence of Spanish transformation, whether oak and screwbean “bend blackened” into the hands of the colonizers or human tongues “trilling with hymns” fall or bones “run red with the story” of their “Christian death.” Buckeye, on the other hand, is a hardy indigenous plant, a head high shrub that grows sweet-smelling flowers and poisonous nuts and seeds. In “Margaret,” the speaker in “Buckeye” utilizes an

indigenous plant to disrupt and assert survivance. While native bones and native tongues fall victim to “Christian death” while singing trilling hymns, buckeye remains continuously. Indigenous plant life serves as a crucial aesthetic anchor in Rose’s poetry, a kind of symbolic and material framework from which she examines larger issues of colonialism.

The “secret shining crops,” or gold, an extractable good for harvest, as the term “crop” implies, naturalizes the brutality of the gold rush against the land as much as against the Native peoples living in those lands. The line “places dark and toxic” evokes contemporary discourses of environmental justice and ecological health that affirm that environmental toxicity and imbalance are effects of settler colonialism. These crops “moan and tremble at night” giving voice to the lament and grief and fear intricately linked to their value, extraction, cost. The use of the word “crop” further aligns gold within an ecology of organic and inorganic matter that lives, produces, and is extracted. The profuse mining of the nineteenth century created imbalance within that ecology, particularly because of how the mining practices disrupt the land. The added line, “The blasting apart of the mountain’s bones,” illustrates the explosive violence of mining practices and their long term harm on places and spaces. In a special issue of *News from Native California* about contemporary California Indian reflections on the Gold Rush, Karuk artist Julian Lang introduces a series of four line drawings he has created to grieve and reimagine the lingering effects of the Gold Rush. The four images—“Boom Mountain God Mountain All Fall Down,” “Center of the Worldview Hole in the Ground,” “Pretty Burning Houses at the River’s Edge,” and “Earth Worship Schmeearth Worship”—interrogate aspects of settler epistemologies and actions during the Gold Rush, and include a paragraph of explanation and analysis after each. Image and text are loosely associated across the series. For example, the image “Boom Mountain God Mountain All Fall Down” depicts a northern California foothill landscape, with

mountain peaks in the background, being dynamited. The explosion is represented in the foreground by a jagged line in which white, or negative space, intervenes in and disrupts the landscape scene, representing the miners' use of dynamite to destroy land in search of commodity gold. The text, however, reads: "This image reflects my personal belief that there exists an innate indigenous sense of Oneness. Anyone who has spent time in the sacred High Country to seek 'understanding' will experience the reason for this belief. All life is interconnected in a hierarchy in which the sacred peaks have dominion over us all" (*News* vol. 30 no. 4 p. 11). As the text describes the sacred interconnectedness of all and the role of the mountain peaks as overseers of these relationships, the image can be re-read to understand the negative space of the explosion as a disruption of such an "innate indigenous sense of Oneness." The words affirm Indigenous values while the image visually represents the disruption caused by the Gold Rush.

In the fourth stanza Rose makes a notable shift in pronoun references away from the named Emiliana, Elfriede, and Lenchen who, in the 1989 poem, are the ones imagining impaling themselves as romantic heroines and drowning in the sea. In the 2002 version she attributes these actions to Margaret Castor (Newman). This shift changes perspective, as they watch Margaret board the ship that they are no longer on; they are left in Europe. They aren't on the ship during its crossing. Margaret, instead, is the one who says a "final goodbye, words that must last/ a lifetime" (ll. 39–40). The stanza is riddled with internal rhymes and rhyming couplets, almost nursery rhyme in effect. The speaker's speculation on how these women felt about their travels, opening possibilities to read it as cautionary tale, a fable, or moral caution.

From here on out it is the stanzas that are situated in California that undergo the most revision. Stanza five is expanded so that rather than Margaret's westward movements bringing "to life/ the anxious temblor in my heart,"

You brought to life
 the anxious temblor
 at the valley's edge,
 both in the mountain
 and in my heart
 the shaking
 has not stopped.

Here the switch between "my heart" and "the valley's edge" as a geographical and embodied place aligns the speaker with the land and demonstrates how the arrival of settlers set off tremors in both that continues, "the shaking/ has not stopped." The 1989 version more explicitly links Margaret to the speaker, but the 2002 version links Margaret to settler colonialism and to both the speaker and her land. This stanza also invites complexity into Margaret's migration by predicating her own life on Margaret's arrival: Margaret literally brings life to Rose, her heartbeat, the "temblor in my heart" that "has not stopped" is Rose's life which is only possible because of Margaret's arrival in California. When the speaker says "You brought to life/ the anxious temblor/ at the valley's edge ... and in my heart" Rose is affirming her own life and the lifelong effects of colonialism in Bear Valley.

Similarly, the seventh stanza is significantly revised to include concrete details about the commodification of Yosemite. The 1989 version reads as follows:

More than a century later

My brown hands cannot recall
 Your Germany of your mother lode,
 Yosemite untouched by tourists
 Buying ice cream and souvenirs
 In Tenaya's hiding place.
 My questions burn
 And summon fire
 Older than the sun. (ll. 56–64)

Here the speaker's hands cannot access a felt memory of either Margaret's German homelands or her settled home. Yosemite is touched by tourists in an implication that touch changes. The juxtaposition of ice cream and souvenirs with Tenaya, the Ahwahneechee man who resisted settler colonial violence, underscores the violence of tourism for Indigenous peoples.

Rose significantly alters and expands this stanza in the 2002 poem. It reads as follows:

More than a century later
 My brown hands cannot recall
 Your Germany of your Mother Lode,
 Yosemite untouched by tourists
 And car exhaust, buying ice cream and souvenirs,
 Trying to pet the young deer in velvet,
 Or feed the bears by volition or accident,
 All of this along the broken back
 Of old Tenaya. How this question burns,
 summons fire, conjures a younger sun

that never showed its face to Europe
and never will.

The details added here add pollution and images of tourists feeding animals that disrupt and challenge the right ecological order between humans and deer and bears. Humans do not pet deer, bears should not be fed by humans. These dangerous, irresponsible, and careless encounters occur on Native lands, which the speaker makes synonymous with Tenaya's body, his "broken back," suggesting that both the land and the bodies of the original inhabitants of the lands have been broken by settler colonialism and its range of tactics of domination. Tenaya was a leader of the Ahwahneechee peoples who tried to resist removal in Yosemite Valley, but eventually allowed his people to be moved to a reservation near Fresno. While environmental justice folks have been making critiques of national parks and the naturalization of public lands that perpetuate the idea of a pristine wilderness, Rose is on the first wave of environmentalist critique as she poignantly and perceptively illustrates how tourism is distinctly violent to the "pristine wilderness" of Yosemite. The changes Rose makes to this stanza reveal a provocative expansion of how she articulates the ongoing effects of colonialism in California. The Spanish swords and fields of blood and toxic rains are gone but they are replaced by proliferating tourists and car exhaust, and the juxtaposition of these two forms of settler violence, past and present, connect tourism and ecological degradation to earlier and comparable forms of colonial violence that, like tourism, break the backs and bones of the Indigenous lands and peoples. Hawai'ian scholar Hokulani Aikau offers a decolonial critique linking settler colonialism to the destruction of Hawai'ian sovereignty and provides insights specifically to the effects of tourism on Indigenous lands and sovereignty. She writes, "Unless we actively work to dismantle this infrastructure and refuse the tourist imaginary, we will (wittingly or unwittingly) contribute to reproducing the

occupation and colonization of these places, people, and practices” (3).⁶⁶ What Aikau articulates here is an echo of what Rose writes in “Margaret Castor” in 2002: that is, the tourism economy is a reproduction and continuation of settler colonial occupation of Native lands. Yosemite has always been Indigenous land; the people and the place are so entangled that the body and the land are the same. Kat Anderson writes in *Tending the Wild*, “Areas now labeled simply ‘wilderness’ or ‘national park’ on topographic maps once encompassed ancient gathering and hunting sites, burial grounds, work stations, sacred areas, trails, and village sites, all making up what was home to hundreds of generations of California Indians” (Anderson, quoted in Baldy, “Why We Gather” 1). Hupa scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy expands on Anderson’s point by explaining how the designation of wilderness spaces and national parks are explicit tactics to dispossess Native peoples from their lands, cultures, and ways of living:

Native lands, the places where California Indian tribes had interacted closely with the landscape for generations, were designated as unpopulated ‘wilderness’ areas to conform to Euro-American notions of idealized, pristine conditions that supposedly existed before contact. This assertion was, in part, built upon the idea that Native peoples were not and had not interacted in any meaningful way with significant portions of California. These systematic attempts to attack the very existence of California Indians were a means by which white settlers set out to exterminate, control, and dominate the land, flora, and fauna of Native California. It also meant attempting to destroy Native knowledge and epistemologies as a way to claim rightful ownership over the land” (Baldy, “Why We Gather” 3).

Risling Baldy centers land as a crucial aspect of Native knowledges and ways of living. When Rose links the over-rampant tourism of Yosemite Valley to the violent military occupation of the

valley a century prior, she articulates the violent conditions by which Yosemite became public lands, conditions that depend on the breaking of bodies, relationships, and knowledges.

With the exception of some minor formatting, one stanza remains unchanged between the 1989 and 2002 versions. Given the substantial changes to every other stanza, that this one remains untouched suggests that it is and always was the heart of the poem. In this stanza the speaker directly addresses Margaret, collapsing a century of time and creating kinship with her ancestor:

If you are a part of me
 I am also that crazy acorn
 within your throat
 around which pioneer stories
 rattle and squirm.
 If you are the brave heritage
 of Gold Rush California,
 I am also the bone
 that buzzes behind your breast.
 If I am the tongue made indigenous
 by all the men you would love,
 I am also the ghost
 of the pioneer's future. (ll. 65–77)

In the 2002 version, lines 65 to 69 are set further to the right, Rose adds a comma after the end of line 65, and lines 72 and 73 are reconfigured and the word “also” is omitted from line 72: “I am ~~also~~ the bone that buzzes/ behind your breast.” In this stanza past and present collide, as

Margaret's legacy and the legacy of settler colonialism in California converge in this conversation between great-grandmother and great-granddaughter. The intimacy of the "if you are/then I am" construction of the conversation establishes an explicit and direct relationship that links Rose to the complicated legacy of Margaret. More than remapping histories and places, Rose is remapping bodies, entangling past and present and mixing flesh and bone. It is a stunning stanza, and a haunting challenge to Margaret: if you, settler, are me, are the brave heritage of California, then I, a Native woman, am also you. The speaker's tone shifts as she enters a direct conversation with Margaret, which collapses past and present as the two women meet within the space of this stanza and is assertive and nearly aggressive, demonstrating a persistence and relentless claim to Margaret's past that reveals how deeply the speaker desires to affirm her connection and sense of belonging in the world. Rose *claims* belonging for herself from the clutches of settler colonial erasure. The lines "I am also the ghost/ of the pioneer's future" are particularly provocative, implying a reverse form of haunting in which the descendant haunts the easy dominance of the pioneer, and on the other, foreshadows a haunted future in which Native peoples are ghosts in their own lands.

In addition to the alliterativeness of the phrase "crazy acorn," Rose is once more, as she did with tule in stanza four, invoking California indigenous plant life to disrupt and amplify the effects of settler colonial disruption. The acorn is more than plant life; it is one of the primary sources of nutrients and sustenance for many California Indian tribes. In "Margaret," the acorn makes pioneer stories "rattle and squirm," a device and signifier that refuses the easy flow of stories that perpetuate the proud California settler heritage. Rose situates herself as an obstacle to the narrative of extinction, to the easy flow of settler mythology. "I am the crazy acorn" is a powerful assertion of an embodied refusal of extinction. Crazy, perhaps: the way Native peoples

are framed and stereotyped as abnormal or other-than is a subject position Rose embraces. Crazy or not, she exists, and refuses. This line also sits in conversation with the image in the poem, “Notes on a Conspiracy,” discussed earlier, of the acorn resting in the spine of the uncovered skeleton. In both poems the presence of the acorn activates, in some way, the bodies in which they rest. In “Notes,” the acorn provides support and refusal; in “Margaret,” the acorn disrupts and unsettles.

Rose also transforms the bone imagery that signifies for dead, historicized Miwok extinct bodies: the bone lives and “buzzes” in the settler body. That bone buzzing behind Margaret’s breast, then, is much more than a bone. It is the seed of Indigenous descendants taking root in the settler body, settler stories, settler imaginaries. It is both the wall that Margaret and Rose run into and a seed “ripe with fertility and renewal.” Miranda demonstrates how bones disrupt mission mythology; bones similarly interrogate Gold Rush myth, “the brave heritage/ of Gold Rush California.” Rose’s refusal to allow the ancestors to remain dead, to endow them with agency, to claim their relatives, occurs throughout her poetry but between these two poems powerfully refuse extinction and center the colonial violences that turned ancestors into bones in the first place. The speaker’s conclusion seems to arrive at the fact that even settlers were once from Indigenous communities, the tribes of the Black Forest of Germany, and how much is forgotten to arrive in a new land in search of gold. In form this poem grapples with the complexity of the speaker’s ancestry.

The “Margaret” poems are ultimately provocative for the ways in which they reveal Rose’s deep desire to establish maternal relations to her Miwok ancestors and pull together the threads of Rose’s identity anxiety. For Rose, the maternal has functioned as a barrier—the Hopi “maternal” is a barrier to belonging on one hand, since she is Hopi through her paternal lineage

and therefore unable to be claimed by the Hopi community. But the Miwok “maternal” is also a barrier, since her mother and her mother’s family refuse to acknowledge their Native identity. By reaching back into her genealogical connections, Rose seeks a more viable source of connection to her Miwok ancestors. Margaret is therefore an incredibly important connection for Rose, as she is the original maternal link between Rose and her Miwok ancestry. By skipping over her close maternal relatives—her immediate and known family and all their violence and refusal—she locates a more viable source of connection to her Miwok ancestors.

Conclusion

Within this chapter I have laid out the preliminary framework to pull together the vastly complex work Rose has created through the course of her life that maps a geography of California Indian survival in the twentieth century. Not only does California, as a place, inspire Rose to write poetry in the first place, but it also contains, in its strata, the memory, the ghosts, and the possibility of connection for her to identify with her Miwok ancestors. The imminent and threatening presence of extinction, as a concept, and as a lived experience, hovers closely to all of Rose’s works, and yet out of, and in spite of, that she generates a robust and future-oriented body of poetry that expresses a fierce commitment to survivance. Rose remaps a social and political cartography that does not account for California Indian survivance, nor does it account for the complexity of her “halfbreed” status, and grasps at inclusion through her writing. She challenges the intellectual structures of academia not only by becoming a part of those institutions but by transforming them, both through poetry and her own activism as an archeologist.

I have striven to establish a working framework here to build on the idea that Rose's poetry maps a complicated twentieth-century California. What remains compelling is that she does not connect, in public or visible ways, to the very active contemporary Miwok community. The Tuolumne Rancheria of Miwok Indians, adjacent to the Bear Valley region where her mother's relatives lived, was a vibrant and politically-active Miwok community throughout the twentieth century. As the next chapter will analyze in depth, the visibility of California Indian community and activism was uneven across the state, depending on tribal belonging and community connection. It is possible that Rose was unaware of the political activism and cultural revitalization efforts of the Tuolumne Rancheria community. It is possible that the trauma of her maternal family's refusal to acknowledge these genealogies prevented her from seeking them out. Regardless, Rose builds a place of belonging for herself, and for others like her who feel similarly disconnected and impacted by the ongoing effects of settler colonial erasure.

Chapter 3

A Much Wider Circle: Editorial Juxtaposition, Polyvocality, and Abundance in Trans-Indigenous
California Indian Writing

What's the best way to kill a lie? Like bad spirits they are notoriously immune to arrows—in fact, they are often known to rise after being killed, even after being buried. We must know where to aim, pick our targets, remain clear-sighted.

I say 'we' because my efforts here are part of a much wider circle of California Indian peoples and allies talking back to mythology, protesting, making waves.

—Deborah Miranda, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*

The epigraph for this chapter, from Deborah Miranda's introduction to *Bad Indians*, offers a model for refusing California Indian erasure that is grounded in polyvocality and collective collaboration between California Indian peoples and their allies. The lie to which Miranda refers specifically is the lie of Mission mythology, the settler mythos that shrouds the violence of Spanish missionization with narratives of patriotism, manifest destiny, and dominance, a lie with a deep and powerful undercurrent capable of dragging an *individual* beneath the surface of settler colonialism's catastrophic waters. While individual acts of resistance against the erasure of California Native peoples remains crucial (such as the poetry of Wendy Rose discussed in chapter two), success in killing colonial mistruths, which persist and are "often known to rise after being killed," rests in the strategic power of "a much wider circle" of peoples and allies. A chorus of protests, and a diverse set of protest methods, amplifies resistance, "making waves" that demand attention and bear enough power to shift the direction of the pernicious narrative undercurrent.

This chapter examines how literary practices of polyvocality and editorial juxtaposition support the creation of a trans-Indigenous California Indian identity through the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. I argue that intertribal narratives are crucial in California to affirm survivance *and* support tribal (and individual) efforts to recover and reclaim tribally-specific knowledges. I examine the aesthetic activist possibilities of these literary practices through two primary texts, Miranda's *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* and Ajachamen and Tongva writer and artist L. Frank's semiregular column, "Second Serving," which appears in the quarterly periodical *News from Native California*. I situate Miranda's and Frank's works at the intersection of two literary genealogies—the genealogy of polyvocality within American Indian literatures broadly understood and the genealogy of editorial juxtaposition within specifically California Indian-produced periodicals—and argue that through their use of multiple voices, genres, and forms, these texts construct culturally resurgent narratives of survivance. Together, these two mixed-media, mixed-genre texts illustrate the power of both trans-Indigenous collectivity and tribally specific epistemologies that are the foundation of Indigenous pasts, presents, and futures. I demonstrate how crucial the "much wider circle" of voices and allies is to the assertion of California Indian survivance.

Both texts activate these literary practices in order to (re)construct tribal knowledges. Miranda's *Bad Indians* is a re-narration of the Esselen creation story, in which a catastrophic flood devastates the people and their lands. The First Being, Coyote, is tasked by Eagle to raise the people up again in a post-flood world. Like the flood, settler colonialism, and missionization in particular, devastated the Ohlone peoples and their lands. The subjects in *Bad Indians*—Miranda included—take on the work of Coyote to raise the people back up again. Frank's "Second Serving," on the other hand, draws together related but distinct narrative fragments

from the contemporary moment, about a diverse range of topics, typically about language revitalization, material crafts, place, and language. The collage-style DIY aesthetic form of “Second Serving” combines text and image and visually replicates the form of the Tongva ti’at, a type of canoe. As it circulates in the quarterly periodical, this canoe travels and connects readers and knowledges. In both texts, a California Indian author engages in a form of aesthetic activism that draws together a diverse range of voices and forms to affirm tribally-specific knowledges that support sovereignty and survivance.

Story as Activism in Twentieth-Century California

In her formally compelling and complex book, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (2013), Esselen and Chumash writer Deborah Miranda negotiates centuries of violent colonial entanglements in the space we now know as California and reimagines dominant narratives of California Indian erasure to assert their (and her) survival. This work is daunting: California histories refuse easy consumption, and thus the forms and storytelling modes required to map the landscape of colonial aftermath, as well as Indigenous resurgence, are varied and shifting. California Indian resistance to genocidal forms of erasure has taken legal, political, and cultural forms that both align with and depart from methods of resistance and activism across North America. In the wake of the physical genocide of the nineteenth century, California Indian peoples have processed recovery individually, tribally, and inter-tribally, or, trans-Indigenously. Because of the state’s size and its abundance and diversity of tribal nations, resistance and recovery remained localized, centered primarily in the efforts of tribal nations, or in urban centers such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and, as we will see later in this chapter, in Sacramento. Because efforts to reclaim sovereignty across California were grounded in specific places, or in specific

tribes' efforts, cultural resurgence in California rippled across the state in uneven ways. For California Indian individuals who were disconnected from tribal communities, or for those like Ishi whose tribal communities were eliminated by the legal policy of killing Native peoples, the unevenness of revitalization amplifies the precarity of living in intimate proximity to the cultural and physical realities of extinction. The individualized struggle against "extinction" is the backdrop for the first two chapters of this dissertation. For tribal communities advocating for political and legal rights against a backdrop of 18 unratified treaties and harmful federal policies of assimilation, rebuilding tribal life in California means engaging with settler institutions and negotiating sovereignty and recognition on their terms.

In addition to the political and legal processes by which California Indians actively pursued sovereignty in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, storytelling was deeply important to the process of recovery and revitalization. Narratives accomplish what politics and law cannot: narratives construct a sense of presence, identity, and survivance that bypass the restrictions and limitations of political and legal structures that allow or deny "legitimate" forms of existence. Indians all over California were involved in the (re)making of a storied Native California. Story is, as Miranda writes, "the most powerful force in the world," transgressing and transcending extinction and erasure to affirm survivance. The recuperation of narrative sovereignty and cultural and material sovereignty are similar projects to that of what Michelle Raheja calls visual sovereignty. Raheja expands on Osage scholar Robert Warrior's articulation of intellectual sovereignty, "the ideological terrain in which Native peoples assert claims of political sovereignty" ("Sovereignty" 10), to account for the strategies "by which indigenous artists are able to challenge colonial representations of Native peoples and to imagine new worlds that aid in political struggles for self-determination" ("Sovereignty" 11). Given the complex history of

unmade treaties and an egregious lack of recognition of Native lands in California, intellectual and cultural sovereignty, rooted in storytelling, is crucial to “imagine new worlds that aid in political struggles for self-determination. ... [and] permits the flow of indigenous knowledge about such key issues as land rights, language acquisition, and preservation by narrativizing local and international struggles” (“Sovereignty” *Keywords* 11). In California, story becomes a central component in the expression of not only sovereignty, but presence, survival, and resistance. Creative sovereignty has the capacity to work around the constraints of political and legal struggle; the “flow” of Indigenous knowledges, as Raheja so poignantly expresses, maneuvers, like water, around obstacles.

An excellent example of this is Concow historian William Bauer Jr.’s book *California Through Native Eyes: Reclaiming History* (2016). Although a work of history, Bauer centers the crucial role that stories play in revising the “California Story,” a “historical narrative of nineteenth-century California that depicted California Indians as ‘racially inferior, predestined to doom and salvageable only by an authoritarian regime’” (Bauer, quoting Tony Platt 5). California Indian people used their stories “to stall and reverse settler colonialism, claim and reclaim lands, and define identities” (6) and to “articulate Indigenous identity, sovereignty and land” (11). Bauer situates his project against two crucial events that occurred in 1930s California: the lawsuit brought against the United States for its failure to ratify eighteen treaties and the Owen Valley Paiute land and water battle against Los Angeles. Stories, and storytelling, helped to “articulate land claims” and re-narrate the violence of the nineteenth century in a way that “questioned progressive narratives of western and California history and empowered California Indians” (7).

Tribal creation stories not only intervene in, and disrupt, settler histories, but also provide a foundation for tribal identity. Like Bauer, who suggests that California Indian “creation stories established the foundations of identity and tribal sovereignty, situating law and leadership at the moment of creation” (25), Cherokee literary scholar Christopher Teuton argues that tribal creation stories “enable us to create our worlds” (xii). Teuton claims that the “Cherokee creation story is richly theoretical, with evocative metaphors and symbolism that invite interpretation,” and that among the story’s meanings it serves as “an allegory about the creation of new knowledge on which a community may stand, grow, and live” (xiii). Story, then, at once connects back to tribal origins and forward to new meaning, new possibilities, and decolonial potential.

Hupa scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy similarly affirms the role of oral tradition and storytelling as central to an Indigenous feminist decolonizing praxis. Her 2018 book, *We Are Dancing for You: Native Feminisms and the Revitalization of Women’s Coming-of-Age Ceremonies*, theorizes the role of story and ceremony to (re)right, (re)write, and (re)rite the Northern California tribe’s practice of the flower dance honoring a young Hupa woman’s coming of age. Baldy writes, “stories not only build a foundation of survivance into Native cultures and futures but are grounded in Native feminisms, and these feminisms, wholly targeted for eradication and erasure by settler colonial society, are necessary to a decolonizing praxis” (35). Baldy draws on the work of Tanana Athabascan scholar Dian Million to affirm that stories are the method by which Native communities negotiate and frame their lives, that “account for the relations of power in our present” (Million, “There is a River” 33).

In his study of tribal stories, Bauer moves between the use of the collective term “California Indian” and tribally specific case studies. Bauer’s book centers two tribes’ efforts to

wield story as legal evidence: his own Round Valley tribal community and the Owens Valley Paiute tribe, whose battle for water rights to the Colorado River basin was deeply controversial. But throughout the book he purposefully uses “California Indian” in much the same way as the collective term “Indigenous” is used—as a political category that “enables solidarity among diverse indigenous peoples and nations” (Teves, Smith, and Raheja 109).⁶⁷ The intersections between the collective trans-Indigenous “California Indian” identity and tribally specific stories and contexts reveals when it is advantageous to invoke the collective and when it matters that the reference is tribally-specific. As the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, the movement across the tribally-specific and the trans-Indigenous collective is part of the methodology to recover California Indian stories.

Bad Indians: Two Genealogies of Aesthetic Activism

I return to Miranda’s claim that it takes the collective to counter the pernicious California Story here. Her method of writing *Bad Indians* is to collect and amplify many of her ancestors’ voices within a single text. Miranda constructs her memoir like a “mosaic,” recuperating and repurposing narrative fragments that testify to those “bad Indian” stories in order to ensure cultural survival. (The phrase “bad Indian” simultaneously contradicts the popular sentiment that “the only good Indians are dead”⁶⁸ and refuses to conform to tropes of Indianness that underwrote/write the justification of settler occupation of Native lands.⁶⁹) Drawing from personal and public archives, she transforms the profound cultural rupture caused by Spanish missionization into a provocative, lively, and polyvocal testimony of survivance—the repurposed narrative fragments bear witness to the “bad Indians” who refused to comply with the edicts of the Spanish friars and soldiers, and all of their unlikely descendants.

Using what non-Native literary scholar Lisa Tatonetti calls a practice of Indigenous assemblage in the “construction” of *Bad Indians*, Miranda juxtaposes archival print, visual, and audio media alongside her own poetry and lyric essays to create her mosaic.⁷⁰ This mosaic in turn intervenes on the “institutional fantasy” of Mission Mythology so strongly supported in public education, and imagines a new Indigenous-centered figuration of California’s history as well as the present and future. Miranda’s creative temporalizing of the four major sections of her book dislocate chronological anchors used commonly in settler historical narratives and reframe California history through her family’s stories. *Bad Indians* is comprised of four sections that move chronologically from 18th century Spanish contact to the present and cover four broad periods of California Indian history. Although the framing sections move chronologically, the internal structure of each section unsettles what non-Native literary scholar Mark Rifkin calls “settler time.”⁷¹ Both Miranda’s broader temporal frames and their internal narratives exemplify Miranda’s method of actively, but not easily, engaging her readers in re-creating a Native California world. When I say actively but not easily, I mean that readers have to work toward understanding and meaning-making, and this is hard work, both in the sense of difficulty identifying how seemingly mismatched narrative fragments fit together and also in asking readers to enter into such violent and unfamiliar histories to re-create them with her. Miranda engages her readers in active participation in making sense out of the fragments by refusing to resolve the jagged transitions between stories and media. Similar to the process of making a mosaic, she believes that piecing the fragments together will—and should—make your hands bleed (135).

Of the mosaic form she writes: “Sometimes something is so badly broken you cannot recreate its original shape at all. If you try, you create a deformed, imperfect image of what

you've lost ... more useful and beautiful results can come from using the pieces to construct a mosaic" (135). The mosaic, like the collage, which also utilizes the juxtaposition of multiple materials or images, as a literary form affirms that "Matter cannot be created or destroyed, only transformed" and that using the narrative fragments honors and does justice to the integrity of the stories (135). Miranda is an incredible provocateur: she plays upon the dominant presumption that "all those California Indians are gone!"⁷² and invites readers into a contradictorily rich storied world of Native California in order to assert that not only have California Indians survived supposed cultural and physical genocide, they are carrying on in increasing abundance. Certainly, she testifies to the precariousness of survival. But Miranda refuses the persistent narrative of erasure and disappearance perpetuated about California Indians: rather, she overwhelms readers with diverse, complex, and even contradictory Native voices that clamor out of the archives and onto the page, bursting to be heard after such a long-imposed silence. On one hand Miranda's project is compellingly simple: in raising the voices of silenced ancestors she affirms to her readers and to herself that Native Californians are *still alive* and *still here*. On the other, the formal complexity of her innovative text and her transformation of "bad Indian" stories into Coyote stories grounds her storytelling praxis in tribally-specific knowledge that continues to inform and instruct contemporary Esselen, California, and Native as well as non-Native peoples.

This narrative practice emerges from two distinct genealogies. On one hand, *Bad Indians* participates in a rich tradition of polyvocality in twentieth-century American Indian literatures. But it embodies a core convention of periodical and anthology publications as well, of which there is a substantial tradition not only across Indian Country as a whole but also specifically in Native California—the editorial juxtaposition of diverse voices and media. Situated at the

intersection of both literary genealogies, *Bad Indians* demonstrates how a literary practice of collecting and curating a chorus of voices is a form of what literary scholar Dean Rader calls aesthetic resistance, what Robert Warrior would call intellectual sovereignty, and what Michelle Raheja would affirm as a form of visual sovereignty. Miranda's trans-California Indigenous polyvocal text (re)constructs the Costanoan Ohlone origin story, affirming Bauer's observations of the way that the collective "California Indian" heuristic also functions at the tribally specific level and that origin stories continue to map pathways for Indigenous survivance. In the following section I trace the formal and aesthetic traditions in *Bad Indians* through a genealogy of polyvocality and how it is used in twentieth-century American Indian literatures. Then I situate *Bad Indians* in relation to the history of California Indian periodicals.

Polyvocality

The short lyric essay "Ularia's Curse" is a particularly striking instance of polyvocality in *Bad Indians*. This brief essay contains layers of voices and storytellers to piece together a history of what happened to the American settler, Sargent, who took land from Miranda's ancestors and then mysteriously drowned in the Carmelo River ten years later. "Isabel says it was Ularia's curse that killed Sargent," the essay opens, framing the narrative to come in the context of Isabel recounting the story to salvage anthropologist J.P. Harrington. Isabel tells Harrington, Miranda finds Harrington's notes, and then Miranda retells the story in *Bad Indians*. "Isabel says" opens four of the eight paragraphs, while "The Americans say" opens another. The essay is a series of multiple voices speculating on Ularia's role in Sargent's death. Miranda's method of writing this story, however, grants Ularia agency, presence, and depth. Ularia is represented as speaking with the river, which is itself another voice, or character, in the essay. Miranda enlivens Ularia beyond

the framing of “Isabel says” and “Amerians say.” In Miranda’s story, Ularia acts, moves, feels, she leans down, “her spine crackling with age” as she “scooped a handful of Carmel’s clear water in her palm” (41). Ularia speaks with the river, asking it: ““Will you miss us, River?” ... ‘Will you miss our feet on your riverbed, our twined fishing nets combing your waters, our sacrifice of the first salmon every year?’” (42). The next paragraph enlivens the river with a voice: “Isabel says the river must have said yes” (42).

The invocation of polyvocality as an aesthetic or formal technique occurs frequently in American Indian literatures, and in this regard it is hardly a uniquely “California” aesthetic. Polyvocality is, in many ways, foundational to how we think about the relationship between the oral and written narrative traditions, because of the way it emphasizes active collaboration between the text and the reader, constructing a relational dynamic that refuses static representations of Native peoples. Teuton writes: “By incorporating the oral impulse within a historically graphic mode of communication, American Indian literature negotiates the tensions between the oral and the graphic, inviting readers and their communities to enliven their own critical impulses in the process” (xix). That is, the incorporation of aspects of the oral tradition, whether that is the content (such as origin stories) or the textual reproduction of the relational aspects of engaged hearing and listening in an oral context, into the written literatures of American Indians.

One anchor text in studies of Indigenous polyvocality as well as of multi-genre and mixed-media literatures is Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday’s *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, published in 1969. *The Way to Rainy Mountain* is a multi-genre text that weaves together three voices—the mythic, the historical, and the personal—and incorporates images by the author’s father to evoke Momaday’s experience retracing the Kiowa migration route from the headwaters

of the Yellowstone River to the Wichita Mountains in western Oklahoma. American Indian literary scholar Arnold Krupat called this literary methodology a “blurring of genres” in 1980 and the creation of a “polyphonic” text in 1989. Krupat draws from Bakhtin’s use of the term “polyphony” to describe texts where more than one voice can be heard.⁷³ These terms have productively helped articulate the potential relationships between oral traditions and written texts. Over time, Native studies scholars most frequently discuss such relationships as mixed-genre, multigenre, genre blending, genre bending, and polygeneric.⁷⁴ And these terms have been applied not only to Momaday’s works; he is joined by writers like Leslie Marmon Silko, whose celebrated 1981 book, *Storyteller*, similarly mixes genres and media to foreground the importance of place, community, and multiple storytelling voices in her Laguna community and for herself. Muscogee poet, writer, and musician Joy Harjo, Choctaw writer LeAnne Howe, Ojibwe poet and writer Louise Erdrich, and Anishinaabe writer and scholar Gerald Vizenor, for example, all engage traditional Indigenous storytelling practices that move across the oral/textual divide and cultivate an active, dynamic, Indigenous literary and artistic presence.⁷⁵ As scholar of regional American Indian literatures Eric Gary Anderson claims, these texts are energized and sustained by the participatory nature of storytelling invoked by mixing genres and media (40–41).

Similar to these writers, Miranda incorporates multiple genres and media to create what she calls a “mosaic” of narrative voices that recount the legacy of Spanish missions and subsequent waves of settler-colonialism in California (Miranda 135). Miranda juxtaposes personal anecdotes about her family with her experience with sexual trauma, and incorporates archival materials documenting California’s genocidal history, including photographs, government documents, and public school curricular materials to emphasize that settler-colonial

violence against California Native peoples began in 1769 with the Spanish missions and continues today. The “bad Indians” who show up in her book refused, individually, to disappear into settler narratives of erasure. The intimacy of these stories bumping up against each other creates a cacophony of survivance, a crowded room full of “bad” Indians. (Here I intentionally use the term “cacophony,” more of a musical term, in relation to but distinct from the idea of “polyphony” to emphasize that the diverse voices in *Bad Indians* do not necessarily compose a unified whole. They are not necessarily dissonant; rather, they are, at times, difficult to reconcile, sharp and textured, and handling them “slices our fingers and makes us bleed” (Miranda 135).)

Similar to Momaday, Miranda blends her personal voice with the mythological and historical as she evokes oral tradition and historical archival material to create a narrative that, as Roemer says of *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, elides standard definitions of authorship, literature, and text on the one hand and processes of identity formation on the other. That is to say, Miranda’s act of storytelling, like Momaday’s, is an act of self-creation in which she works to locate herself in relationship to her community and place. In fact, one might apply what has been said about *Rainy Mountain* to *Bad Indians*: they are both texts that read the past with imagination and use juxtaposition, contradiction, and intentional ambiguity to engage readers (Blaeser 41); they both recall intergenerational connections and draw on family histories to “conjure the ancestor through the magic of words and names” (Allen, *Blood Narrative* 185); and they both playfully transgress the oral/textual divide as a method for engaging readers as active co-producers of the narrative (Teuton 82).

California Indian Periodicals in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

While Miranda's book is celebrated for the way it constructs a complex narrative using the practice of formal juxtaposition, *Bad Indians* additionally follows the model of a different kind of polyvocal practice: the Indigenous-produced periodical. As a print medium and a genre, the newspaper and the periodical conventionally juxtapose content created by different authors, include images and a variety of genres of writing, and circulate regularly to subscribers.

Newspapers and periodicals have been a textual site of Native activism and sovereignty since the *Cherokee Phoenix* was first published in 1828. As tribal newspapers or as intertribal newspapers, these publications were often formed in reaction to the oppressive legal and political regimes that disempower Native peoples. As literary scholar Susan Bernardin writes, newspapers and the print periodical are "vital sites of mobilization, community building, and resistance" ("Acorn Soup" 3). Such a trend "reflect[s] a rising movement in nationalism and growing demands for self-representation" (Littlefield xx).⁷⁶ Prior to the 1940s much of California Indian activism was tribally-specific or regionally-specific. For detribalized California Indians in particular, the lack of a community meant being left out of a collective consciousness. As political scientist Benedict Anderson has famously articulated, newspapers are foundational tools for the construction of an imagined community. In the case of Native California, newspapers played a crucial role in the construction of a collective, trans-California Indigenous identity. The "California Indian" collective identity affirms a "wider circle" (to return to the epigraph) of peoples who survived the physical genocide of the nineteenth century and, through textual representation, helps to suture together collective and tribal identities.

Three periodicals produced by California Indians circulated during the twentieth century, and one into the twenty-first century as well: *Smoke Signal* (1948–1978), *Indian Historian* (1964–1979), and *News from Native California* (1987–present). Each publication was anchored

in California Indian issues around land and sovereignty, supported the imagination of a California Indian collective, and encouraged the political, legal, and artistic revitalization of tribally-specific cultures and identities. All three publications were produced by Native peoples and affirmed a commitment to primarily Native publics. The editorial juxtaposition of legal, historical, informational, and creative works within these three periodicals established an important narrative framework that supports the representation of California Indian abundance rather than scarcity. In the twenty-first century, that framework translates into a wide range of single-authored works as well.

Smoke Signal was run as an intertribal newspaper by Mountain Maidu activist Marie Potts. The need for a California Native-produced source of news and information arose out of growing tensions around land claims cases in the 1940s. Too many settlers had been taking advantage of California Indian communities to profit from the claims cases, and so in response, Potts and the Federated Indians of California organized and began circulating their own newsletter to California Indians across the state, many in rural places hard to reach by other means. *Smoke Signal* was the first newspaper of its kind in California to produce content for a California Indian audience, by California Indians.

A different kind of publication, *Indian Historian*, began in 1964 as a periodical, the publishing arm for the academic organization the American Indian Historical Society. The *Indian Historian*'s scholarly focus meant that the content of the publication was written to engage with scholars and other readers interested in the ongoing political and legal conditions of American Indians at a national level. Yet perhaps because it was produced and printed in San Francisco, California, and headed by a Cahuilla scholar, Rupert Costo, *Indian Historian* retained an implicit commitment to centering California Indian news and stories.

News from Native California, which began in 1987 and is published through Heyday Press, a California press committed to better representation of California Indians, continues to circulate on a quarterly basis and provides readers, primarily California Indians and their allies, with news, literature, and arts. *News* returns to a primarily California-centered focus and centers the stories and news most relevant to contemporary California Indian peoples.

Each of these publications expresses a purposeful refusal of dominant settler narratives. It is not a surprise that the genres and forms found in newspapers and periodicals facilitate activist work. The periodical form is effective in combating the pervasive lies that erase California Indian presence by printing a diverse chorus of California Indian voices expressing sovereignty across a spectrum of creative forms. This affirms not only presence, but abundance, creating an imagined community of California Indians across tribal and geographical boundaries. In a geographical region as large as California, with many tribes who have been unevenly affected by the violence of settler colonialism, newspapers and periodicals became central political and cultural spaces for revitalization and activist work. Over the course of over seventy years, *Smoke Signal*, *Indian Historian*, and *News from Native California* have been sites of collective trans-Indigenous California identity where the assertion of presence, survivance, and abundance remains a vital example of how to “kill the lie” of extinction and erasure.

The *Smoke Signal* of the Federated Indians of California, 1948 to 1978

“Reck-uh-member this all writ by California Injuns for-um Injuns ... [signed] Injun Louie.”

(Castaneda 98)⁷⁷

Injun Louie was a fictitious humorous Native character who regularly appeared in the California Indian-produced periodical, *Smoke Signal*. *Smoke Signal* was the publishing arm of

the Federated Indians of California from 1948 to 1978 and was helmed by Mountain Maidu activist Marie Potts for all but the first two years, when it was under the leadership of her daughter, Kitty Flores. As anthropologist Terri Castaneda describes it, *Smoke Signal* was produced on a mimeograph machine—requiring the typing out of every article into the mimeograph stencils—its pages stapled together, individually-folded and mailed. In 1948 they started with a subscription list of over 4000, with an increase in subscriptions during the civil unrest and American Indian activism of the late 1960s (89). Readers learned about basketry and land claims news in a single sitting, drawing into intimate relationship a diverse range of California Indian experiences. *Smoke Signal* was the first urban, multi-tribal newspaper, produced by California Indians, of its kind in California, and out of it emerged an important sense of collectivity and solidarity across Native California.

Castaneda, one of the only scholars to seriously engage with the archive of Marie Potts and *Smoke Signal*, positions *SS* as a California Indian response to the proliferation of publications in California that targeted California Indians and their land rights. California Indian tribal nations have organized around land claims for decades. In 1905 the “lost” treaties of California were located and pressure mounted to make reparations. In 1928 “the California Indians Jurisdictional Act won the state’s native populations the right to have their case heard before the U.S. Court of Claims” (Castaneda 79). It was not until 1944 that the Court of Claims awarded California Indians financial reparations, but that money was not turned over to the people; rather, it continued to be held in trust, not adjusted for inflation from 1851 to the present, and remained out of reach of California’s tribal communities. In 1946 California Indians from across the state gathered in Sacramento to protest.

California tribes made more progress in their appeal for federal restitution through the Indian Claims Commission Act (ICCA) of 1946, which was created to resolve outstanding claims against the federal government for the wrongful appropriation of treaty lands and designed to resolve these issues rather than grant land back. Many California Indians organized under the collective name “Indians of California,” while the Mission Indian Federation, a collective of tribes in Southern California who shared a history of missionization, and the Pitt River tribe filed separate land claims, in order to resolve the issue of land payment.⁷⁸ These tribal and inter-tribal collectives utilized the ICCA (the Act) to petition for restitution for the eighteen unratified treaties and the unlawful taking of California Indian lands between 1851 and 1852, which resulted in an insulting 47 cents per acre payment to the Mission Indians.⁷⁹

Castaneda writes: “As early as 1921, newspapers designed to convince Indian readers to join one or another land claims suit began to roll off the presses in the Golden State” (106). The Federated Indians of California organized in Sacramento as an inter-Indian collective of California Indians advocating for land claims rights during the land claims cases. Exhausted by white settlers attempting to profit off of, manipulate, or co-opt the cause of California Indian land, and recognizing the need to collectively organize in the campaign for land, a group of California Indian leaders broke ranks with the white settler organizer Frederick G. Collett and established the FIC. The FIC’s primary objective in their allyship was “to file suit against the U.S. government before the Indian Claims Commission for loss of their ancestral lands—meaning the whole state of California” (Castaneda 82).

The first periodical published by California Indians for a broad California Indian readership, *Smoke Signal*’s thirty-year success was rooted in California Native readers’ desire for not only land and political justice but hunger for a collective sense of identity. It was explicitly

established in contradistinction to the long history of settler exploitation with regards to land claims legislation: “Conceived as a newspaper containing a broad spectrum of news and information relevant to all Indians within the state, the *Smoke Signal* was clearly designed to institutionalize the FIC’s authority and establish its superior credibility over other organizations and print media that were neither owned nor controlled by California Indians” (Castaneda 84-85). The authors of *Smoke Signal*, as California Indians themselves, made it clear that the paper “was the only newspaper Indians in California could count on to honestly and accurately represent their legal rights and entitlements” (Castaneda 84). They signaled this loyalty to the community by refusing to collect subscription fees or membership fees as part of the FIC collective (although the production costs of *Smoke Signals* eventually led to subscription fees).

In scope the *Smoke Signal* “offered its readers a broad spectrum of political news and commentary, calendars of regional and statewide social events, humor, notices of births and deaths, editorial columns, and the like” (Castaneda 92). For the first time, California Indian news was being collected, curated, and circulated by California Indians. The publication of political news alongside community news and editorials amplified the diversity and abundance of voices that spoke out of lived experiences as California Native peoples. In large part this collective of diverse voices is a product of urbanization in the war and postwar era.⁸⁰ Although it was established as an urban pan-Indian collective, during the land claims era most of the readership was made up of “remotely dwelling, impoverished, uneducated Indians who had no means of decent subsistence, no transportation into urban areas, and no access to local (much less long distance) telephone service. ... For Native Californians such as these—from Requa to Tehachapi to Stewart’s Point—the *Smoke Signal* was a voice, a forum, a beacon. For some it was literally a lifeline” (Castaneda 92–93). “The *Smoke Signal* served to foster and reify the diaspora to which

they both belonged. The paper cut across gender, class, and geographical lines to help disparate California Indian tribes and individuals to awaken to their common condition as colonized people and to the potential political power that they represented as a pan-tribal collectivity” (Castaneda 94).⁸¹

The *Smoke Signal* connected California Indian peoples to events and occasions that provided opportunities to strengthen pan-California Indian identities as well as tribally specific identities. Marie Potts helped organize cultural and material craft showcases at the California State Fair and other regional gatherings. Of such events Castaneda writes: “These occasions clearly facilitated a revitalization of ancestral culture, in terms of both social values and expressive arts. As people sought to share their ancestral traditions cross-culturally within the urban Indian community, they often rebuilt interest and bases of knowledge for their own kin groups” (96). Potts showcased baskets, regalia, dancing, and weaving. Castaneda writes:

Indians and non-Indians alike soon came to recognize and celebrate the common themes, practices, and materials that animated and eventually came to symbolize or typify ‘California Indian’ culture. These were not ‘subsistence activities’ or ‘rituals’ documented by historians and ethnographers in the pages of an academic text; these were everyday practices and communal celebrations of cultural traditions and identities interpreted and reinvented by contemporary Native Californians. (97)

The relationship between cross-cultural exchange and the rebuilding of interest within tribal or “kin groups” demonstrates the significant role of the imagined collective California Indian identity. Through the construction of an imagined collective, California Indian peoples found ways to re-engage with their own tribal traditions and arts and regenerated tribal knowledges and pride.

Injun Louie, introduced at the opening of this section, further garnered support for a collective California Indian identity by subverting the racist California settler narratives with which California Indians were all too intimately familiar. Louie's satire "contributed as much toward the building of California Indian political solidarity and cultural identity as the *Smoke Signal*'s more serious copy" and "helped to galvanize the readership's growing sense of pan-tribal cultural belonging and distinction" (Castaneda 100).⁸² The role of humor and affect in cultivating this sense of belonging and distinction underscores the importance of storytelling and audience engagement in the long and tedious process of decolonization.⁸³

"Of course, the principal means by which the *Smoke Signal* established itself as a legitimate California Indian newspaper was by cultivating an authentic sense of community and cultural belonging among its readership—one that was clearly grounded in their lived experience and common political condition" (92). The formal gathering of so many diverse California Indian voices and circulating them as a single collected text reveals an intimate link between the editorial juxtaposition of these many voices and the growing sense of collective identity among the subscribers.

The *Smoke Signal* died with Marie Potts in 1978, but Castaneda concludes that Marie's "greatest contribution ... was her cultivation of a California Indian readership that was primed, by two decades of the *Smoke Signal*, to have another periodical dedicated to issues of direct importance to their community" (Castaneda 110). Potts's work went beyond the geopolitical boundaries of California, however. Her energy behind *Smoke Signal* was recognized as far away as Washington, DC by the editor of the National Congress of American Indians' *Bulletin*. Potts served as a guest editor for the national publication for a month in 1961, opening an opportunity for her to circulate California news to a national audience. As Castaneda remarks: "The *Smoke*

Signal was a pioneering publication in many ways. ... its singular success in bringing California Indian culture and politics into sustained national focus rank among the most important of these” (Castaneda 105-6). In this regard *Smoke Signal*, and Marie Potts, paved the way for future iterations of California-focused publications such as *Indian Historian* and, two decades later, *News from Native California*. Whereas *News* operates similarly to *SS*, *Indian Historian* diverges in its mission to be a national periodical. Marie Potts and Rupert Costo actually crossed paths at the 1970 gathering for the formation of the American Indian Press Association. Potts joined AIPA, Costo did not, but the two exchanged letters of respect despite the difference in their feelings about the BIA’s role in AIPA. Costo even named Potts an honorary Indian Historian.⁸⁴ Despite the differences in mission and audience, with a California Indian at its helm, *Indian Historian* organized national American Indian news and content around California politics and peoples, as the next section discusses.

The *Indian Historian* and California Indian Activisms in the 1960s

“We just like to hear the stories is all.”

In 1964 a group of Native scholars led by Cahuilla historian Rupert Costo and his wife, Cherokee scholar and educator Jeanette Henry, formed the American Indian Historical Society in San Francisco and began publishing the quarterly *Indian Historian*. Like *Smoke Signal*, the *Indian Historian* was the publishing arm of an urban pan-Indian collective invested in Indigenous self-representation and professed to be “a journal of history, information, and literature about the American Indian in the past and his situation today. It is published, edited, and directed entirely by American Indians” (vol. 1 no. 1 p. 1). Like *Smoke Signal*, it maintained a

similar commitment to the revitalization of cultural identities and sovereignties and similarly juxtaposed a diverse range of media and genre in the service of regeneration and identity formation. *Indian Historian* circulated news, creative short stories, personal essays, poetry, and political documents that center American Indian politics and representation. It also maintained a commitment to a similar audience, stating its intent to publish a journal “for the Indian in every sphere of life: farmer and professional, scholar and laborer.” In a departure from *Smoke Signal*, however, the *Indian Historian* was national in its scope, audience, and content, demonstrating a commitment to American Indian interests and knowledges across the nation rather than specifically across California.

And yet, perhaps due to Costo’s own position as a California Indian, early issues of the *IH* in particular are anchored in California politics in a way that reorganizes national narratives of activism and sovereignty. Nestled within the national scope of the Society’s efforts at self-representation is an underlying and emphatic focus on California Indian issues and rights. Within the first issue alone, three California events are centered: the purchase of a cemetery in Fremont, California that contains the remains of missionized Ohlone peoples; the revitalization of the Tuolumne Miwuk acorn festival; and the Pitt River tribe’s ongoing legal battle with the Land Claims Commission. In much the same way that Wendy Rose anchors her poem “Colonial Adventures” about global colonialism and its effects in California geographies and people, the *Indian Historian* is anchored by California politics. The effect is a California-centered national lens on American Indian histories and politics.

In his book *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts*, literary scholar Chadwick Allen points out that one of the first actions taken by this organization was to purchase a cemetery that contains the remains of missionized Indians.

This purchase signaled an early return of California Native land, exemplifying the society's "stated mission of preserving Indian history" (119):

In January 1965 the American Indian Historical Society acquired title to the Ohlone Indian Cemetery, located in Fremont, California. Members of the Miwuk nation, the Ohlone people had built the Mission of San Jose for the Spanish friars; in the early 1960s, the cemetery and the remains of more than four thousand Indians buried there were still owned by the Oakland Catholic Diocese. After the transfer of title, the Society restored the two-and-a-half-acre site as the Ohlone Indian Memorial Park, opened it to the public, and hired a family of Ohlone Indians as caretakers. Over the next several years, the *Indian Historian* published a number of articles that described Ohlone culture and chronicled their long history. The Society's efforts at preserving and publicizing the Ohlone site can be read as significant acts of ethnodrama. Its actions held up sacred lands and ancestors as important links to the Indian past and as important components of contemporary Indian identity. The creation of the Ohlone Indian Memorial Park visibly reinserted Indian historical memory into the landscape of contemporary America. (Allen 119)

The Historical Society's purchase of the Ohlone cemetery was influential on a national level, but in 1964 it carried significant salience for California Indian communities who had, for decades, been engaged in a legal battle around land claims, a battle that produced the need for *Smoke Signal* in the first place. Without treaties there was no guaranteed land base in California for California Native peoples: the private purchase and return of the Ohlone Cemetery was not only a crucial act of "ethnodrama" in the United States broadly, but a continuation of, and expansion on, local California Indian land claims activism. The private purchase of Indian land inspired the

emerging collective activist sentiments of the era and provided an early model that more California tribes would come to utilize to reclaim land.⁸⁵

In the fall 2015 issue of *News from Native California*, the next periodical I will discuss, Ohlone tribal member Vincent Medina published an article titled “Our Cemetery, Our Elder: Hope and Continuity at the Ohlone Cemetery” in which he recounts the stories told to him by his Aunt Dottie, an Ohlone woman at the center of the preservation of the Ohlone Cemetery in Fremont. Written as an oral account of his aunt’s stories, Medina’s article describes the efforts of two Ohlone women, Dottie and her mother, Dolores, to clean up and save the cemetery, understanding that their relations were buried there and that they have the responsibility to care for them. It was only the two women cleaning for weeks, until the rest of the community recognized the significance of their efforts and joined. Medina writes: “Aunt Dottie tells me they [‘All the Ohlone guys’ and their families] all understood the sacredness of this spot and they all knew the importance of protecting it” (Medina 19). Her story, and Medina’s, expands on the reporting of the cemetery’s preservation documented by the *Indian Historian* by including first-hand accounts of the Ohlone women who began the work. Dottie remembers that “Jeanette Henry and Rupert Costo from the American Indian Historical Society came and helped to document and protect the cemetery so that its significance would not be lost” (Medina 19). In the style of personal oral narration, Medina shares the history he documented with Dottie as a testimony to document how the stories that preserved Ohlone culture through missionization and secularization remained intact, and how they took root in the activist efforts to save the cemetery—their elders, and their land. Medina writes: “Aunt Dottie tells these stories as if they happened yesterday. Her incredible and immense knowledge is a gift to us all as East Bay Ohlones” (Medina 19).

Indian Historian began publication in 1964 and its inaugural article features the Miwuk tribe's revival of the annual acorn harvest festivities at the Tuolumne Rancheria. The very first page of the periodical features the event, a short informational blurb on how Indians stored acorns, and a personal narrative by Miwuk tribal member Birdie Burris that describes the way her mother used to cook acorns, "with hot rocks in her old cooking basket" (n.p.). Burris's account includes Miwuk language, "Y-eh-im Teh-lei-li," which translates to "let us prepare the new harvest of acorn" (n.p.). Immediately readers of a nationally-distributed journal encounter local California traditions, foods, and languages. *Indian Historian* continues to report on what emerges as an annual gathering at the Tuolumne Rancheria—a new roundhouse is built, capable of holding 100 people. The following page is titled "Acorn Food was Basic Necessity, More Varied than Bread, for Old-Time California Indian Families," and includes stories of how to cook acorn, how to store acorns, their health benefits, and how they thank the creator for the harvest (3).

The *Indian Historian* also features transcribed oral stories of California Indian peoples, as well as writings about arts, education, Indians and the law, histories, and books in review. The Story Section incorporates as-told oral stories. The editors of the journal explain: "The Indian Historian will gladly publish ancient legends, stories, as remembered by any Indian person. NO EFFORT will be made to expertise or 'make anything' out of such stories. We leave that to scholars who like to expertise in this manner. We just like to hear the stories, is all" (vol. 1, no. 3, n.p.). After printing several stories told by a Pit River woman named Mrs. Lelia Rhoades, the editors include this note: "TO THE READER: There is no implied or intended substantiated material in these stories. They are beliefs, and stories, of a charming and delightful Indian lady, that is all. It is enough. THE EDITOR" (n.p.). The assertion that stories are circulated as stories

and nothing more signals the importance of narrative and story as creative acts of sovereignty. Although they perform political work in circulation alongside other media in *Indian Historian*, the editors' emphasis on the stories as *story* differentiates them and underscores creative cultures.

In part, the assertion of the editors that "we just like to hear stories is all" matters because of its refusal of anthropological analyses that have and continue to frame California Indian peoples, and of Kroeber's legacy, in particular. As Hupa scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy writes, "Kroeber's constructions of the Native people in California primarily focused on ceremonies, stories, and cultural life as artifacts rather than as complex philosophies," and pointedly notes that "Kroeber's work in California would be particularly misrepresentative because of his disengagement from the genocide of California Indian peoples" (Risling Baldy, *We Are Dancing* 82). The *Indian Historian* editors' refusal to provide intellectual framing around the reproduced oral stories of California Indian tribal peoples is an activist refusal to reproduce the limitations of such frames.

In *Bad Indians*, Miranda offers another example of this form of refusal. In the third section of *Bad Indians*, "Light on the Carrisa Plains: Reinvention," Miranda includes eight transcribed stories from her grandfather that had been recorded on cassette tape. The stories range in topic, from working as a migrant laborer in California to waking up hung over after a night of drinking in Kansas, but they are all stories of the everyday life of a California Indian man in the early twentieth century. For three of the eight stories, Miranda transcribes them verbatim and then follows up with a contextualizing paragraph to locate Tom and his stories in the broader California social and political geography. As a complement to Tom's stories, Miranda's own words, italicized to note the distinction between the two voices, ground Tom's adventures in a specific, Western form of knowledge production—that is, she adopts the persona

of the ethnographer to her grandfather and assumes the authoritative explanatory position that ultimately provides the grounds from which to make meaning of them. For example, in one story Tom describes his memory of his grandfather, “Dr. Tarango,” a traditional healer whom Tom used to visit as a child. Tom remembers that he “used to treat me nice” and lived by the river near the old mission where he “used to dry salmon” (79). Tom’s memories are from the perspective of a small child who remembers details of relatively mundane significance. And yet Miranda offers a contextual framework that invites her readers to see Tom’s stories as not the endearing memories of a small child but the captured representation of an important tribal elder. Miranda contextualizes this story by explaining that it is, like the ocean, “just the surface of what is really going on”: *“Tarango’s name turns up in some of Harrington’s field notes, ... he did indeed have a reputation as someone who knew his way around cures, curses, and supernatural matters. ... Tarango was one of many whose work went on in the background, where few whites would notice, where only the Indigenous people could see”* (79). Miranda reads the memories of her grandfather as a child against the ethnographic works of Harrington as a form of legitimizing the truth in her grandfather’s stories. Yet she does not reproduce this form of settler knowing unaware: After offering the same kind of ethnographic context following two more stories, Miranda leaves the remaining five transcribed stories purposefully uncontextualized. The invitation to her readers here is to learn how to engage Tom’s stories as complex forms of knowledge production on their own. More than simple stories told for remembrance and pleasure, his stories produce historical knowledge about California Indian lives in the post-genocide twentieth century.

It seems at first that Miranda’s representation of Tom’s stories diverges from the *Indian Historian* editors’ refusal to “make anything” of the oral stories they reproduce. Indeed, the

refusal to frame or contextualize Native stories demonstrates an early practice of reader engagement and refusal to reproduce colonial interpretive acts. Miranda, unlike the editors, seems to buck this instinct and makes something of his stories, acting—at least for the first three stories—as an “expertise in this area.” But she abruptly halts providing framing context using the ethnographic works of Harrington without signaling that she is doing so. One might ask whether this is a kind of trickster move on Miranda’s part, to subtly remove the ethnographic frame and allow her grandfather’s stories to stand on their own for readers to encounter. And if this is true, to what effect? A reader might, whether or not they are aware of it, transition from reading for information to reading for pleasure: Tom’s stories are enjoyable as much as they are informational, after all. Without the familiar Western ethnographic frame to support one’s understanding of Tom’s stories, readers have the opportunity to encounter stories such as Tom’s as enjoyable narratives that also encode Native epistemologies and worldviews. So, although Miranda initially provides the kind of framing that the editors of *Indian Historian* refused to add to their own published oral stories, she makes a kind of trickster move and removes those familiar supports without signaling that she is doing so to her readers, and the pleasure of encountering such great stories contains the potential to evoke feelings of just wanting “to hear the stories, is all.”

The “Research Ridiculousities” section of *Indian Historian* uses satire and humor to unsettle the knowledge produced by settler researchers, directly critiquing the social science discourses of the Western academy that rhetorically historicize California Native peoples. In following the pattern of anchoring broad criticisms in a specific California context, the first two “Research Ridiculousities” critique California-based research practices. In the third issue of *IH* an unnamed writer authors the first “Research Ridiculousities,” criticizing a San Jose State

University archeology professor for perpetuating the false notion that the Ohlone and Costanoan peoples are extinct. This archeologist had published an article asserting Ohlone extinction, grounding the evidence for extinction in the excavation of “ancient” artifacts. The writer’s tone is satirical as they suggest “Not All of History Is Written Into Dead Bones, Cracked Mortars, and Potsherds. Sometimes, you should ask an Indian!” (vol. 1, no. 3, Dec. 1964 n.p.). This humorous assertion underscores the pervasive issue of basing knowledge about Indian communities on material culture and unearthed artifacts rather than on the living, breathing Indian communities. (It also anticipates Miranda’s encounter with the fourth grader at Mission Dolores, whose surprise and fear at meeting a “real” Indian demonstrates the extent to which the ability to “ask an Indian!” remains not only unrealistic but nearly traumatizing for school children.) “Research Ridiculousities” invokes the spirit of Injun Louie from *Smoke Signal*, particularly in its use of dialect and humor to create affinity between the journal and its readers. The title of the column also explicitly critiques the role of research.

The juxtaposition of such critiques with stories told simply because “we just like to hear the stories, is all,” illuminates the provocative work of *Indian Historian*. The stories themselves, or the legal reporting itself, standing alone, would not be as effective as the mixed-genre, mixed-media approach. The transformation of narrative fragments, short articles, drawings, and book reviews into a more dynamic narrative that asserts Indian vitality, abundance, and survivance is crucial for all American Indians but especially for California Indians.

News from Native California 1987 to the Present

“There is so much happening.”

Malcom Margolin, “Reflections on the Founding of *News from Native California*”

News from Native California began as a calendar of events in service to the California Indian community in 1987 and is still running as of 2021. In its 30th anniversary issue in 2017, one of three founding co-editors, Malcom Margolin, reflects on what has made *News* such a robust and sustainable periodical. (The other co-founders are Coast Miwok writer David Peri and non-Native anthropologist Vera Mae Fredrickson.) He cites several reasons: modest ambitions, the activist legacy of the sixties, a service ethos, a follow rather than lead mentality (“Our contribution was not to create new movements but to support movements already launched” (10)), and low production costs. Like *Smoke Signal*, *News from Native California* circulated beyond urban centers and created a connected network of California Indian readers who were primarily motivated to subscribe to learn about tribal events taking place near them. Margolin writes: “We had practical work to do, manifestly valuable in a down-to-earth kind of way. Subscribers looked forward to each issue in large part because it would give them places to go” (9). Citing an increase in university-educated tribal youth, Margolin explains that a new energy around cultural revitalization was growing: “a California-based calendar of events turned out to be just what the Indian communities of the late 1980s needed. ... In short, everywhere were sprouting the seeds of what can be described without exaggeration as a statewide cultural renaissance. We just happened to show up at the right time with a watering can” (Margolin 9).

Margolin compounds the imagery of *News from Native California* as a watering can with the image of the publication as an old hunting rutted groove used to drag sea life catch from the ocean to the village. Margolin recounts a story told to him by an Ohlone tribal member about his rediscovery of an old worn groove through which his people used to drag sea lions back to the village for food:

An Ohlone elder from the Fremont area—I believe it may have been someone named Dario—once told me how during the Depression he would often go to Mowry Slough, part of the extensive saltwater marshes of South San Francisco Bay, and poach a sea lion, roping the carcass and dragging it through the streets of Fremont to his house, where the family would butcher it, cook it up, and eat it. Constantly afraid of being caught by Fish and Game, he tried to use public streets as little as possible. Once when he was dragging the body of a sea lion through a part of the marsh he hadn’t visited before, he felt it slipping into a kind of groove or channel. Instead of struggling to pull it, he could now feel the body move easily. He realized he had stumbled upon a groove that his ancestors had carved into the land during their thousands of years hauling sea lions back to their families. (Margolin 10)

As an extended metaphor, Margolin likens the existence of this old route to the processes of cultural revival that *News* documents and circulates. Many California Indians were in the process of uncovering various old “grooves”—basketry, canoe-building, language, foods, lands, arts, and more—finding that as they struggled to bring these crafts home they were reactivating pathways and memories. *News from Native California* amplifies the recovery processes and makes legible the abundant work being done; as the epigraph exclaims, “There is so much happening” (Margolin 9).

As literary scholar Susan Bernardin points out, *News from Native California* participates “in a long lineage of diverse publications, transitory and long-lived, that have served and sustained members of particular Native nations and communities while informing broader Indigenous and non-Indigenous readerships” (Bernardin 3). When these efforts are brought to bear on California Indian cultures and histories, they work to “counter legacies of genocide,

historical trauma, and intergenerational loss for Indigenous peoples in California” (Bernardin 2). Bernardin extensively analyzes *News* and the ways in which it exceeds its stated role as an “intellectual trade route,” trading calendars of events, news, and history, and “also functions as an Indigenous art salon” (4). *News from Native California* has demonstrated an explicit commitment to the production of literary and artistic works by California Indians. Bernardin explains that *News* has published “many of the top California Indian artists, photographers, and writers: Deborah Miranda, Darryl ‘Babe’ Wilson, Judith Lowry, Dugan Aguilar, Julian Lang, Greg Sarris, Harry Fonseca, Frank LaPena, and Janice Gould, among others. Their poems, stories, paintings, and photographs appear alongside articles on politics, education, law, land, foods, and language” (4). The writers and artists named by Bernardin vary in their recognizability or legibility to audiences outside of California communities, but by enumerating this extensive list of names Bernardin is identifying an abundance of California Native peoples using creative and expressive arts to negotiate survivance and sovereignty. Bernardin establishes literary writing in contradistinction from other discursive forms of writing such as political or legal and argues that literary writing, as well as works of visual art, performs differently in relation to other forms of content.

For example, the Summer 2017 issue, “Greater than Gold: Stories of Resilience,” guest edited by Hupa scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy, contains a range of visual and textual works by nine different California Indian writers and artists all bearing testimony to the ongoing effects of the gold rush and its harmful narratives. The issue opens, as most *News* issues do, with an Indigenous language poem. In this issue, the language featured is the Nisenan language, by Nisenan poet Alan Wallace, immediately introducing readers to a poet and a language that has survived the genocidal effects of the Gold Rush, subverting from its opening pages the narrative

of erasure. (The Nisenan language is centered in this issue, as it was on Nisenan lands and waters that gold was first “discovered” by Sutter and Marshall.) The second article is a creative mixed-genre piece by Coast Miwok writer Yulu Ewis. The opening and closing paragraphs, in standard black print, offer historical facts about the start of the Gold Rush, offering historical details such as “In 1848 ten to thirteen thousand wealth seekers arrived on the shores of California.

Throughout the Gold Rush, this number would continue to rise and the number of Indians would decline drastically, from 150,000 to 30,000” (8). These details provide a contextual frame around the central poem embedded in the article. This poem, set in gold type rather than black, visually distinguishes itself in voice, form, and genre from the Western historical context within the article. The poem’s four stanzas vary in rhythm and length. It reframes the arrival of these “ten to thirteen thousand wealth seekers” as “exterminators” arriving in the “land of the Mighty Miwoks,” which the speaker also calls Coyote’s home in Nisenan: “*’oyen yomo.*” The first stanza depicts Coyote ceremoniously caring for his land, “Cradling the land between his toes,/ Calling for remembrance” and praying for restoration. The concluding stanza leaves Coyote in the wake of the Gold Rush, weeping in a land seeping with blood, but having survived nonetheless. Next, the closing paragraph, in black ink, simply states: “The descendants of the Miwok and the Nisenan people continue to thrive in the Sacramento and San Francisco communities” (8). The juxtaposition of historical fact with Coyote’s perspective of the destructions wrought by the Gold Rush, and in black and gold print to differentiate between the perspectives, inserts the dynamic perspective of Coyote into the standard story of the Gold Rush and transforms the ending, so that rather than death there is an affirmation of thriving in contemporary California Indian communities.

I offer this partial reading of this issue of *News* to show how literary and visual works can complicate the pervasive erasure narratives of events such as the Gold Rush. Bernardin theorizes that the juxtaposition of numerous voices and works in a publication such as *News* “envision[s] collaboration as both valued methodology and value system” (4). The aesthetic activist potential of *News* accomplishes more than simply affirming that there are *many* individual California Indians speaking back to the pernicious lies of settler colonialism. It reveals that, as a methodology and value, survivance in California depends on an inter-tribal network of individuals and tribes doing the work to reclaim culture, tell old and new stories, and combat the evil spirits of colonialism.

The California Indian community is the primary audience, but as Bernardin has noted, the works included within *News* construct multiple relational networks and access points. *News* circulates—that is, it *moves*, across audiences, through geographies, and as it moves, it connects, (re)creating community and creating community, audiences, participation in the activation of these stories and their relationships. These intimate juxtapositions and combinations of texts and voices produce one crucial effect: they assert not only survivance but abundance. Bernardin’s argument about the work of *News from Native California* that connects and creates community at multiple points of access applies to *Smoke Signal* and, in a more limited way, *Indian Historian* as well. In drawing these three periodicals into conversation over the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, I argue that the work of connection and community-making that takes place in relationship to these publications was, and continues to remain, crucial for the social and political assertion of a collective and abundant California Indian community. The trans-Indigenous collective of California Native peoples is the “much wider circle” that Miranda argues is crucial to killing the settler colonial lies of erasure and extinction. The many and diverse juxtaposed

voices that can be found inside the publications, as well as the broad and diverse readership of these publications, affirms abundance. In making this genealogy of editorial juxtaposition across the three periodicals, I demonstrate one literary historical genealogy that informs the work of *Bad Indians*. Now I turn to the literary anthologies produced starting in the 1990s.

California is Sounding: Three Literary Anthologies

Listen. This place, these rolling, oak-dotted hills, redwood forests, deserts and ocean shores are
sounding.

—Greg Sarris, *The Sound of Rattles and Clappers*

We are a place now of many peoples, many tribes and visitors.

—James Luna, *Red Indian Road West*

Since 1994 three anthologies of California Indian writing have been produced: *The Sound of Rattles and Clappers: A Collection of New California Indian Writing* (1994), edited by Pomo writer, scholar, intellectual, and political figure Greg Sarris; *The Dirt is Red Here: Art and Poetry from Native California* (2002) edited by Margaret Dubin, a settler scholar working with California tribes and managing editor of *News from Native California*; and *Red Indian Road West: Native American Poetry from California* (2016) edited by Kurt Schweigman (Lakota) and Lucille Lang Day (Wampanoag). Nationally the 1990s witnessed a new wave of literary activism in light of the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990 and the observance of the Columbus quincentennial in 1992. At a local, California level, the success of *News from Native California* as an “Indigenous arts salon,” as Bernardin describes

it, suggested that California was experiencing its own growth of creative energy and expressions of survivance and sovereignty. These three anthologies, produced within this surge of creative and activist energy, diverge in their approach to the collection, curation, and circulation of California Indian voices. *The Sound of Rattles and Clappers* emphasizes the literary works of the first peoples of California only. *The Dirt is Red Here* similarly draws the line of inclusion and exclusion around tribal peoples who call California their ancestral home but expands the media and form included in the anthology to visual as well as textual arts. The most recent anthology, *Red Indian Road West*, is edited by two relocated Native writers and expands its membership to include Native writers who live in California but who may be from tribes outside of the state. All three speak to and assert the vibrancy and diversity of the many California artists writing during this time.

The Sound of Rattles and Clappers expands the literary salon of *News from Native California*. (Sarris was himself often published in *News*.) In the introduction to this anthology he writes: “I wanted to gather the work of these writers in a single collection for two reasons: first, because so much of the writing speaks to me of my own history and experience; and second, because I wanted other American Indians and non-Indians to see and hear the voices of California Indians” (Sarris, *Sound of Rattles and Clappers* x). He claims, in other words, that the writings contained within the anthology speak to the histories and experiences of California Indians (like himself) and the anthology amplifies those voices to broader audiences. He makes the editorial choice to only publish the works of “American Indians of California Indian ancestry” (x) because he “wanted to start with the place, the original people of the place, and find out what we have to say about it” (x). Sarris further states: “From this place called California, then, you have the voices of many California Indians. They are singing, telling stories, their

voices echoing on the pages so you will know. Listen. This place, these rolling, oak-dotted hills, redwood forests, deserts and ocean shores are sounding” (Sarris xiii).

In *Red Indian Road West*, editors Kurt Schweninger and Lucille Lang Day expand the rubric of “California Indian” to include “the entire range of Native American experience in California” (9). They continue: “With more than 720,000 Native Americans, California has by far the largest Native American population of any state and perhaps the most diverse. There are currently more than one hundred American Indian tribes nationwide now residing in California” (9). They locate the population growth in the policies of termination and relocation and explain that the poets “give voice to culture and traditions that intertwine with contemporary life in California” (10). In the anthology’s introduction, Luiseño poet and performance artist James Luna affirms the specificity of a California Indian identity while extending the identity to include Relocated Indians. Luna affirms that “We Natives are from a very special place called California in our bit of Turtle Island as there is no other Native place that has the variety of geography and abundance of foods to find, and thus the diversity of tribes who are part of our landscapes” (11). He continues, “We are a place now of many peoples, many tribes and visitors. We can’t ignore the new surroundings that have come with the tsunami of people, but this does not mean that our cultures cannot survive, and in fact many tribes are growing and finding ways to walk the two worlds. That is in part the energy that writers have brought forward” (12). The trajectory of these anthologies—to begin by centering the original inhabitants of California and eventually expanding to include Relocated peoples—demonstrates the dynamic and shifting nature of the California Native population over time. It also reveals an ongoing, and often unspoken, entanglement between California Indians and Relocated Native peoples, especially regarding issues of visibility, legibility, and recognition. From Inceville to Alcatraz, the visibility of

Relocated Indians has often obscured the visibility of California Indian peoples. And yet, California has always been a site of rich cultural exchange and diversity and, as Luna aptly articulates in the introduction to *Red Indian Road West*, Relocated communities add energy to ongoing efforts of revitalization in California.

Abundance?

On one hand, the existence of three substantial periodicals and three anthologies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries appears to be a robust affirmation of a vital community of peoples across Native California, writing literatures, producing art, engaging in politics, pursuing legal and political sovereignty. But another reality also exists alongside this reality of abundance: that the circulation of these publications did not completely succeed in creating a legible, visible California Indian presence. As the previous chapter in this dissertation clearly depicts, the Hopi and Miwok poet Wendy Rose, who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s in Berkeley, where there was ongoing, robust activism, never felt connected, at home, or engaged with the California Native community. In 2002, the same year that the second anthology, *The Dirt is Red Here*, is published (an anthology that *includes* Rose), Rose also published a collection of poetry titled *Itch Like Crazy*, a collection that engaged, as interlocutors, her deceased ancestors, including her Miwok relations, in a reckoning of who she is and where she belongs. It is poignant to note that even as Rose is included in—even central to—collections of California Indian writing by the twenty-first century, she still struggled to make sense of her own tribal identity. In the poem, “The Itch: First Notice,” the speaker opens:

There

between the brown bubbling mud

of an old woman's memory
 and the angry girl within
 lies the frightened moth
 huddled with fragile dusty wings
 and swollen face

at the edge of any light
 no matter how hot, how cruel,
 no matter if it is suicide.

The energy of the bubbling mud, the liminal space between the inner child and the adult exterior, the fear of a moth lingering at the border between light and dark, the precarity of getting too close to the light lest it burn, all suggest a sense of precarity and loneliness that Rose links to a hunger for her people:

I am looking for my People.
 As I find the names
 I write them down,
 Encasing the letter between
 The pale blue lines of my ledger

The contradiction between being published in multiple anthologies and periodicals as part of an abundant collective of People and the tender precarity of a Native woman still seeking to find a people and capture them in a notebook, a poem, some space where she can engage with them, reveals that recovery and reconnection remains an uneven process.

Miranda also recounts growing up not knowing that other Native people wrote, at all, not to mention California Indians who wrote about the legacy of missionization. In her essay, "The

Bones Speak: Excavation and Reunion,” she says the first time she met another California Indian writer was when she took a poetry workshop from Koyangk’auwi Maidu poet Janice Gould as an adult. Gould provided Miranda with “recommended-reading lists” that came to sustain her as she sought out other representations that reflect her own experiences as a California Native woman (289, 290). In 1994 she discovers Wendy Rose while browsing the University Bookstore in Seattle, Washington. Miranda says this encounter felt “almost like meeting a person whose arrival I had been longing for, but did not know how to find” (290). The experiences of these two women, despite the robust activism and publication history of Native California, suggest that what activism was happening was not yet enough to draw all California Natives back into the communities, stories, and networks of relations that affirm survivance. The specter of extinction and the ongoing structures of genocide, in addition to the complex identity politics of claiming belonging, continued to isolate California Native peoples.

The literary tradition of editorial juxtaposition and polyvocality found within these periodicals and anthologies demonstrate the stakes of the collective community: it takes everyone doing everything to “kill the lie.” Miranda runs with this concept in her provocative memoir, and in doing so writes back against mission history and its ongoing effects. In the next section I demonstrate how Miranda moves from a literary tradition of both polyvocality and editorial juxtaposition to piece together a tribal origin story that supports her process of affirming survival and imagining a future.

Following Coyote: An Ohlone Origin Story

From the outset of the making of *Bad Indians*, Miranda experienced the presence of her ancestors and relations and their demands to be included in the story. *Bad Indians* is not actually

the book Miranda set out to write. In an interview with literary scholar Rene Dietrich she explains that she began to write a more academic book about her grandfather and the recorded oral stories she inherited from him. The title of section three of *Bad Indians*, “The Light from Carrisa Plains,” was originally going to be the book’s title. But Miranda explains that in pursuing research for the project, she was struck by the voices of many ancestors “seeping out of the pages,” and recognized that there were ancestral voices that had different opinions about what story needed to be told: “I feel this very deeply, that this is a collaborative text; that I did not write this book by myself” (Dietrich 103). Choosing to honor the experiences she had listening to the archives, Miranda switched directions and began the project that became *Bad Indians*. She states, ““These are people’s voices that need to be heard and I’m not in charge of it. They’re telling me what they want to tell me, I’m not the boss of this book”” (Dietrich 105). Miranda transformed the project into a creation story that honors their voices, bringing together generations of story fragments to composite, or create a mosaic out of, the remnants to produce a story of survival as well as resilience.

In this we see something of a departure from the periodicals in that Miranda wrote this book in partnership with ancestors who are no longer living. Miranda becomes the editor- author, juxtaposing archival fragments that contain the stories that need to be told. Miranda’s ability to listen, to hear these voices in the silence of their absence offers a provocative methodology of listening and hearing through absence: “Silence is a long story, a complex art left to descendants of Native speakers” (Miranda, *BI* 138). As we see across the periodicals and the anthologies, there is a clamor of contemporary voices ready to speak and bear witness to California Indian creativity and resilience. In *Bad Indians*, we hear this clamor in the silence of the archives, in the lost voices of the ancestors who desire to be heard in the contemporary moment.

Miranda is attentive to a broad audience but remains faithful to the process of juxtaposition as one that should “make your hands bleed” as you put the pieces together (135). The mosaic builds indirectly on Wendy Rose’s imagery of fragments and shards—of pottery, of songs. The experience of cultural fragmentation as a result of settler colonialism is a shared experience across American Indian communities; the fragmentation in California, where genocide was so explicitly the purpose, is inflected through a literary aesthetic that permeates twentieth and twenty-first century narratives.

Bad Indians utilizes formal juxtaposition that we can trace back through the genealogy of California Indian literary development. It combines story fragments of loss and genocide and constructs a creation story. It participates in California Indian activist work to revise problematic education narratives (mission projects and mission history) that is a cornerstone of California Indian activism in the twentieth century. The book relies on the active participation of readers/audiences, Native and non-Native, a practice of relational aesthetics, where huge gaps in knowledge and understanding are encountered as sites of refusal, as lies, or as genealogical aporias. The stakes of telling are survival and new possibilities, an imagined future. The relational context—the shared experiences of settler colonial violence stemming from missions and the gold rush, as well as the shared relationships to place—and the significant fragmentation of cultural continuity form one cornerstone of contemporary formal and aesthetic literary practices in Native California. The invocation of active audience participation is an inclusive formal tactic that creates networks of responsibility, relationality, and belonging. *Bad Indians*, in other words, is a creation story that includes a diverse range of readers in a newly imagined California that includes a thriving Native presence. Miranda adapts the longstanding tradition of editorial juxtaposition and utilizes it in a single-author story. This formal practice is an

expression of California Native relational aesthetics and ethics: the idea that collective conversation between tribes and across generations and the continued responsibility to those stories and voices expresses core beliefs about identity and belonging in California and Native communities across Turtle Island.

Scholarly responses to *Bad Indians* underscore the ways in which Miranda's innovative text advances current conversations about Indigenous genres, archives, aesthetics, material cultures, and temporalities.⁸⁶ The following analysis situates *Bad Indians* at the intersection of the two literary genealogies just analyzed—that is, between polyvocality and editorial juxtaposition—and argues that as readers enter into this kind of formal, historical, and emotional complexity, it can be helpful to have a guide. One possible way to navigate *Bad Indians* is to follow one of the figures who recurs throughout: Coyote. I ask: what happens when we follow Coyote through the book? What might Coyote have to teach us? What can we learn about Miranda's project by noticing how Coyote moves, plays, and creates pathways through the book? What does he make visible that was invisible before attending to him? Understanding the creation story of the Esselen world and Coyote as one of the Creators helps.

At the beginning of the world, a catastrophic flood caused the Costanoan Ohlone First Beings—Eagle, Coyote, and Hummingbird—to flee their homelands in what is now known as Monterey, California and seek sanctuary on a nearby mountain peak to wait for the waters to recede. After a time, Eagle sent Coyote down to see whether it was safe to return home. Coyote returned to inform Eagle and Hummingbird that the waters had receded and that it was safe to return home. In gratitude for the risk Coyote took to investigate their homelands, Eagle gave Coyote a wife and instructed him to begin the crucial work of raising the people back up again.

Shared with University of California, Berkeley anthropologist Alfred Kroeber in 1907 by two Carmel Mission women, Jacinta Gonzalez and Maria Viviana Soto, this creation narrative is a remarkable story of “rebirth and regeneration, one that recounts how the First People were brought to the brink of destruction yet survived to re-people their land.”⁸⁷ Collectively, the Coyote stories gathered by Kroeber construct a fragmented creation narrative about both hardship and regeneration for the Carmel Mission peoples, a story of “setbacks, false starts, doubts, and departures, all on the way to recovery.”⁸⁸ As Gonzalez and Soto share, Coyote’s five children became the founders of the five Ohlone tribes in the Monterey region.

Like the origin story, Miranda’s 2013 innovative mixed-media, mixed-genre memoir centers catastrophe as a central event. That is, the “twin evils”⁸⁹ of colonization in California: Spanish Missionization and the subsequent California Gold Rush that brings her people to the brink of destruction. When the Spanish arrived in what is now California in 1769 and established twenty-one missions along the Pacific coast between San Diego and San Francisco, the world as coastal California Indian communities knew it ended, submerged in the first of what would become multiple waves of violent settler colonialism between 1769 and 1848 and their enduring effects through time. As California mission historian Steven Hackel explains, “Unlike the ocean’s waters, whose gradual ascent in the Early Period had afforded the Indians of Monterey an incremental adaptation over generations, these agents of change flooded in, often unseen, if not wholly unanticipated, and so brought the Children of Coyote to the brink of destruction.”⁹⁰ Settler notions of progress, education, and civilization disrupted traditional ways of living, dislocated hundreds of thousands from their homes, and enforced new forms of religious worship under penalty of punishment.

And yet once more, like the creation story, the world in *Bad Indians* does not end following catastrophe. As the story goes, many like Coyote risked their lives to ensure that the people would survive and rise back up. In *Bad Indians* these figures are the Indians who transgressed colonial law and order, who evaded punishment, missionization, and murderous vigilante hunting groups in order to survive, who fought to maintain cultural traditions and knowledges, and who innovated to ensure that important stories were safely encoded in settler and other archives for future generations. In other words, they were “bad Indians.” Later and elsewhere, Miranda calls these “bad Indians” mission- and post-mission era Coyotes, a compelling re-figuration that recuperates narrative control of these transgressive figures and restores them to tribally-specific frameworks that affirm their role as important agents of social instruction.⁹¹

One question that arises is *who* exactly is Coyote in *Bad Indians*? The answer is as complex as the figure of Coyote itself: there are many. As the storyteller who pieces together the narrative fragments in order to make a new world, Miranda is herself a kind of Coyote figure, both trickster and cultural hero. The other featured storytellers who appear in the book are also represented as both Coyote and storyteller: Esselen informant Isabel Meadows and the Smithsonian ethnographer, J.P. Harrington. Miranda situates herself in a storytelling genealogy with both figures, because Meadows is her relative and because she takes up Harrington’s work of collecting culturally resurgent narratives. The previously mentioned “bad Indians” who defy the edicts of colonizers trying to assimilate or eradicate them, whose stories she tells are also Coyotes. There are fifteen different narrative fragments of various lengths and fullness throughout the book that detail evidence of these bad Indians. Lastly, Coyote himself appears in the book: once in the inclusion of one of Acjachamen and Tongva artist L. Frank’s famous

Coyote comics, titled “California Pow Wow,” and once in the short story “Coyote Takes a Trip,” which Miranda wrote and originally published in *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature* (2011). As we will see, these multiple Coyotes overlap, bump up against, and trip over each other throughout the book, raising questions such as: how do the contradictory actions of Coyote support world-building? How do Coyote’s shape-shifting capacities and transgressive actions defy elimination while instructing the community how to survive?

To complicate things further, the figure of Coyote in *Bad Indians* is not simply the common figure found across Turtle Island storytelling traditions. More than the common trickster figure who appears in tribal literatures across Turtle Island, Coyote is a tribally-specific First Being and Creator grounded in creation narratives and traditions. Certainly he embodies the qualities of “stamina, curiosity, and malleability” identified in studies about the common Coyote trope.⁹² He is “continually changing, growing, moving, returning, always adding new meaning and making new things possible” and he represents the “unfailing and indomitable creative spirit of his storytellers.”⁹³ The problem with universalizing Coyote as a trickster archetype, according to Hupa and Yurok scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy, however, is that such a portrayal

renders these stories as metaphor. They are translated and consequently mis-translated as animal stories about the trickster subconscious. This universalizing of Coyote First Person separates Coyote First Person from his/her people and his/her land and erases an important intent of Coyote’s stories—to establish an everlasting connection and responsibility to the land and its inhabitants (“Coyote is Not a Metaphor” 16).

By making the important distinction between Coyote as a literary trope and Coyote First Person as a tribally-contextualized Being, Risling Baldy argues that “Coyote First Person is not only a trickster, but also a complex embodiment of Indigenous decolonizing methodologies” (2). Here

Risling Baldy draws from the seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologies* by Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith to argue for the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing—including Coyote stories—as legitimate methods of critical analysis.⁹⁴ In *Bad Indians* Coyote stories affirm tribally-specific and grounded ways of reimagining the pernicious effects of colonialism.

I argue that the Coyote from the previously reproduced creation story is the same First Being figure who also appears in *Bad Indians*, and that reading Coyote this way situates *Bad Indians* in a narrative genealogy that extends backward to the creation story while it imagines forward toward vibrant Indigenous futures. This method of reading reframes Miranda's innovative act of storytelling into a decolonial storytelling praxis that reveals continuous narrative connections to the beginning of time and refuses the pernicious physical and cultural erasure of California Indians. *Bad Indians* is a creation story in that it reimagines the original story of the Esselen people and relies on the resilient work of Coyote as a model for surviving the catastrophe of colonialism. The energy of continuity and survivance embedded in the image of Coyote's fluid and often transgressive movements across the book unsettles colonial formations of identity and temporality that figure California Indians as dead and gone. Just as in the creation story, in *Bad Indians* Coyote is busy at work raising the people back up. But Coyote also reimagines the California story as he moves between the interstitial spaces of Miranda's narrative fragments, remaking the world.

Crucially, Coyote's appearances in *Bad Indians* model how we might enter into this complex process. The relationship between bad Indian stories, other narrative fragments, and Coyote stories is fundamental to the form of *Bad Indians* and to Miranda's compelling praxis of storytelling as instruction and survival. Coyote travels between the narrative fragments and transgresses chronologies. He appears in both Esselen stories and Chumash territory and bridges

the shared effects of colonialism in California. Following him renders the often not-apparent passageways between stories—the story bridges built on the backs of Miranda’s ancestors—visible. In the remaining portion of this chapter I offer readings of three moments when Coyote explicitly appears in *Bad Indians* as evocative examples of how Coyote facilitates Miranda’s re-worlding process. In these three readings, Coyote appears in the archives, in comics, and at Venice Beach. United under the larger rubric of storytelling and decolonial praxis, and supported by Miranda’s mixed-media textual strategies, Coyote and Miranda collaborate to re-enact the creation story and raise up the people.

“J. P. Harrington: A Collage”: Coyote Unsettles the Archives

Coyote explicitly appears for the first time in the piece “J.P. Harrington: A Collage,” in the guise of elusive and highly sought-after Coyote stories. “A Collage” appears at the end of the third section of the book, “The Light from Carissa Plains,” a section that collects and reproduces stories told by Miranda’s grandfather, Tom Miranda, previously recorded on cassette tapes. The inclusion of this (re)collection continues Miranda’s project to restore narrative agency to Native voices. “A Collage,” at the conclusion of this collection of stories, utilizes the formal structure of the collage and the integration of Coyote stories to unsettle the goals of salvage anthropology. It does this by provoking tension in the relationship between ethnologist, informant, and the genre of the field note. Throughout *Bad Indians* Miranda repeatedly addresses the ethnographic pursuit of Coyote stories by prominent California ethnographers such as J. P. Harrington, a Smithsonian ethnologist who worked closely with Isabel Meadows and the Esselen tribe in the early twentieth century, and whose field notes, along with Alfred Kroeber’s, contain a lot of the information

Miranda draws from in her construction of *Bad Indians* (28, 61, 104). As Risling Baldy has argued:

In the early twentieth century, following some of the most violent periods of colonial history, many anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists, and other scholars became interested in documenting Indian life to preserve what they perceived as a ‘dying culture.’ This phenomenon of salvage ethnography implied that Native cultures had been static before contact, and therefore once pristine, untouched Indian society would have no ability to survive the continuing intrusion of Western culture.⁹⁵

Harrington was one such researcher, a man known to be so compulsive in collecting remnants of disappearing cultures that Miranda recounts that he would, if prompted, “write down the Indian directions for scratching your ass” (23). While humorous, this glib joke at Harrington’s expense underscores salvage ethnographers’ obsessive impulses to *collect, collect, collect* cultural knowledge: *What* knowledge they collected or the ways in which that knowledge was often mis-contextualized was less important to the ethnographer.

J. P. Harrington: A Collage

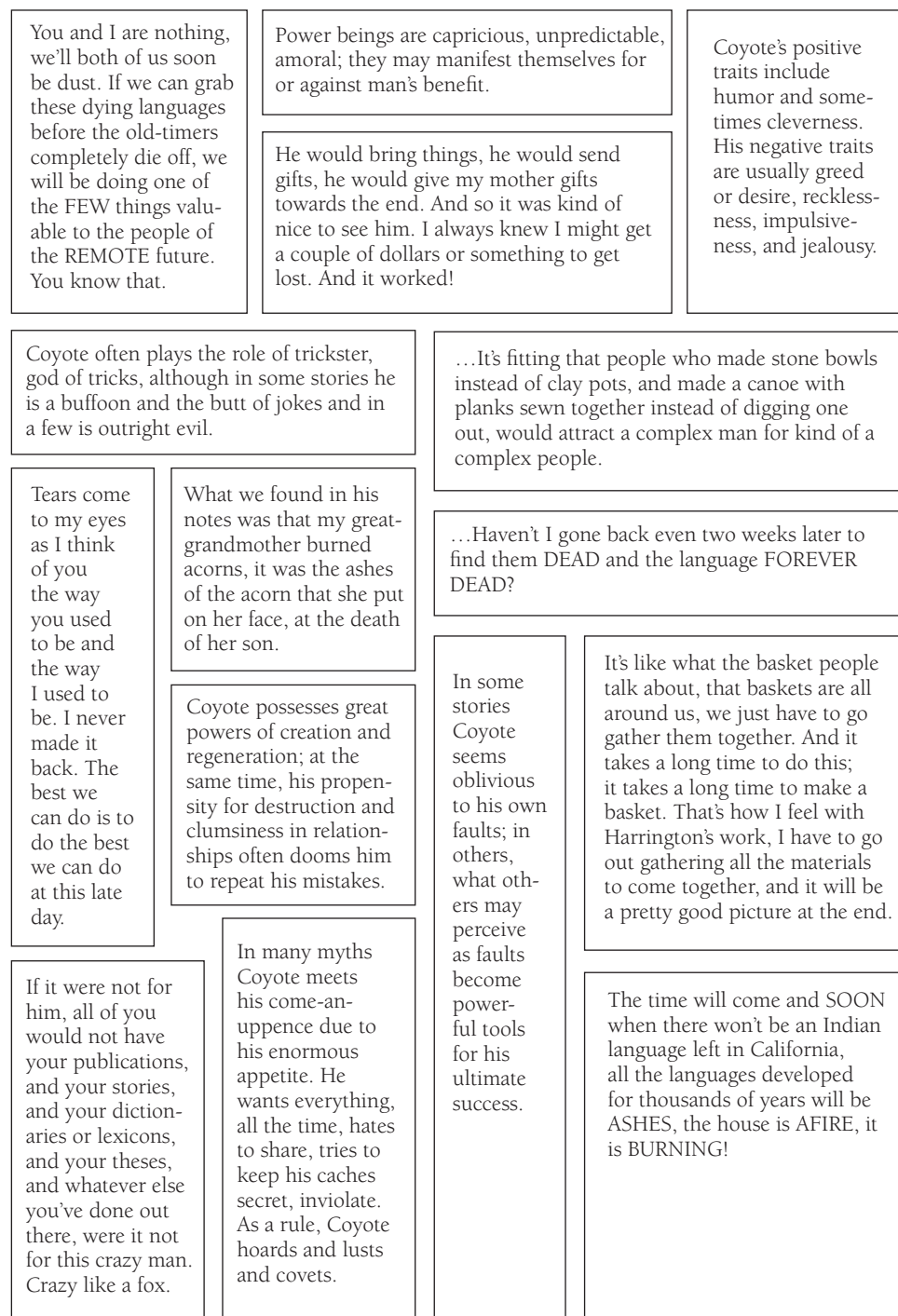


Fig. 1. “J. P. Harrington: A Collage” from *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Reproduced with permission of Heyday Press.

“J. P. Harrington: A Collage” demonstrates the flexibility of the archives, configuring them literally into a new form while also blending colonizer and colonized voices together in an evocative demonstration that to make a new story it takes the active work of many storytellers. “A Collage” is composed of fifteen text boxes that contain extracts from ethnographic field notes that affirm three common tropes of salvage ethnography: the imminent disappearance of Indigenous peoples and cultures; the collection of material culture decontextualized from its cultural context; and the necessity to understand Coyote stories as representative of important cultural pedagogy. Much like reading a comic narrative, the fragmented field notes and juxtaposed narrative wisps invite readers into active, participatory meaning making in order to connect the stories. On one hand, readers can choose what route to take through and across the text boxes, tracking for example only the five interspersed fragments that describe the figure of Coyote. To read only the five fragments about Coyote and leave the rest would construct a decontextualized Coyote figure with positive traits like “humor and sometimes cleverness” as well as negative traits such as “greed or desire, recklessness, impulsiveness, and jealousy”; one who “often plays the role of trickster, god of tricks” and sometimes “a buffoon and the butt of jokes and in a few is outright evil” (104). Reading in this pattern reproduces the act of collecting Coyote stories and renders a generalized Coyote figure easily transformed into a metaphor or folk tale. Reading in this pattern also reproduces the act of “cherry picking” stories of interest that disregard their complex and embedded relationship to other aspects of material and human culture. In other words, selectively choosing which stories you “collect” reduces their power to accurately represent the whole picture.

On the other hand, reading the collage in its entirety following typical reading practices of reading left to right, top to bottom, creates a complexly interwoven narrative about cultural loss, material culture, and Coyote stories that move rapidly between foci and unsettle the referent of the narrative wisps. One effect of reading in a “traditional” manner is that it becomes difficult to discern whether the ambiguous pronoun “he” refers to the figure of the ethnographer or to Coyote. The statement “Power beings are capricious, unpredictable, amoral; they may manifest themselves for or against man’s benefit” for example can transform into a double meaning in which “power beings” might refer to either creation figures such as Coyote or to ethnographers such as Harrington (104). Within the discrete text boxes it is clear who the “he” or “power being” is; but when we read *across* the boxes the repetition of “he” and the constant switching of the referent creates ambiguity and uncertainty. The primary effect of this is that Harrington’s authoritative position as the ethnographer becomes unsettled as he is conflated with the Coyote figure who is “oblivious to his own faults,” whose “propensity for destruction and clumsiness in relationships often dooms him to repeat his mistakes” and so on. The salvage ethnographic narrative, for decades the primary narrative *about* Native peoples in California, effectively loses its singular authority and restores narrative agency to storytellers such as Meadows and Miranda.

A secondary effect of the collage form is that it reverses the anthropological gaze and positions Harrington as the object of analysis. While “A Collage” effectively unsettles the authoritative position of Harrington and blurs the distinction between him and Coyote, the page following “A Collage,” an imagined obituary for Harrington, further cements this reading. Miranda includes this obituary as a final reflection on Harrington from the perspective of the Esselen. She writes: “They called you by so many names. Glutton. Savior, cheat, outlaw. Clown. Creator. Pragmatist,” each term directly invoking the idea of Coyote as both trickster and the butt

of jokes described in “A Collage” on the previous page. Miranda assumes the position of storyteller held by Harrington and repositions Harrington as a complicated figure in Esselen history, one about which she and her people have formed varied opinions. She then directly addresses Harrington: “Could you even imagine that the descendants of Isabel, Laura, Maria, and so many others would track your every syllable as you’d tracked theirs? In your wildest dreams, did you ever think that we would survive you?” (105). This last question, positioned on the last page of the third section, carries the weight of 104 pages describing the structures of colonial violence and genocidal policies that were meant to eradicate Miranda’s people. When she asks if Harrington ever thought they would survive, the reader knows the answer is, rhetorically, a resounding “no”; the questions are a vital assertion of survival. Read in relationship to “A Collage,” these questions cement Miranda’s efforts to complicate salvage anthropological narratives at the level of form. By conflating descriptions of Harrington with Coyote on both pages, Miranda reifies that relationship. In turn this invites us as readers to consider that Coyote’s presence, as in the creation story, supports Miranda’s re-worlding process.

Lastly, and arguably most importantly, “A Collage” teaches readers how to re-read salvage anthropological archives as Coyote stories rather than stories of extinction. Miranda asserts, in the first section of the book, that Harrington’s archives are actually a record of Isabel Meadows’s “creative use of words, literacy, and empowerment on behalf of her community” (28). Meadows, Miranda argues, uses Harrington rather than the other way around: “Meadows knew she was a valuable resource to Harrington; he returned to her again and again, pleaded with her to work with no one else, snapped up the bits and pieces of cultural information and language she fed him” (28). Meadows not only knew her value but further understood how to manipulate the anthropological record to save culturally resurgent information. As Miranda describes, “in

between the language lessons and Coyote stories Harrington was after, Isabel snuck in the stories *she* wanted to salvage: her own private project, a memorial, a charmstone of hope for future generations” (28). Elsewhere, Miranda explores Meadows’s encoded stories as a form of gossip that functions as “a complex and deeply Indigenous documentation and explanation of intense *felt* experiences that illuminate ... uniquely Indigenous strategies for agency and survival” (Miranda, ““They Were Tough”” 377). Her focus on the implications of the affective experiences of colonialism amplify the work of literary scholar Dian Million’s felt theory and locate an important nexus between storytelling and embodiment as strategies of agency and survival.

This becomes poignantly apparent in the story of Vicenta’s rape. Vicenta experiences sexual violence at the hands of a priest during the mission era, a story Miranda tells in the first section of the book. This story is passed down through generations until it reaches Meadows, who tells it to Harrington and ensures that it is recorded for future generations. Miranda extends Vicenta’s story with her own experience of sexual violence and situates herself in this genealogy of telling for survival by using parentheses to allude to her own experience within the context of Vicenta’s narrative: “(It happened to me way before fourth grade)” (24). The parenthetical foreshadowing deconstructs the temporal distance between Vicenta’s and Miranda’s experiences of sexual assault and constructs a direct relation between the two as the direct result of colonialism in different centuries. By linking the affective and intimate to structures of settler violence across the centuries she demonstrates the limits of settler narratives of California history and opens possibilities for reimagining personal storytelling as education and Indigenous agency. In other words, these stories become stories of instruction for survival meant to unite Native women’s experiences in order to affirm their experiences and raise them back up.

Miranda centers these stories as more than stories of victimry and tragedy; they are the narrative wisps drawn from the archives that teach, instruct, and transform women such as Vicenta into unlikely heroes.⁹⁶ The form of these educational narratives emerges out of settler archives and personal testimonies and are transmitted through acts of storytelling. Miranda relies heavily on the archives of Harrington and Meadows to locate narrative fragments about her ancestors. In the process of her archival work she emphasizes the creative agency Meadows exerts in recording the kinds of stories she wants to preserve. Miranda draws a long relational arc between Vicenta's decision to tell about being raped in the mission era and Meadows's choice to continue to tell that story in the twentieth century: she calls Vicenta's story a "precursor to modern Native Literature" and a "teaching device for contemporary California Indian women" (28) and suggests that the act of telling is "potent," "medicinal," and "healing" for both teller and listener (29). Here the flexibility of the archives reveals possibilities for narrative agency for Native communities working to reclaim their own representative authority. Far from the narratives of erasure and extinction ethnographers meant to leave behind for posterity, Miranda's Coyote impulse to collect the resurgent fragments like Vicenta's reconfigures the entire genre of the field note for the purpose of raising her people up again.

In a later publication Miranda explicitly invokes Coyote as she advances her theoretical work on archival recuperation and the significance of Isabel Meadows's storytelling practices.⁹⁷ In this work she turns to another story Meadows documented, that of Estéfana Real, a mission-era Indian woman whose documented sexual transgressions figure her as both a "bad Indian" and a survivor: "And because of her relentless expression of her pain, Estéfana makes her way into Isabel's stories and survives for many generations beyond her own lifespan, becoming a *mission-era Coyote* of sorts: a trickster, teacher, and hero figure for the future" (394, emphasis mine).

Miranda's invocation of the term "mission-era Coyote" invites us to consider the productive potential of the phrase for reading *Bad Indians*. Miranda defines the role of Coyote here as a "trickster, teacher, and hero figure for the future," aligning her figuration of Coyote with popular tropes of Coyote that appear across North American Indigenous stories. In the provocative term "mission-era Coyote" Miranda unites her work on affect and trauma. Coyote refigures the felt experiences of colonialism and the ongoing affective experiences that resonate today. As a malleable, adaptable instructor and *survivor* Coyote resists static narratives of trauma and victimhood and injects dynamic energy into them.

The Harrington collage demonstrates the flexibility of the archives, configuring them literally into a new form, but also blending colonized and colonizer voices together in an evocative demonstration that to make the new story it takes all of the storytellers. Miranda uses the form of the collage to assert that the genre of the field note is an Indigenous genre that encodes and transmits crucial cultural knowledge: "Through the vehicle of the field note we are engaged in a very Indigenous practice: that of storytelling as education, as thought-experiment, as community action to right a wrong, as resistance to representation as victim" (29). The Esselen creation story invites readers to consider the ways in which "A Collage" raises the people back up again, and affirms Coyote's transformation of salvage anthropology—and the resulting archives—into resurgent stories that contain significant information about kinship, identity, and survival. Miranda's efforts to transform the field note into Coyote stories that instruct participates in the unbroken Esselen tradition of storytelling as survival and world building.

Dreaming, Coyote's Side Hustle: L. Frank's "California Pow Wow"

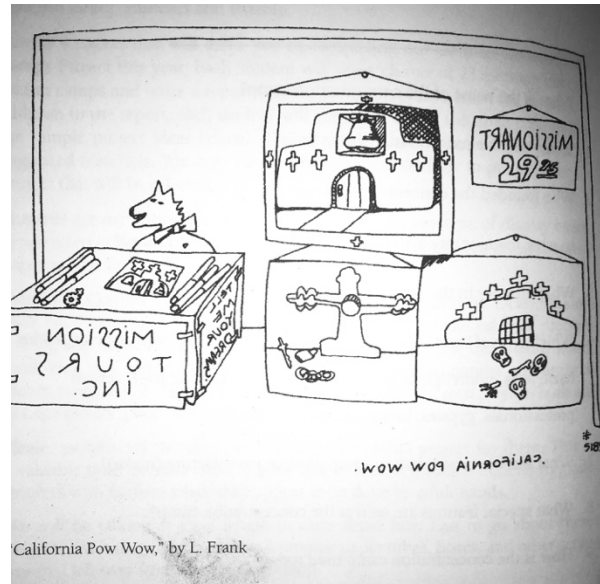


Fig. 2. "California Pow Wow" by L. Frank Manriquez. Reproduced with permission of Heyday Press.

Miranda continues to incorporate different forms of media into *Bad Indians*. The inclusion of "California Pow Wow," a Coyote comic by Acjachamen and Tongva artist L. Frank Manriquez (she commonly goes by L. Frank), compresses Miranda's complex book-length argument into a single-panel image and creates relational pathways within the book and beyond. "California Pow Wow" depicts Coyote as a smiling salesman hocking mission art for the fictional company Mission Tours Inc. In a concise manner, the series of mission art works for sale within the comic unsettles what Miranda, in her introduction, terms the "visual mythology" of missions—that is, the pervasive architectural "bastardization" of mission-style buildings found throughout coastal California that "drains the missions of their brutal and bloody pasts for popular consumption" (xvii). Meanwhile, Coyote's employment for Mission Tours Inc. further applies pressure to the easy commodification of mission mythologies and the "exorbitant amounts of money ... made from the ruins of Native lives" (48). Frank's "California Pow Wow" "adjust[s] the frames" of mission history and amplifies the work Miranda has already done across the book to unsettle the

same narrative (Bernardin 2). By invoking connections between the single-panel image and earlier sections of the book Coyote connects the traumatic effects of colonization to the future-oriented practice of dreaming that not only restores but reimagines California Indian identities.

For Coyote's audience at the pow wow—primarily California Natives—these critiques are unsurprising and familiar. (For non-California Indians or non-Native audiences, more work is required to interpret this.) Non-Native literary scholar Susan Bernardin extensively theorizes the relational work of Coyote in L. Frank's comic series. Bernardin's core argument about Frank's Coyote aesthetics states that Coyote invites readers into a collaborative reading practice that “thwarts passive consumption” (11), “animates shift, shifting questions of access, visibility, and intelligibility” (8), and recognizes California Native literature as always “on the move” (4). As Bernardin writes, the complex interplay between dominant visual narratives and what appears in Frank's Coyote comics “work in concert to demonstrate the ongoing, interactive relationship between past and present for Indigenous peoples” (15). Native audiences or audiences familiar with Native aesthetics are likely prepared to encounter Coyote as a figure who is complicating dominant narratives, and readers of *Bad Indians* will have already had this kind of encounter with him in “J.P. Harrington: A Collage.” More than recognizable aesthetic presence, though, Coyote is also affirming a longstanding presence and connection with the Costanoan origin story and therefore asserting survivance through the horrors of the missions by modeling how to move forward.

If Coyote is asserting survivance, the opportunism he displays in “California Pow-Wow” also asserts his world-building impulse. Certainly, Coyote is not one to miss the chance to profit from colonization; there is money in the mission tourism economy and as his position as representative for “Mission Tours Inc.” suggests, he is happily there to make a buck. But Coyote

is also running a side hustle. A sign, hard to read, words written backward and at an angle, hangs on the right side of his booth inviting attendees forward to tell him their dreams. The sign, facing the right side of the panel, directs the readers' attention forward, toward the future, and incorporates dreams and dreaming as a crucial act of resistance to the commodification and erasure of California Indians in the rest of his business. In other words, while Coyote may be fully complicit in the economic systems of the settler state that continue to erase California Indian histories, to see Coyote at the table is a welcome sight; and he is also subverting that very system and continuing his work of raising the people back up again.

The criticisms and directional reading practices contained within Frank's comic ground Coyote's critique of missions in tribally-specific experiences and expand outward to create relational reading networks across *Bad Indians*. As mentioned, the mission art for sale within the comic centers the iconic architectural features of missions—their adobe walls, arches, terraced belfries, broad eaves, wooden doors, and low red tiled roofs—as sites of critique. These features are replicated in contemporary California architecture, from private homes to shopping malls to Taco Bells. Frank's comic uses these iconic elements to restore this visual myth to its “brutal and bloody pasts,” and its placement within *Bad Indians* creates pathways between the first and fourth sections of the book. The first image in the series of art for sale looks like a “standard” mission—adobe walls, a bell hanging in the terraced belfry, cross-shaped adornments on the exterior wall, and an arched wooden door. Two features in particular, the door and the bell, are reminiscent of Miranda's earlier glossary of terms and coloring book revision found in the first section. Miranda teaches us to read the mission bell as “the voice of the padres” (9), their tolls “ordering us to prayer,” “tell[ing] us to scatter to our work,” “demand[ing] prayers or instruction in prayer” (9). Miranda revises the image of the bell through the second section, tying together

the bell as a symbol of mission mythology to the rhetorical and physical violence leveled at California Native women. Similarly, the wooden door in the first image in “California Pow Wow” invokes the “huge carved doors” Miranda describes in “A Few Corrections to My Daughter’s Coloring Book,” in which her annotations identify the invisibilized presence of Native labor in the creation of those doors: “Carved by whom?” (21). Miranda’s critique of the invisible labor is mirrored in Frank’s comic in the way the door is replaced with a barred gate in the last image in the series of art for sale. The gate, paired with the cat-o-nine tail, three skeletons, and bones littered in the foreground of the mission, transform the mission into an institution of punishment and death and make visible the violence typically contained within the mission walls. The comic rendering of the cat-o-nine tail whip invokes Miranda’s glossary of terms: “A whip, usually made of cow or horse hide, with nine knotted lines, invented in and used throughout Europe and by pirates for various crimes” which might include “steel balls or barbs of wire” on “the ends of the lines to give them more striking force” (13, 14). Lastly, the gate and the skulls reinforce Miranda’s comparison of missions to concentration camps and slave plantations: as an institution and a “conversion factory” the missions functioned more like a site of forced labor that used physical punishment to keep people in submission.

The juxtaposition of missions as sites of forced labor and genocidal violence with their iconic imagery activates reader participation to disentangle the contradictory narratives. This reading is reinforced by the fact that the comic appears immediately following a series of three school project worksheets in the section titled “Post-Colonial Thought Experiment.” This thought experiment juxtaposes missions with a Birmingham slave plantation and the Dachau concentration camp (186-191). While the comic itself performs a similar critique of missions as sites of violence and death, its contextualization within *Bad Indians* creates relational pathways

between multiple sections of the book. As Bernardin writes, “L. Frank’s explosive mission cartoons refuse amnesia and obfuscation, hallmarks of California state origin stories” (20). As in “A Collage,” “California Pow-Wow” invites readers to reconsider the dominant narrative—salvage anthropology or “mission mythology”—and, following Coyote, re-read the story with Native experiences at the center.

Following Coyote into a deconstructed vision of mission history also leads readers to his vision for the future, a future grounded in the act of dreaming. “Tell Me Your Dreams” is Coyote’s side project in “California Pow Wow.” Whereas Coyote faces smiling off toward the left of the panel, a backward gaze that draws the previous parts of the book into this image, “Tell Me Your Dreams” faces the right side of the panel and directs the momentum of the panel forward. The invitation to dream is a radical invitation in the context of colonialism in California. Left to right reading practices make this sign a bridge leading beyond the images of missions and out of the comic and toward the next page, a lyric essay titled “To Make Story in the World Again.” “To Make Story” asserts that to make a “fractured” story whole again “what is needed is a multilayered web of community reaching backward in time and forward in dream, questing deeply into the country of unknown memory” (193-94). In other words, Coyote facilitates a crucial transition at this juncture in *Bad Indians*, from recuperating the narrative fragments of Native presence out of a violent past to dreaming toward a future rich with imagination and expressions of narrative resiliency. As Dian Million suggests, dreaming shifts boundaries and possibilities for what actions and visions become available.⁹⁸

The placement of Frank’s comic in *Bad Indians* mirrors the action in the panel itself: the tension between the reified institutions of death and the possibility of dreaming and future reimagines narratives of inevitable disappearance. Coyote’s appearance in this section, at this

moment, teaches us how to re-read the space between these two possibilities. Structurally Miranda has shifted boundaries across *Bad Indians* and invited readers into her process of making other stories available through her extensive archival work and mosaic work of piecing stories together in new and innovative ways. Coyote similarly has to dream his way into raising his people back up again.

Frank's comic performs a complex critique of mission mythology and the visual perpetuation of a marketable and consumable colonial narrative. As Bernardin writes, the complex interplay between dominant visual narratives and what appears in Frank's Coyote comics "work in concert to demonstrate the ongoing, interactive relationship between past and present for Indigenous peoples" (15). In its inclusion in *Bad Indians* Frank's "California Pow Wow" "adjust[s] the frames" of mission history and amplifies the work Miranda has already done across the book to unsettle the same narrative (Bernardin 2). "California Pow Wow" echoes, in abbreviated visual form, the same unsettling narrative Miranda is constructing through the rest of *Bad Indians*.

"Coyote Takes a Trip": A New Creation Story

In the two previous readings Coyote has modeled how to reclaim the archives and re-imagine settler histories as he rebuilds his world. In this final reading, I consider Miranda's inclusion of her short story "Coyote Takes a Trip" as a story of restoration and creation grounded in language and embodiment. Crafted in the style of traditional Coyote tales, its original publication in the 2011 anthology *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature* foregrounds its significance for theorizing sexuality in not only Native contexts but, I argue, tribally specific narrative worldviews. The creation story reminds us that Coyote is the father of the tribes; in

“Coyote Takes a Trip” sexuality and creation become entangled and interlocking discourses that generatively move toward restoration and (re)creation. The restoration of Coyote’s sexual “mojo” in this story is additionally linked with the restoration of the Chumash word for Two-Spirit relations, underscoring the intimate relationship between language and identity in Native communities.⁹⁹

In “Coyote Takes a Trip,” Coyote’s “sexual prowess” is dampened by winter’s cold weather and cold company in Venice Beach, California, and so he sets out to leave in search of warmer climates and warmer women. En route to the airport, though, he encounters a not-quite-beautiful but well-put-together, “[s]uave” transgender Indio woman. The woman gives him “the eye” after he accidentally exposes his genitalia on the bus, and her seeming admiration of his “prowess” restores his mojo, “like an illegal firecracker smuggled off the rez” (183).

This encounter restores more than his “mojo”; in trying to identify the appropriate word to describe the woman, Coyote also returns to and restores the use of Chumash language, bypassing the Spanish language and its associated rhetorical violence. Like his encounter with the Indio woman, his search for language is sensuous: Coyote is depicted “licking his chops” as he searches for the old word that captures who she is: “Standing on the sidewalk, Coyote rolled his slippery pink tongue around in his mouth as if he could rattle the lost names out from between his teeth somewhere” (184). In his demonstration of the embodied nature of language restoration, Coyote manages to express not only the complex operations required to disentangle Indigenous identities from colonial impositions, but also the creative energy inherent in Indigenous understandings of the relationships among language, sexuality, and worldmaking.

Although “Coyote Takes a Trip” is a contemporary story, Miranda intersperses quotations from mission-era Spanish soldiers’ and priests’ journals describing Two-Spirit people

in California Native communities. In the same way that Miranda collapses the temporality between Vicenta's and her own story of rape in the first section, she collapses the rhetorical marginalization of Two-Spirit people with the mission-era formation of those rhetorical divides. "Coyote Takes a Trip" opens with an epigraph in large print by a soldier named Pedro Fages who documents in 1775 "Indian men who ... are observed in the dress, clothing, and character of women" and "pass as sodomites by profession" and "practice the execrable, unnatural abuse of their bodies" (178). Fages observes that "They are called *joyas* [jewels], and are held in great esteem" (178). Father Gerónimo Boscana observed that the founders of the San Diego missions "found men dressed as women and performing women's duties" who, "Being more robust than the women, ... were better able to perform the arduous duties required of the wife, and for this reason, they were often selected by the chiefs and others" for partnership (181). Father Francisco Palou observed an incident at the Santa Clara mission in which a "*joya*" was caught in an "unspeakably sinful act" with another man and that their punishment hardly fit "the enormity of their deed" (184). When asked to defend themselves, "the pagan replied that the *joya* was his wife" (184). Encoded in these quotes are significant representations of what the Spanish called *joyas*—what we today would call two-spirit peoples and what Coyote recalls as '*aqi* in the Chumash language—as community members of "great esteem" who were "often selected by the chiefs" as partners for their respected work in communities and who were valued as committed partners in sustaining relationships. These quotations, in other words, contradict the intended purpose of the Spanish to represent these community members as "unnatural" and "sinful": rather, the fragmented descriptions, when pieced together, encapsulate a robust portrait of a culture in which Two-Spirit peoples have distinct roles, are respected members of the community, and enter into committed and mutual relationships with partners.

Pairing “Coyote Takes a Trip” with Spanish archival descriptions of Two-Spirit people rhetorically bridges the first section of the book with the fourth and centers the way that language, paired with physical violence, was and continues to be wielded as a tool of cultural dispossession and erasure. Miranda links the end of the world, that is, the ability for Esselen and Chumash to enact their own ways of being and living following colonization, to the role of the two-spirit community member and again to the further erasure of the figure through language: “Then the soldiers came, the priests came, christened us *joyas*, jewels, laughing at how our tribes treated us—sodomites, *nefando pecados*, *mujerados*—as treasures. Treasures? They called us monsters. *Joya* was a joke. But we had other names before that: *aqi*, *coia*, *cuit*, *uluqui*, endearments only the ancestors remember” (31). Coyote’s encounter with the woman in the contemporary moment sends him searching back through the centuries of linguistic erasure for the correct term for the person who was not a “little old lady” but an “*impressed*—old man” (183). He thinks:

Not exactly a man. What was that old word?

Joto?

No, older than that, and sweeter.

Joya? Jewel of the People? (183).

Coyote is not satisfied with “joya” because it conjures memories of Spanish brutality against Two-Spirit people. He continues: “Nope, still Spanish, and just thinking it conjured up vile images of humiliation before loved ones, being stripped naked, mastiffs set loose, flesh and souls mutilated” (183). The provocative imagery of dog attacks and tearing flesh specifically recalls an essay titled “Cousins” in the first section of *Bad Indians*, in which Miranda writes a tribute to a Two-Spirit relative named Victor. “Cousins” is written from the collective “we” point of view

and recalls the specific forms of violence targeted at Two-Spirit people: “In the missions, we were stripped bare, whipped, made to sweep the plaza for days ... ‘In the south, we fed your kind to our dogs,’ soldiers grinned, and stroked the heads of their mastiffs” (31). The repetition of key terms such as “stripped” and “mastiffs” reminds readers that the Spanish word “*joya*” invokes imagery and memory of violence and fear that spans centuries and represents language as a crucial mechanism of colonial dispossession and erasure.

Coyote refuses to stop at the language of the colonizer and perseveres to locate the correct Chumash term. This is, as previously mentioned, a sensuously embodied remembering for Coyote: his “mouth remembered” what his mind could not and the word came to him: “‘*aqi!*’” (184). But the interplay of “Cousins” and “Coyote Takes a Trip” across the book actively restores the creative, life-giving position of Two Spirit people in their communities. “Cousins” affirms that one of the primary roles of Two-Spirit people was to open “the way for the next generation,” give “birth to the tribe’s future,” and “midwife the dead” (31). That is, they were responsible for saving the world but were “disappeared, murdered, or heartbroken” and “the end of the world came anyway” (31).

Coyote dislocates the Chumash word from his mouth and affirms two things: not everyone has forgotten and the work can be rekindled. Coyote’s act of language recovery reverberates across time and across the book, echoing Victor, who thinks:

How strange it is, now, to hear young voices calling to us. ... Who remembers us? Who pulls us, forgotten, from beneath melted adobe and groomed golf courses and asphalted freeways, asks for our help, rekindles the work of our lives? ...

Where have you been? Why have you waited so long? How did you ever find us, buried under words like *joto*, like *joya*, under whips and lies? (31–32)

The soggy story world of Venice Beach in the winter begins as a dead end for Coyote. But read within the context of the creation story we know that a flood marks the beginning of the Costanoan world.¹⁰⁰ Venice Beach is Chumash territory, which complicates this reading on one hand; on the other, with the knowledge that Miranda's father is also Chumash, it broadens our reading practice to consider the trans-Indigenous¹⁰¹ application of creation stories in a California context.

Following Coyote through *Bad Indians* leads us on a journey through archives, languages, visual mythologies and more. The Coyote stories Miranda selects to include perform crucial reparative work in between the testimonies to the pernicious and ongoing effects of colonial violence in California. Moving between these stories and across the book, Coyote models how to connect these disparate fragments together and dream forward toward possibilities for vibrant Indigenous futures. These futures are grounded in connections to the past and anchored in the original act of creation in the Esselen world.

Following Coyote also leads us toward productive future work with *Bad Indians*. Beyond the decolonization of historical narratives and formal storytelling devices, how might Coyote create conditions by which tribes such as the Esselen can rightfully advocate for the return of lands, for example? Or, remaining in the realm of the literary, what productive new relationships emerge when we learn how to follow other First Beings such as Eagle and Hummingbird through California Native literatures as well? With Coyote as a guide, the possibilities for building California Native futures are endless.

Situated in a narrative tradition of both polyvocality and editorial juxtaposition, *Bad Indians* is an innovative re-telling of the Esselen creation narrative that centers tribally-specific knowledges, Creator figures, and methods for rising up in the aftermath of catastrophe. Although

it is a single-authored work, it is constructed using fragments of stories told by many people over time. Miranda pieces the fragmented narratives back together carefully and, at times, painfully, juxtaposing them in order to transform the trauma of colonialism by viewing it through tribally-specific stories and figures. The formal and aesthetic devices support Miranda's efforts to re-world. Like Ishi, she pulls her world around her through story and recreates a pathway between the past and present as well as toward the future.

"Second Serving"

I transition lastly to the semi-regular column called "Second Serving" that appears in the quarterly publication *News from Native California* to emphasize that the process of collecting polyvocal narrative fragments into a single text simultaneously affirms tribally-specific knowledges even as they draw on diverse, trans-Indigenous formal and aesthetic practices. For my reading of "Second Serving," I examine the way this issue circulates among California Indian readers in *News* as a Tongva ti'at while it draws on the Polynesian Indigenous sport of surfing in its content. In connecting "Second Serving" to this larger argument about polyvocality, transforming scarcity into abundance, and *Bad Indians*, I hope to affirm the broad connections I am making between periodicals, literatures, and affirmation of literary survivance and sovereignty. This reading, which focuses on surfing in particular, diverges a bit in focus from the rest of the chapter and dissertation, but offers a kind of foreshadowing of work I plan to do for my next project, which is an examination of Indigenous surfing and seafaring aesthetics and technologies and how they circulate in literary and artistic works in Pacific Indigenous literatures and arts.

Literary scholar Susan Bernardin describes “Second Serving” as “part memoir, part photo-journal, part California Indian and Indigenous reportage,” and a “‘travelogue’ moving through memory, place, and experience.” As I will demonstrate, the form and content of “Second Serving” work together to encode Indigenous processes and knowledges that generate creative solutions to the pernicious and ongoing problem of Indigenous erasure in California, processes rooted in polyvocality as well as tribally-specific formal constructions. The column is written by Acjachamen and Tongva writer and activist L. Frank Manriquez, and its mixed-media, mixed-genre composition mirrors the construction techniques involved in creating a Tongva plank canoe called a *ti’at*, or *tomol* in Chumash cultures, the only seafaring plank canoes to come out of Indigenous North America. These canoes are constructed by sewing together wooden planks planed from foraged redwood trees that have drifted down coast from northern California. The planks are then sealed with a tar pitch or pine resin--and, more recently, with the introduction of settler technologies, sometimes with asphalt. By linking both the processes and the aesthetics of canoe-building and storytelling, Frank participates in what Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson calls a “radical resurgence project.” That is, a project which “uses Indigenous interrogation, critique, and theory, and the grounded normativity these systems generate, as the intelligence system that instigates resurgence and is the process from which grounded, real world, Indigenous alternatives [to colonialism] are manifest and realized” (34).¹⁰²

A core component of Simpson’s concept of “radical resurgence projects” is storytelling. As Simpson elaborates, in these projects stories are “coded processes that generate solutions to the problem of occupation and erasure.” Radical resurgence projects also refuse the dispossession of Indigenous bodies and lands and call for the “formation of networks of constellations of radical resurgent organizing within grounded normativities” (34). In the case of her semi-regular

column “Second Serving,” Frank engages multiple everyday acts of resurgence, from language revitalization to photography, from storytelling to Two-Spirit activism, and utilizes Indigenous technologies—specifically the form of the plank canoe—to articulate a grounded normativity specific to Tongva culture but which also constellates out to suture Indigenous communities across California, and beyond, together.

Frank has, over the course of her life, resourcefully drawn fragments of cultural knowledges from vast and unusual archives, as well as from her own dreams—or what Athabascan scholar and poet Dian Million calls “intense dreaming”—to help her enact her radical resurgence projects. In both dreaming and radical resurgence, the work begins with the individual in an embodied manner and constellates outward to make a network of relationships.

In spite of California’s reputation as a surf state, California Indians have not adopted surfing as a community-building cultural practice in the same way that skateboarding has been adopted across Indian Country, for example. The instances of California Natives surfing remain anecdotal, such as Luiseño artist, poet, and activist James Luna, or Luiseño and Cahuilla activist, educator, and Alcatraz occupier Ed Castillo, both of whom began surfing in the 1960s within the counterculture surf scene. In the contemporary moment there is Andy Nieblas, world-famous longboard stylist and 2018 Vans Duct Tape Invitational champion, who does not politicize his identity but whose Instagram biography nonetheless simply states “Ajachamen Nation.” There are also relocated Native surfers in California, such as our own Colville scholar and activist Dina Gilio-Whitaker. Indeed, Native people all over the world engage in surfing. In my own corner of the Pacific Northwest, I have gotten to know several young Makah surfers, and I met two Sea Sámi surfers in northern Norway, in spaces where the Sea Sámi are barely recognized as still existing, even by other Sámi peoples. In all of these anecdotal instances, I would argue that

surfing is a trans-Indigenous water technology and an embodied resurgent practice that affirms longstanding oceanic relations that predate colonialism and constellates broad Indigenous relations. Surfing demonstrates how Indigenous peoples employ a diverse range of activities, traditional and borrowed, to (re)build a feeling and practice of what Yellowknives Dene First Nation scholar Glen Coulthard terms grounded normativity, a rooted interconnection between people and place that becomes a means by which Indigenous struggles are expressed.. It turns out that surfing has been, and continues to be, an important through-line in Indigenous acts of resurgence, including in California.

Surfing appears exactly one time in “Second Serving.” If Frank’s column is like a Tongva ti’at, you might say that the anecdote about surfing found in the winter 2009 and 2010 issue functions as part of the resin that helps fill the gaps between the main hewn planks: the anecdote is the adapted technology that has been added along with pine pitch to patch the canoe. In this story, Frank recounts being invited to watch a young Karuk boy surf in a surf competition in Crescent City, in northern California, and the surprise feeling of community she experienced while she was there. The anecdote is brief, and on the surface it is fairly straight forward, expressing both Frank’s joy watching a young Native boy connect with the ocean and her surprise at the community that materializes around him. But there are several things happening simultaneously in this story. On one hand, Frank hooks into popular surf rhetoric, using terms like “stoked,” “bitchin’,” and “tubular” that commonly convey excitement and enthusiasm. These are terms with strong connections to popular surf culture. General readers therefore easily understand that Frank is excited to make this trip to watch her friend surf. What’s more, most people tend to understand that supporting youth is a positive experience for both the young person and the mentor or supporter. Plus, Frank is a “so.cal.ndn,” so, naturally she is well-versed

in all things surfing-related, as its visual, mediated, linguistic, and performative cultures saturate Los Angeles. But Frank is also a language revivalist who works with tribal and Indigenous communities globally to recuperate Indigenous languages out of threat of extinction, so we can be certain that there is more at work under the surface of her invocation of surf-speak.

Beneath the easy deployment of popular surf rhetoric in this story, Frank encodes subtle disruptions that unsettle usual reading practices and refuse the dispossession and erasure of Indigenous peoples and lands from this surf contest space. For example, “privileged” is misspelled, and several proper nouns, such as Karuk, Pomoan, Crescent City, and the name of the little surfer, Bert, are left in lower case. Both the subtle mis-spellings and the switches in the letter cases invite the reader to stop, take a second look, ask ourselves, “did we read that correctly?” In both cases these unsettlingings make the reader aware of him or herself in the act of reading and, as Bernardin writes, this “coaxes active collaboration” from us (Bernardin 15). Frank’s spelling of “so.cal.ndn” similarly invites more than one reading. It most obviously locates her as someone who comes from southern California but also might just as easily assert that she is SO California Indian, with an emphasis on the “so” affirming once more that “we are not extinct.”

In the statement that “the gift of watching children grooving with the ocean was tubular,” Frank uses the popular term “tubular” to encode the idea that watching a Karuk and Pomo boy surf with the ocean evokes a deeper, longstanding, circular, ancestral link between California Native coastal peoples and the ocean. Frank finds herself surprised by the abundance of connections that occur in the space of this event, between Bert and the ocean and between Bert and his parents and mentor. Her misspelling of privilege evokes the word’s potential homophonic pun on the word “village” and underscores the unique constellation of strong

California Native connections she has found herself inducted into. Given Frank's lifetime work of trying to recover fragments of language and culture, given her family's own disenrollment experience, and her own experiences with marginalization because of her Two-Spirit activism, which she references in other issues in the column, she is not primed to enter this experience at a surf contest (of all things) and recognize it as a vital system that is generating real world, Indigenous alternatives to colonial formations of California Indians and human-ocean relations. (And, her insinuation that it looked like it was going to rain, that the environment was dark, might mirror this.) As she describes elsewhere, her practice of recuperating fragments of stories and technologies from unusual spaces like European museums and anthropological field notes has grown out of a sense of lack. She writes: "Our elders and the people who knew things have been gone for so long that retrieving traditions or continuing our lives as natives is really incredibly difficult ... Because our people are considered extinct, it's hard to get information" (Frank 41).

In this small anecdote about a surfing competition, readers encounter simultaneous acts of radical resurgence. Little Bert is doing his surfing thing, and Frank is telling the story. Borrowing from both Indigenous technologies and surf culture, Bert and Frank enact and encode knowledges that resist the pernicious problem of Indigenous erasure in California. The story performs surfing and surf culture, and celebrates the way they connect Native youth to the ocean and to community. As anecdotal as this seems, this fragment of a story strengthens the undercurrent of stories of abundance that collectively surge out of "Second Serving." By including this story in "Second Serving" as one of many fragmented stories about radical acts of resurgence, Frank refuses erasure and encodes the processes for transforming the fragmentary into abundance.

The title of the column assists in the process of this transformation. “Second Serving” refers to the fact that the column proceeds from her original semi-regular cartoon series for *News from Native California*, a single-pane Coyote cartoon series which she collected and published through Heyday Press as *Acorn Soup* in 1999. *Acorn Soup* derives *its* name from the food that is traditional to many California Native tribal communities and thus puns on the idea that the content of the book is rich in nutrition and good for the body. “Second Serving” in this context can mean several possible things: it could suggest the scraps of the leftovers, as in, second servings are often scraped together out of whatever was left after the initial meal. It could also suggest excess, or plenty, as in there was such an abundance that there is plenty for seconds. The juxtaposition of the possible interpretations of the title also shows the enriching and provocative tension between lack and excess, because this is the case in the ongoing and real time process of cultural revitalization in Native California. There is certainly lack, as in a lack of cultural continuity, access to traditional lands and waters, knowledge of languages, food traditions, and technologies. But there is also certainly abundance, if you know where to look and how to locate the archives, the knowledges, and the memories. I suggest that the column is best read as both: as fragments, the individually collected stories and images testify to a certain form of lack. But collectively, the fragments work together and new forms of knowledge emerge.

Frank has a longstanding reputation for networking broadly with Indigenous communities across California, Turtle Island, and beyond, and “Second Serving” demonstrates this, whether she is canoeing with the Anishinaabe or receiving a water blessing at a language conference in Australia. Her commitment to radical resurgence in her own community reveals the need to learn from others. She explains that in the process of learning to build ti-ats:

Our tribe made our first canoe in two hundred years. It's the only plank canoe in the western hemisphere. ... We made the first one in two hundred years, and we don't know how the heck to paddle this thing or which way the wind blows or the tide goes, but we're learning. We're getting a lot of encouragement from the Hawaiians, who not that many years ago were in the same place with their canoes, and now they're back, so now we're back. (Frank 41-42)

Frank is a dynamic activist whose work carries her around the globe but who always centers her tribal knowledges and the knowledges of California Native peoples. "Second Serving" brings the various facets of her activism together in a formally rich way. Her work models the fact that Native cultural revitalization--the reclamation of Native spaces, technologies, languages, and identities--does not happen exclusively in tribally-specific, isolated, or individualistic ways: it happens in community, collectively, and often *across* communities, technologies, and stories. Her work emphasizes the importance of the personal, the tribal, and the local, and the inherent integration between these and the global and the trans-Indigenous.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have demonstrated that the tradition of editorial juxtaposition in three California Indian periodicals, *Smoke Signal*, *Indian Historian*, and *News from Native California* are integral to the affirmation that there is a rich body of creative works across Native California that contradict settler narratives of erasure and extinction and promote survivance and sovereignty. When the individual works are juxtaposed and circulated together, they assert abundance, not scarcity. As a methodology and value, survivance in California depends on a

trans-Indigenous network of individuals and tribes doing the work to reclaim culture, tell old and new stories, and combat the evil spirits of colonialism.

Such a broad circle of California Native peoples and allies doing the work does not mean that the affirmation of survivance relies on foregoing tribal specificity and flattening tribal knowledges into an essential California identity. As we see in *Bad Indians* and “Second Serving,” the vast trans-Indigenous circle of voices and stories can be manipulated into forms and encoded knowledges that affirm tribally-specific origin stories and material cultures of individual communities. While these are brilliant formal and aesthetic practices, their significance is amplified against almost a century of news publications that relied on the juxtaposition of diverse and multi-tribal voices to make political, legal, social, and cultural interventions into twentieth century dominant beliefs about California Indians. The creative and intellectual activism of publications such as *Smoke Signal*, *Indian Historian*, and *News from Native California* laid a foundation for later works such as *Bad Indians* to epitomize a now-recognizable form of sovereign expression. By drawing them into a comparative chapter like this I am underscoring and emphasizing their significance as activist texts that demonstrate ongoing, unwavering resistance to dominant narratives of California Indian extinction and erasure. *Bad Indians* and “Second Serving” do not emerge out of a void—they participate in and expand on the activist and creative traditions of California Indians throughout the twentieth and twenty first centuries.

Chapter 4

Grunions Running: Re-Locating California in *House Made of Dawn*

This chapter makes a departure from the previous three chapters in this dissertation by shifting its examination of aesthetic innovations to the spatial site of California's Pacific coastline. It uses the space of the coast to examine how living in proximity to the Pacific Ocean shapes California Native conceptions of identity, belonging, and relationality. The coast is a borderland where ecological and kinship relations are organized by the cyclical rhythms of the ocean's tides. Hardly neutral spaces, coastal zones, especially in California, are representationally hyper-saturated with settler narratives that perpetuate the pervasive erasure of local as well as other Pacific Indigenous peoples. Drawing from borderland scholarship originally theorized by Gloria Anzaldua that defines borderlands as spaces where "differences converge and social norms are often fluid" as well as where "state-sanctioned authority is often absent" (10), Kanaka Maoli historian Isaiah Walker applies borderland theory, traditionally associated with inland geopolitical borders such as the US/Mexico border region, to beaches and surf zones—that is, the liminal space where the ocean meets land and creates waves.¹⁰³ While California's multiple colonialisms and legal policy of genocide dislocated California Native peoples from coastal spaces and early twentieth-century development hyper-saturated southern California coastal zones in residential and commercial developments, the beach persists as a site of contestation and negotiation for the state's Native peoples. From organized protests over the conservation of Panhe, an Ajachamen sacred site located within the boundaries of San Onofre State Park in northern San Diego County, to "illegal" abalone harvesting in Mendocino County in central California, to "land back" movements organized at Indian Island off the rocky shores of

Humboldt County in northern California, the coast remains active as a site of California Indian resistance.¹⁰⁴

My shift to examining coastal representations in California Indian literatures centers on Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *House Made of Dawn*, and contextualizes one of the most famous California beach scenes in American Indian literatures in its California setting. Although Momaday is not a California Indian writer, and although the novel is typically read by scholars as a Relocation novel, Momaday's larger literary commitment to representing place extends into *House Made of Dawn*, and the scenes that occur on the beach provoke questions around how we read Indigenous literatures set in California. This chapter strategically juxtaposes a trans-Indigenous reading of California Indian stories with Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday's canonical 1968 novel, *House Made of Dawn*. Doing so expands on scholarship about the multiple Indigenous aesthetic systems at work in the novel to include California Native aesthetics. My argument is that scholars have yet to contend with California Native aesthetics alongside the novel in a robust manner, and so I analyze how a trans-Indigenous reading of California Indian aesthetics and mappings of coastal ecologies work across tribal aesthetic systems to support the restoration of order and health in the novel.

California Indian storytelling and aesthetic traditions activate the coast as a site of balance, care, and belonging, and represent it as a place of ongoing centrality to California Indian identity and creative expression. In this chapter I piece together multiple California Indian creative representations of coastal places and relationships. Across this dissertation, I think about California Indian storytelling in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries within methodologies that California storytellers *themselves* lay out. Here I engage with Deborah Miranda's practice of making mosaics out of fragments and shards. Miranda, when confronted with the impossible task

of piecing together her tribal history out of the fragments of information she found across several archives and media, writes that “if we pick up the pieces and use them in new ways that honor their integrity, their colors, textures, stories—then we do those pieces justice” (135).

Methodologically, I work with juxtaposed “pieces” of coastal literatures from across Native California to (re)construct an active Indigenous coastal zone. In order to read *House Made of Dawn* I find it productive to additionally think with Karuk artist Julian Lang’s practice of composing what he calls story cycles—that is, a cultural recovery project specific to the coastal narratives and aesthetics of his northern California coastal community. Lang describes how he created this process of making story cycles through his experience learning about the Karuk spirit figure, Abalone Woman. He only found fragments of stories about Abalone Woman that were scattered through neighboring northern California coastal tribal stories, such as the Hupa, Yurok, Wiyot, and Tolowa. Lang argues that taking the separate stories about Abalone Woman and viewing them together creates “a larger story that literally defines the indigenous world being considered” (Lang 99).

When all of these stories are held together—like making a mosaic or a story cycle—we perform a trans-Indigenous reading of California Indian narratives. This in turn illustrates an alternate view of coastal spaces to that of the one represented in Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn*. While the imagery and setting of this beach scene aptly underscore the very real pain and alienation of the protagonist Abel’s life, they also encode possibilities for restoration and renewal in cyclical structures of belonging through California Indian narrative traditions. It is particularly through the possibilities of kinship between human and other-than-human relations, such as the grunion, a small silver-sided fish that appears in the novel, that Momaday foreshadows Abel’s eventual restoration to his tribal community. I argue that the presence of the

grunion in the novel invites readers to consider that while Abel may have cycled out of Pueblo structures of belonging, there is opportunity to see how he might be integrated into California Indian stories and beliefs. In activating a range of California Indian stories that establish intimate relationships with coastal landscapes, I not only affirm ongoing California Indian presence rather than erasure, but I also argue that California Indian narratives are capacious and dynamic enough to integrate Relocated individuals such as Abel into new structures of belonging.

House Made of Dawn: A California Story?

Perhaps the most famous California beach scene in all of American Indian literatures occurs in Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday's 1968 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *House Made of Dawn*. This scene, set in January of 1952, depicts the novel's protagonist, a World War II veteran and Jemez Pueblo man named Abel, lying badly beaten on an unnamed Los Angeles beach at night after sustaining serious injuries in a fight with a police officer named Martinez. Abel's extensive injuries, exacerbated by his extreme intoxication, cause him to drift in and out of consciousness. As he drifts through conscious states, his thoughts become patterned by the rhythm of the nearby waves and the reflection of the moon on the water, and he recalls a non-chronological series of events that led him to this night and to the brink of death.

Abel finds himself on this beach after failing to re-integrate with either his home tribal community at Jemez after the war, or with the newly forming Relocation community in Los Angeles in 1952. As literary scholar Lawrence Evers explains, Abel was in need of a ceremonial structure to help him transform the chaos of his life's experiences into meaningful balance. After returning from the war, Abel tries, and fails, to participate in a ceremonial tradition in his home

community. Likewise, after ending up in Los Angeles, he tries and fails to find a sense of belonging in the urban Indian ceremonial and social structures developing there.

The Los Angeles beach at night, then, is meant to signify, geographically, that Abel has found himself as far removed from familiar or available social and spiritual structures of belonging as possible. Momaday underscores Abel's out-of-placeness in this scene by interspersing descriptions of Abel's wounds with descriptions of an ecological phenomenon that occurs only in southern California and the Baja peninsula: the grunion run. Grunion are a unique species of small silver fish that are indigenous to the southern California and Baja peninsula coastline.¹⁰⁵ These fish travel in schools, and during the low tide of a full moon in the spring and summer months they run—that is, they swim up to the shoreline and heave themselves onto the shore—in order to mate. After mating, they flop back into the sea, where they die shortly after. Momaday describes the run in this way:

There is a small silversided fish that is found along the coast of southern California. In the spring and summer it spawns on the beach during the first three hours after each of the three high tides following the highest tide. These fishes come by the hundreds from the sea. They hurl themselves upon the land and writhe in the light of the moon, the moon, the moon; they writhe in the light of the moon. They are among the most helpless creatures on the face of the earth. Fishermen, lovers, passers-by catch them up in their bare hands. (89)

The juxtaposition of Abel's body on the beach with this life-death-life cycle of the grunion underscores the fact that, in this moment, Abel is very much out of his element—a figurative fish out of water. Momaday's repetition of "the light of the moon, the moon, the moon," an allusion to Edward Lear's nursery rhyme "The Owl and The Pussycat," participates in this unsettling of

the scene as a fairy tale story of love, belonging, and celebration. The cognitive dissonance created by the allusion to this fairy tale, along with the juxtaposition of Abel's body and those of the grunion, emphasize Abel as a fish out of water, which is temporally, subtly and perhaps unintentionally, affirmed by the fact that the scene is set in January, very much *out* of season for grunion, which typically run between March and August. Abel is literally on the beach out of season. The juxtaposition of Abel's own precarious proximity to death with these "most helpless creatures on the face of the earth" epitomizes Abel's inability to integrate into tribal or urban life. Momaday manipulates dominant assumptions of beach representation and juxtaposes Abel with the grunion; in doing so, he makes use of specific California coastal imaginaries and ecological aesthetics to drive the transformation of his protagonist.

The concept of the grunion "running" is further integrated with the imagery of the Dawn Runners that recurs through the novel. The novel opens and closes with depictions of the Dawn Runners, whom Laguna scholar Paula Gunn Allen also calls "Runners-After-Evil" (90). The Dawn Run is a ceremonial run associated with pueblo feast days, and the twinning of ceremony and grunion runs foreshadows Abel's eventual restoration. The overlapping imagery of the Jemez Dawn Runners and running grunion invite compelling questions around the role of the grunion in relation to Abel's journey from brokenness to healing. The grunion offer Abel an alternate structure of belonging, and their life-death-life cycle offer Abel a new cycle for finding his way back toward his own life. Reading grunion as California Indian relations re-inserts California Indian presence into this Relocation novel: grunion are not only a source of nutrition for coastal California Native peoples but activate an entire relational ecosystem in which Abel might participate. Their presence also complicates the setting as a site of Indigenous erasure as well as relocations; grunion are signifiers of ongoing cycles of life and death and new life that

persist despite structural oppression against California Indians and their homelands and waters. And lastly, the grunion support a vibrant trans-Indigenous aesthetic that demonstrates the robust possibilities of literary re-worlding—while Abel has fallen out of Pueblo and Navajo ceremonial cycles, he is being invited, through the figure of the grunion, into California Indian aesthetic cycles of belonging and care.

House Made of Dawn is a foundational, or canonical, novel in American Indian literatures. The first novel written by an American Indian writer to win the Pulitzer Prize, *House Made of Dawn*, many say, launched an American Indian literary renaissance in the 1970s. (That is, the American publishing houses were much more likely to publish books by Native writers after that; we know, and it is well-documented, that American Indian and Indigenous peoples had been writing, but more importantly telling stories, *long* before 1968.) Both the novel's plot and structure rely on elements of the oral tradition—particularly, as Evers writes, the way oral stories help listeners imagine and form relationships with “who and what they are in relation to particular landscapes, cultures, and individual members of cultures” (297). Evers argues that “A sense of place derives from the perception of a culturally imposed symbolic order on a particular physical topography” (298). Within this understanding of the relationship between place, stories, and peoples, it becomes understandable that Abel, a Jemez Pueblo man from the Southwest, struggles to imagine who he is and make sense of his experiences in relation to a foreign geography like urban and coastal Los Angeles.

Momaday himself describes the plot and the structure of *House Made of Dawn* as a circle and a race or a journey, and indeed there is a ceremonial run through the land at Jemez that anchors the novel's opening and closing, which Abel ultimately participates in as an act of reconciliation and restoration. There is an invitation in the novel's formal and ceremonial

cyclical structure, and in the imagery of the run—both the actual run through Jemez and the grunion run that I described earlier—to transform the chaos of Abel’s out-of-placeness and integrate him into alternate structures of belonging that are grounded in California Indian epistemologies about coastal places. As a novel set partly in California, written by a Native writer who is not a California Indian, *House Made of Dawn* raises provocative questions about representations of California as a place without tribal stories. Further, set in the particular moment of Relocation, a complicated federal policy that encouraged American Indians to move away from reservations and into urban centers so that the government could terminate its nation-to-nation treaty agreements—the novel also raises ongoing questions about the ways in which the influx of Native peoples who are not California Indian perpetuated, albeit unintentionally, the continued erasure of California Indians.

California’s multiple historical colonial encounters, from Spanish missionization to US occupation, as everywhere, dispossessed California Indian peoples from their homelands. Pervasive narratives of California Indian extinction, encoded in a diverse range of settler legal, political, and cultural structures, from law to fourth grade public school curricula, continue to make it difficult for living, surviving California Indians to assert visibility and sovereignty. In southern California, where the coast is now hyper-saturated with settlers who have naturalized themselves to these spaces, the ongoing battle for visibility and rights for people like the Tongva, whose homelands are where Los Angeles currently sits, remains challenging (although, as Indigenous communities are everywhere, the Tongva are making exciting interventions into settler spaces and stories). Momaday’s depiction of the beach on which Abel finds himself indeed reflects the pernicious effects of California’s settler colonialism on Indigenous lands and bodies. Contrary to typical representations, or popular imagery, of southern California’s gauzy,

sandy, sun-soaked spaces of fantasy and leisure, the narrator describes the location of this nighttime scene as an urban and industrialized “broad rocky beach” adjacent to a shipping yard full of “tractors and trailers,” where “cans and bits of paper and broken glass” litter the ground against a fence made of “heavy wire mesh” (99). This industrial scene of Abel’s ultimate dark night can be read as an indictment against settler colonialism and urbanization, as it transforms the “beach” into a nightmarish reality of Indigenous pain, brokenness, and defeat.

But the place we know as Los Angeles has never been a neverland absent of Indigenous stories. Hardly neutral spaces, beaches persist as sites of contestation and negotiation for California Native peoples. And they are storied. California Indian storytelling and aesthetic traditions activate the coast as a site of balance, care, and belonging, and signify it as a place of ongoing centrality to California Indian identity and creative expression.

In other words, Momaday has established, in this most famous of beach scenes, a complex setting that integrates multiple Indigenous and settler aesthetic systems that overlap, and weave together an unlikely combination of epistemologies that affirm Abel’s pathway toward wholeness. In the work that follows, I argue that the novel’s structure activates the urban space of Los Angeles, and the beach in particular, as a dynamic site of transformation, and that the dynamic potential of the setting enlivens aspects of California Indian epistemologies of balance and order. Momaday relies on settler and Indigenous assumptions about beach spaces to construct the complementary scenes on the beach, ultimately creating space for Abel to find his own path back to belonging.

House Made of Dawn: Synopsis and Narrative Structure

The novel opens with Abel's return home to Jemez after World War II. In the aftermath and trauma of the war, he has fallen into alcoholism. As he attempts to re-integrate into ceremonial culture at Jemez, he ends up unable to do so, and after a night of drinking murders an albino man he believes to be a witch. After serving time in jail for the murder he is sent to Los Angeles with the nascent work relocation program for Native peoples, incentivizing them to move to cities and assimilate into the US labor system.

Abel remains disoriented in his new urban setting, spiraling further into alcoholism and unhealth. His personal disorientation becomes integrated into a collective sense of disorientation in Los Angeles's newly forming urban Indian community, and with the exception of two individuals, he again fails to integrate or form meaningful connections with people there. The two relationships he does form are with a Navajo man named Ben Benally and a white working-class woman named Milly. Ben and Milly function more as caretakers for Abel, who continues to drink, is unable to hold a job, and antagonizes anyone he can until he winds up on an unnamed Los Angeles beach at night, beaten by a Mexican cop named Martinez, whom Abel also believes is a witch. The beating lands him in the hospital and becomes the turning point that facilitates Abel's return home. After recovering from his beating in the hospital, Abel returns to Jemez where he reconnects with his grandfather and provides care for him as he dies. The novel closes on Abel participating in a ceremonial dawn run across the cold, arid landscape of his homeland. Abel's participation in the ceremonial run signifies a restoration of meaning and order in Abel's life.

Momaday locates the drama of his novel, and Abel's internal struggle for voice and embodiment, against the background of the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the US federal policy of Termination and Relocation. Many American Indians served in the war

and subsequently struggled to reintegrate into their home communities and lifeways following the trauma of that experience. At the same time, US Indian policy was moving toward a period of structural assimilation, in which the federal government justified terminating government-to-government relationships with recognized tribes by arguing that American Indians should simply live as American citizens. The U.S. federal government initiated a voluntary relocation program in the 1950s. This program was part of a larger movement in early twentieth-century U.S. legislative policy to terminate federal fiscal responsibility for American Indian reservation systems and assimilate these sovereign communities into mainstream U.S. culture. Starting with the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, which imposed full U.S. citizenship on all Native Americans, the government began developing policy designed to assimilate all Indians into U.S. mainstream culture. In 1950 the government enacted the Navajo-Hopi Act, which provided job training in Los Angeles, Denver, and Salt Lake City. Although the Relocation Program of 1952, which promised financial aid to move to the city, assistance securing a first job and a first home, and some medical help, was pitched as a voluntary program designed to assist the American Indians who desired to move away from poverty-stricken reservations to cities where the promise of employment and financial stability seemed enticing, members of those communities ultimately maintained that termination (including relocation) was “used as a weapon against the Indian people in a modern war of conquest” (Deloria, Jr. 81). In other words, Native communities ended up viewing Relocation as another tactic to further erase their rights to sovereignty from the very land and fabric of American life. That said, thousands of American Indians participated in the relocation program over the course of its lifetime. Of those, the largest population chose to move to Los Angeles. The Native population of Los Angeles jumped from 27,000 to 719,000.¹⁰⁶

Narrative structure and setting are intimately entangled in this novel. *House Made of Dawn* remains exemplary of what literary scholar William Bevis calls the “homing narrative,” a narrative arc within American Indian novels that anchors its characters to traditional homelands. Bevis claims that tribal identity is composed of the intimate relationship between society, past, and place.¹⁰⁷ That is, for Native characters, identity is constructed through the relationship between a tribal community, their shared history (passed on through oral tradition), and their belonging to a particular geography or place. Central to the homing plot is the Native protagonist’s sense of alienation from their tribal communities, the result of the effects of settler colonialism, followed by an eventual reconnection, usually facilitated via ceremony or journey. In contradistinction to narrative arcs commonly found in American literatures, in which “American whites keep leaving home,” the hero in Native American novels returns home, where home is constituted as “a primary mode of knowledge and a primary good.”¹⁰⁸

These plot features are prevalent in *House* and are underscored and emphasized through its cyclical narrative structure. The novel is divided into four sections, the first and fourth set at home in Jemez Pueblo, while the middle two sections are set away in Los Angeles. Structurally and spatially, the novel is a cycle, first taking Abel from and then returning him to a tribal community held together by “society, past, and place” (Bevis 19). In taking on this cyclical pattern, Jemez book-ends the novel, with the sections on Los Angeles in the middle, constructing a balanced and complete cycle. Within this cycle and Bevis’s configuration of the homing plot, Los Angeles is situated as an unfamiliar territory absent of tribal stories and experiences. As literary scholar Laura Furlan writes, “Because of the narrative gap between the ‘critical narrative site’ and the telling, novels like Momaday’s and [Leslie Marmon] Silko’s imagine urban landscapes, but as other critics have noted, the city is portrayed as a destructive place where

tribalism is difficult to maintain” (Furlan 30). Furlan is articulating that the Indigenous urban imaginary is more often filled with destructiveness and lack of connectivity, especially when juxtaposed with tribal homelands that are storied and intact. Through the frame of the homing plot, Los Angeles is a site of alienation and loss. This resonates with the description of the nighttime beach scene above: Abel was left alone in a space of decay and in a state of disorientation. Los Angeles is not *placed*—it is alienating for Native peoples who may find themselves there. By treating the setting in this way—as the “other” location that is void of Indigenous presence other than those repopulating it through relocation and those innovative and modified systems of relating and belonging, the limits of the homing plot structure foreclose on the possibility that Los Angeles is *storied*, populated, and active as an Indigenous landscape.

I am perhaps over-stating Los Angeles’s lack of tribal presence, however, which reveals the limitation of the homing plot in establishing the city as an active and dynamic, transformative space. Momaday is a writer deeply committed to the representation of place and the felt connection to lands. In his landmark invocation, “The Man Made of Words,” he famously stated:

Once in his life a man ought to concentrate his mind upon the remembered earth, I believe. He ought to give himself up to a particular landscape in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wonder about it, to dwell upon it. He ought to imagine that he touches it with his hands at every season and listens to the sounds that are made upon it. He ought to imagine the creatures that are there and all the faintest motions in the wind. He ought to recollect the glare of noon and all the colors of the dawn and dusk. (52)

I am interested in what happens when we turn this attentive gaze to the remembered earth of Los Angeles. What are the interpretive possibilities of looking at Los Angeles “from as many angles

as [we] can”? To think about its seasons, and its sounds, to consider its creatures (such as the grunion) and its social ecologies. The novel’s evocation of multiple Indigenous aesthetic systems opens evocative opportunities to do so.

Activating an Indigenous Los Angeles

Momaday activates Los Angeles to generate dynamic energy that facilitates the restoration of Abel’s emotional order. The novel is structured not only around Navajo and Pueblo epistemologies, as a number of scholars have demonstrated, but also around an Indigenous map of Los Angeles through which Ben and Abel navigate their belonging. In other words, Los Angeles is a vital place in Abel’s sense of identity and belonging, whether or not he is capable of seeing its vitality through his fragmented experiences. As I have already established, *House Made of Dawn* is set at the nascent origins of Relocation: in 1952 Los Angeles is deeply unfamiliar, and Abel is a first-generation Relocatee. The city is only in the beginning throes of being transformed by what will grow into a wave of over 500,000 American Indian relocatees from around the country. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) held offices in the downtown neighborhood of Bunker Hill, what is now commonly known as Skid Row. (The neighborhood is actually now a collision between the upper-end arts district and Skid Row.) The influx of Relocated Native peoples to this specific downtown neighborhood led to the creation of new Native spaces.

This version of Los Angeles is perhaps best depicted in Kent Mackenzie’s 1961 documentary film, *The Exiles*. Mackenzie’s “docudrama” chronicles twelve hours in the lives of three American Indians who relocated to Los Angeles. The opening narration explains that the film intends to reflect “a life that is not true of all Indians today, but typical of many”

(Mackenzie, *The Exiles*). Urban planners and geographers Dick Winchell and Leo Zinn claim that the film, in following these three characters, performs a crucial mapping of the ways in which Relocated Indians inhabited the Bunker Hill neighborhood of downtown Los Angeles. The sites that the film maps are the “Indian” bar, which represents one of several bars in Bunker Hill where Relocated Indians gathered and drank; Hill X, a hill just outside of the neighborhood where American Indians gathered and danced, drummed, and sang their traditional songs; domestic spaces; and the reservation, which is only briefly acknowledged when one of the Relocatees, Homer, receives a letter from home and reminisces about his family. Additionally, the film depicts a few social spaces that afford another of the relocated Indians, Yvonne, a degree of anonymity and autonomy: the Grand Central Market, where people of many ethnic backgrounds are seen, the movie theater, and the Angel’s Flight funicular railway.

The bar and Hill X are crucial spaces in which the male characters are able to forge connections with other Relocatees. In his study of Relocated Indians in Los Angeles published in 1995, Western Shoshone historian Ned Blackhawk (Te-Moak tribe) identifies the ability to connect with other Relocated Indians as a prime factor in the individual’s ability to successfully integrate into Los Angeles urban culture. In both the bars and Hill X, Relocatees had the opportunity to encounter and interact with each other relatively freely. The bar is where the men gather and joke, talk about work, and flirt. Employment, at least to some degree, is implied in *The Exiles*. Yvonne has money for groceries and for the movies; hers and Homer’s home (the two are a married couple) is simple but furnished, and she is able to cook enough food for Homer’s friends when they drop in; and they live above the city center, as is evidenced when Yvonne takes the Angel’s Flight up out of the city center after shopping at the Grand Central Market. The film raises questions about both the gendered nature of these social spaces as well

as the role alcohol plays in the lives of the characters and how it impacts relationships (there is almost a sexual assault on Hill X). For now, however, it is useful to understand the ways in which the film functions as a text that articulates the early social spaces of Relocated Native people in urban Los Angeles.

House Made of Dawn creates a similar map of Native social spaces—it features scenes in bars, at home, on the reservation, and at Hill X—but it also broadens the map to include places of employment, the pan-Indian Holiness Rescue Mission, the beach, and the Los Angeles Indian Center. *House Made of Dawn* more explicitly delineates the tenuous relationship between the BIA, Relocatees, and potential employers. Ben Benally's intervention on the BIA's efforts to locate a job for Abel, as well as his offer of a place to live, is fortuitous for Abel, whose criminal record seemed to be making it difficult for the BIA to place him. Benally, in offering employment *and* a place to live, extends to Abel the kind of social connection that is so crucial to the well-being of early Relocatees. Simultaneously, the Pan-Indian Holiness Church in downtown Los Angeles provides another opportunity to connect with other Native people, talk about home, and practice ceremony in a uniquely Indigenous space. Blackhawk reports that half of the individuals in his research claimed that participation in Indian churches, where it was common to hear songs from various tribes in their own languages, played a significant role in creating a sense of community and adapting into urban life (25).

We can think of the map of LA Momaday constructs in the novel as a reproduction of Jemez Pueblo's town center, the Middle. In the first section of the novel Momaday describes The Middle in this way: "The Middle was an ancient place, nearly a hundred yards long by forty wide. The smooth, packed earth was not level, as it appeared at first to be, but rolling and concave, rising slightly to the walls around it so that there were no edges or angles in the dry clay

of the ground and the houses; there were only soft contours and depressions of things worn down and away in time. From within, the space appeared to be enclosed, but there were narrow passages at the four corners and a wide opening midway along the south side ..." (Momaday, *House* 40–41). Like the Middle, Los Angeles's city center feels enclosed by freeways and limited mobility in a car-centered economy. Yet there are openings and pathways that lead out from the center. Los Angeles's city center is literally encircled by a network of freeways: the 10, the 110, and the 101. In Navajo aesthetic systems, even numbers represent static, fixed energy: two of the three freeways that enclose downtown, the primary setting for the Los Angeles scenes, are fixed with even-numbered freeways. In this understanding of Los Angeles we see the ways Navajo aesthetic codes afford meaningful readings of the space while also encoding dynamic disruptions that foreclose on a static Los Angeles. The route west from downtown to Santa Monica further represents a spatial vector or directional appendage to the spatial map of Indigenous Los Angeles, inviting us to read it as an active divergence.

The Los Angeles readers encounter through Abel and *House Made of Dawn* is dingy, industrial, chaotic, and manic, fueled by alcohol, perpetually in a state of intoxicated disequilibrium. The second section of the novel which opens on Los Angeles juxtaposes two spaces in the first page: a brief poetic invocation of the coast of southern California, followed by a lengthy description of the Los Angeles Holiness Pan-Indian Rescue Mission. The basement of the mission is "cold and dreary, dimly illuminated by two 40-watt bulbs" with walls that were "bare and gray and streaked with water" and windows that were "small, rectangular openings near the ceiling" and "covered over with a thick film of coal oil and dust" (Momaday, *House* 90). Tosamah, the Priest of the Sun, opens with a lengthy sermon followed by a peyote ceremony. These juxtapositions enact a reconfiguration of Los Angeles *on Indigenous terms*. That is,

Relocation facilitates the Indigenizing of Los Angeles. *House Made of Dawn* affirms not only Indigenous dispossession but Indigenous belonging. As Laura Furlan argues, “While the image of city Indians that dominated the public imagination was one of desperation and poverty, Native writers tell another story, one of survival and re-creation” (7).

Momaday transforms the profane space of the city into a sacred space with its own origin stories and stories of renewal and continuity and possibility. Susan Scarberry-García argues: “Although *House Made of Dawn* is a written work of fiction, it retains the oral ability to reorder existence and personal lives by naming sacred places” (7). This is, in part, what makes Momaday’s inclusion of the beach as an “indigenous” space such a fascinating addition to the map. The excursions Abel, Ben, and Milly take to the beach (an easy drive, or bus route, down the 10 freeway) significantly expand the territory traveled and inhabited to Relocatees away from the city center, signaling a *positive* ability to adapt and increase mobility within the city. The route out to Santa Monica is a dynamic appendage extending outward from the city center, incomplete and therefore active and unresolved. Yet this appendage also terminates at the ocean’s edge where another circular, repetitious cycle (the tides, the grunion, the moon) takes place. By including the beach within the oral tradition in which the novel is written, Momaday depicts the complexity of adaptation by demonstrating how it is both a site that signals successful integration and a site that reinforces the alienation and out-of-placeness that Abel experiences.

There is almost no extant scholarship that accounts for California Indian invisibility in texts such as *House Made of Dawn*. In his 2021 historical account, *We Are the Land: A History of Native California*, Bauer explains that this is in part due to the Tongva peoples’ lack of federal recognition: “The Tongva are not among the more than one hundred federally recognized tribes in California. Their lack of recognition partly explains their undervisibility in comparison to

other tribes” (268). Relocation significantly altered the Indigenous landscape of Los Angeles and its effects resonated into the contemporary moment and became another layer of California Indian displacement and erasure. The tension between Relocated Indian communities and California Indian communities remains felt even in the twenty-first century, as California Indian reception to Tommy Orange’s 2018 debut novel *There There* reveals. Beth Piatote explains, “The book is set in Oakland, California, a crossroads of Indian dispossession and relocation, and just as there is a prologue to the novel, there is a prologue to contemporary Native life in Oakland” (Piatote 576).¹⁰⁹ Similar to *House Made of Dawn*, Orange’s provocative novel naturalizes the newest generations of Urban Indians to the cities without acknowledging California’s own Native inhabitants. Orange’s prologue claims instead that “[a]n Urban Indian belongs to the city, and cities belong to the earth. Everything here is formed in relation to every other living and nonliving thing from the earth” (11). A powerful declaration of belonging in the decades following the profound disconnection affected by Termination and Relocation, Orange’s claim still fails to acknowledge that those urban spaces are built on stolen lands, something Piatote’s response attempts to make legible. The naturalization of urban Indians in places such as San Francisco and Los Angeles continues to fail to acknowledge the dispossession of California Indians from their homelands. As Kanaka Maoli scholar Hokulani Aikau has written, Indigenous peoples who have relocated to other places and settled in for multiple generations still have a responsibility—*kuleana*, in the Hawaiian language—to the fact that as a people living in diaspora, they are living on other Indigenous peoples’ lands.

However, within the aesthetic framework of Navajo weaving there is space to animate California Indian aesthetics and develop a reading practice that accounts for California Native presence and considers *kuleana*. This method of reading creates a provocative opportunity to

activate the coastal setting of the scene I introduced at the beginning of this chapter as a dynamic and storied place that integrates Abel into new aesthetic systems.

Reading the Beach

The literary map of Los Angeles constructed in *House Made of Dawn* ties together the urban drama and chaos of downtown Los Angeles, or Bunker Hill, and the Pacific coastline.

Momaday's novel expands the Indigenous map of 1952 Los Angeles by including the beach.

Although Momaday does not explicitly state this, it is most likely that Ben, Abel, and Milly travel to the beach via the 10 freeway, which terminates at the Pacific Coast Highway.¹¹⁰ The beach is an unlikely social space in *House Made of Dawn*, yet it appears twice in the novel. As I summarized earlier, the scene of Abel beaten on the beach at night is perhaps one of the most famous beach scenes in all of American Indian literatures and diverges significantly from popular conceptions of the beach. However, there is a complementary scene that takes place on the same beach during the day, and this scene *is* full of leisure and pleasure. The novel's two beach scenes are particularly provocative for their potential to contextualize the novel's events within both California Indian and California settler aesthetics. The two scenes complement each other, drawing on an expansive set of Indigenous aesthetic systems to reorganize Abel's experiences in Los Angeles. Juxtaposing the scene of Abel on the beach at night, alone, with a second beach scene set during the day with Ben and Milly creates complementarity and balance at the beach even as both scenes remain dynamic and transformative. The juxtaposition also allows for a productive reading of the beach as a site of California Indian relationality, care, and belonging.

The daytime beach scene occurs in the third section of the novel, balancing the nighttime scene that occurs in the second section. Ben Benally recounts the days when he, Milly, and Abel would take the bus down to the beach just to take a break. They would “find us someplace out there on the beach where there weren’t too many people, you know, and we would just sit around down there in the sun and talk and kid each other and look at the swimmers and the birds and the ocean” (163). Ben’s memories of the beach are ones of leisure and openness. As they lounge on the beach, Milly opens up about her life and then “she would get us talking, too” (164). Ben explains that he and Abel “felt kind of free and easy” at the beach, a place where they could feel “good and kind of lazy” (164). He even emphasizes that the sun was out: “It had been kind of cold and foggy all week, but that day [at the beach] it was clear and warm, and we were feeling good” (164). Ben describes a day when Milly had been swimming in the ocean and when she returns to sit with them “Her hair was wet and she was laughing and there were beads of water all over her face and arms and legs. She looked real pretty that way, you know, all clean and cool and fresh-looking” (165). Even Abel, whom Ben describes in the pages leading up to this scene as resistant to making any attempt to survive or integrate into Los Angeles relocation culture, is hopeful: “He had been trying for a couple of days to straighten himself out, and talking about getting a job and all. Milly believed him, and I guess I did, too” (165). In the third section of the novel, Abel is also shown in a flashback, talking to Milly, about this attempt to straighten out:

“I’m going to find [a job] tomorrow, Milly. You’ll see.”

“I know it, honey.”

“Listen, I’m going to get a good job, and Saturday or Sunday you and me and Ben, let’s go to the beach, OK?”

“Oh yes, I hope so.” (121)

Abel links a day trip to the beach to the promise of work and settling into Los Angeles life, a link that affirms the relationship between settlement, labor, and leisure in Los Angeles. Ben recounts Abel telling a story about a horse he used to have, “a good one, small and fast, you know, but it hadn’t been broken all the way” (165). The story ends with the horse deciding to lie down in the middle of the river with an important dignitary on its back, leaving Milly and Ben in hysterics: “She couldn’t stop laughing, and pretty soon we had to laugh, too. And then she got the hiccups, and that just made it worse. We almost laughed ourselves sick” (166). This is a rare moment of joy in the book, and Ben repeatedly emphasizes how much pleasure they experienced during their beach days: “Anyway, we were having a good time, the three of us, laughing and kidding around and talking about all kinds of things” (165).

I argue here that Momaday invokes settler structures of feeling around California beach culture—that is, feelings of leisure, pleasure, and joy—to offer Ben, Milly, and Abel an alternate space where their out-of-place-ness in the city is transformed into feelings of belonging, to each other and to the space of the beach. By structures of feeling I mean to invoke Raymond Williams’ definition of a kind of shared social experience, or style, that unites or makes particular a group of people or set of kinship relations. Williams, in attempting to describe the Bloomsbury group in 1978, attempts to identify the “less tangible qualities that eventually make up the specific social and intellectual atmosphere of the group” (Sharma and Tygstrup 1). Williams’ early invocation of affectivity and affect studies attempts to locate an “elusive stratum of reality” that nonetheless is an integral thread in the fabric of a shared social and cultural identity (Sharma and Tygstrup 1). Gender and cultural studies scholar Krista Comer connects Williams’ phrase “structures of feeling” to the specific subculture of surfing and beach culture in her 2010 book *Surfer Girls in the New World Order*. For Comer, the structures of feeling that

emerge out of surfing and beach culture are entangled with a deep sense of pleasure that situate coastal spaces as anti-labor spaces of leisure (Comer 6).¹¹¹

At the time of the novel's composition, the Santa Monica pier was the last remaining entertainment pier standing on California's coastline. But in the 1950s setting of the novel, Santa Monica would have been one of three entertainment piers, along with the Pacific Ocean Park pier and the Venice Pier. The famous land booster Abbott Kinney developed the stretch of beach between Santa Monica and Venice Beach into a west coast amusement park rivaling the east coast's Coney Island. Kinney's vision of family-friendly amusement and pleasure collapsed—literally—in the decades following World War II (the Pacific Ocean Park pier deteriorated and collapsed in 1965), but up until that point this stretch of Los Angeles coastline was saturated in pleasure seekers and entertainment parks.¹¹²

Momaday's scene is further complicated when read alongside knowledge of the racial politics of Los Angeles beaches in southern California. Santa Monica has a notorious history of racial and socio-economic segregation, both formal and informal.¹¹³ As historian Allison Rose Jeffers writes: "the history of this beach frequented by African Americans in Santa Monica's Ocean Park neighborhood was one of continued assertion of authority to make the place for leisure. This popular beach area was established and defended and persisted as an African American place in the spatial imaginary in California's frontier of leisure" (Jeffers, *Living the California Dream* 72). Against a historical backdrop of anti-Black sentiment and lax anti-racist policies, the racial tensions in this beach culture remained palpable through the 1950s.¹¹⁴ One possible reading of Ben's explicit comment that, when going to the beach, they would "find us someplace out there on the beach where there weren't too many people, you know," is to understand that Momaday was tapping into these racial tensions (163). Whether the three were

avoiding possible racism directed at them or participating in anti-Black racism is not clear from the little context we can garner from the novel; all readers can establish for sure is that two Native men and a white woman sought a day of leisure and play on a beach deeply fraught with such tensions.

This stretch of coastline was also, and continues to be, an important site for the Tongva people. Jeffers notes that the “Santa Monica Bay shoreline seems to have always been a popular location throughout California’s history. The Tongva people (later renamed the Gabrielenos by the Spaniards) lived in villages scattered throughout the Santa Monica Bay area adjacent to the rivers and marshes, and near the Pacific Ocean” (Jeffers 72). Entirely absent from the novel, California’s Indigenous peoples nonetheless maintain a relationship to coastal spaces that include leisure and pleasure, as I more fully explain in the following section. However, this scene, full of pleasure and leisure and possibility and noteworthy because it is a rare moment of joy for Abel, is also significant for how it represents Relocated Indians connecting to stolen lands and invoking the structures of feeling that accompany the settler imaginary around the beach. On its own, this scene relies on a modernity that continues to erase California Indian presence. The beach is, by the 1950s, hyper-saturated in settler structures, overwriting California Indian histories of violence, dispossession, and removal. When read together, the complementary nighttime and daytime scenes rupture the easy triumph of settler leisure and expose the ways in which the foundations of that leisure are built on Indigenous pain, brokenness, and defeat. The presence of the grunion in the nighttime scene, to which I now return, invites rich opportunities to think with contemporary California Indian representations of coastal spaces as well.

Grunion Running

I return to the grunion run from the nighttime beach scene to underscore the significance of this imagery, not only on a metaphorical level for the facilitation of Abel's journey home, but ecologically and culturally for California Indian communities. As Abel lies on the beach at night, Momaday juxtaposes his badly beaten body with the bodies of the grunion. In his pain and disorientation, Abel "had the sense that his whole body was shaking violently, tossing and whipping, flopping like a fish" (115). Earlier Momaday describes the grunion as "the most helpless creatures on the face of the earth" (89). Like the grunion, Abel is at his most helpless and most vulnerable in this scene, as he is so far out of place that he is beyond restoration. Momaday invites readers into this juxtaposition between Abel's body and the grunion, raising provocative questions about Abel's potential to ever find a pathway back toward integration and wholeness. Central to this rupture or sense of alienation is that in being on the beach Abel has entered into an entirely new order of existence in the world, one governed by the moon rather than the sun. By juxtaposing Abel and the grunion, who run according to the lunar rhythm of tides and seasons, Momaday introduces a new possibility for organization and belonging. The active running of the grunion in the novel's second section complements the restorative run that occurs in the novel's final section.

Abel's contemplation of the grunion mirrors the juxtaposition of their physical bodies as well. Momaday writes that as Abel slides toward unconsciousness his mind "boggled and withdrew ... and it came around again to the fishes" (100). And a perplexed narrator wonders, "Why should Abel think of the fishes? He could not understand the sea; it was not of his world. It was an enchanted thing, too, for it lay under the spell of the moon" (98). Why is an apt question given that the novel's structure is dominantly patterned by solar rhythms rather than

lunar. This entire scene, however, is dominated by imagery of the moon and the beings that live according to the structures and cycles of lunar rhythms.

As he contemplates the moonlight reflecting off the ocean's surface, creating a long shimmering pathway in its glow, Abel recalls the healing stories Ben Benally shares with him. Initially Abel links the pathway created by the moon's reflection to the concept of Beautyway stories, perhaps seeing a possible path back for himself. Navajo Chantways such as Beautyway are sacred stories and songs that "have a healing dimension because they symbolically internalize images of the land within the listeners" (Scarberry-Garcia 7). But the sea and the lunar rhythms that govern its waves and so much sea life within it, like the grunions, ultimately remain alien to Abel: "'Beautyway,' 'Bright Path,' 'Path of Pollen'—his friend Benally talked of these things. But Ben could not have been thinking of the moonlit sea. No, not the sea, not this. The sea ... and small silversided fishes spawned mindlessly in correlation to the phase of the moon and the rise and fall of the tides. The thought of it made him sad, filled him with sad, unnamable longing and wonder" (98). The sadness associated with the sea and its correlating phases and tides perhaps derives from a sense that cycles of life, sex, and death are inevitable, and beyond human control. Abel has twice attempted to control the presence of evil in the book by attacking figures he believes to be witches—first, the albino man at Jemez, and second, Martinez, the cop he sets out to confront and who ends up leaving him beaten. Overwhelmed and helpless, Abel contemplates the lack of agency of the grunion as they swirl in a cycle of life, sex, death, and life dictated by lunar forces and not through a sense of choice or self-determination.

In his overwhelming pain, Abel's memory dissociates and reaches back to the daytime beach moments that provided for him a sense of comfort: "...and he was there on the beach with Milly and Ben and the moon was high and bright and the fishes were far away in the depths and

there was nothing but the moonlight and the long white margin of the sea on the beach” (126). Comfort comes from Milly and Ben’s presence, and the fact that the grunion are in their ideal ecological realm, in the depths of the sea. And yet this inevitable and uncontrollable lunar cycle also poses as an alternate pathway or route on which Abel might journey. Grunion, controlled by the moon, model a compressed life cycle that provides some context and insight to Abel’s current moment. The sea is indeed a pathway, like Beautyway or Bright Path or Path of Pollen facilitating a restoration. In California Indian narrative traditions, the sea and the shore are sites of destruction but also of resilience, places where the people dance to restore balance and order in the universe. Absent in the novel, these stories nonetheless continue to map California’s coastal worlds and offer additional insight into Abel’s complementary beach experiences.

In *Landmarks of Healing: A Study of House Made of Dawn*, Scarberry-García notes that “Momaday spawns a symbolic image that helps to fill this gap or anticipated stage in the process of Abel’s spiritual journey. When Abel nearly dies after being beaten up on the beach in Los Angeles, the narrator tells of the death-rebirth journey of the grunion, ... thus creating a parallel image to Abel’s at the moment, and possibly providing the impetus for Abel’s recovery” (20). Later she notes: “The sea represents the tumult of Abel’s inner world, churning beneath consciousness” (88). Perhaps most compellingly Scarberry-Garcia figures the grunion “as mediators between sea and land, and as arbitrators of Abel’s vacillation between consciousness and unconsciousness, and life and death” (89). And more so than other scholars, she sets up the possibility that the beach setting creates the potential that Abel’s proximity to the sea will lead to his “gradually floating ... toward renewal” (90).

The image that Momaday “spawns” derives from the very place-based context of Los Angeles and the southern California coastal zone. The grunion is a California phenomenon with

its own cyclical rhythms. When Pueblo and Navajo ceremonial structures fail to integrate Abel into those cycles of belonging, the grunion and the coastal space of the Los Angeles beach offer an alternate cyclical structure of belonging. I argue that more than acting as “arbiters” of Abel’s consciousness or “mediators” of the liminal space between land and sea, grunions embody the adaptive capacity to integrate multiple terrains (or water-scapes) into a life cycle.

Paula Gunn Allen writes of the importance of ritual renewal and healing in Pueblo and Navajo communities and expressly states that ritual transcends death in the broader scheme of Pueblo and Navajo epistemologies. It is the cycle, the rhythm of pain and healing, that is underscored by Abel’s presence on the beach and its own lunar rhythms. Allen writes, “Lying on the Los Angeles beach where he crawled after the beating, [Abel] understands, finally, his own place in the universe” (Allen, *Sacred* 88). This understanding, this reconciliation, is directly facilitated by not only the imagery of the grunion but by the *lunar* rhythms of the moon. This lunar orientation complicates Allen’s assertion elsewhere that the “controlling metaphor of the book can be said to be the relationship of the sun to Abel” (Allen, “Bringing Home the Fact” 571).

Choctaw and Cherokee scholar Louis Owens writes about Abel’s beating and the beach in terms of Abel’s physical brokenness that mirrors his psychological brokenness: to Owens, the beach is a site of Abel’s total brokenness, as well as the site where he sees the vision of the dawn runners that catalyzes his return home (113). Owens writes: “Abel has been prepared for his return by the healing powers of the Navajo chantways Benally has sung for him ... Abel, whose body has been broken by the brutal beating, and whose consciousness has been badly fragmented from our first meeting with him, is now able to return home, whole and on the path toward healing” (114-15). I argue again that Owens’s reading of the beach positions it as a site of

transformation and catalyst. It is not *just* the vision of the dawn runners that begins his journey toward healing but his momentary integration into that local ecological and material space, into alternate cycles of living and dying and being, that support Abel's restorative journey home. The beach is a space where the multiple fragments of stories and cycles converge to create a new possibility forward for Abel. In fact, it is no coincidence that the act of the grunion coming onto shore is described as a "run"—that is, the fish collectively run toward shore in an act of birth and regeneration. The parallel between the grunion runners and the dawn runners suggests an adaptive capacity to make sense of a Relocation geography, to create story and ceremony using the available imagery and ecology. And that adaptive capacity is reinforced by and integrated specifically through the life and death cycle of the grunion.

Bound to the ocean and its tidal rhythms, as well as to the moon, the life and death cycle of grunion complements the solar cycles within which Abel had been attempting to fit. While his return and restoration ultimately occur in the run at the end of the novel, at dawn, toward the east, the "west" and the lunar become crucial and integrated components of his identity and path toward healing. Integral to healing is the role of Holy People, who "are the judges of the completeness and correctness of the ritual, and if satisfied they are compelled by the ethic of reciprocity to restore universal harmony and thus cure the patient."¹⁵

California Native Writers Writing/Righting Coastal Spaces

This chapter draws out the two scenes that take place on the beach in *House Made of Dawn* and argues that a more nuanced understanding of the social and ecological entanglements of this particular beach not only contribute to new understandings of the novel but, perhaps more importantly, model how to read simultaneously California Indian erasure *and presence* in these

spaces. It is difficult to say something “new” about a fifty-year old novel that has received a great deal of attention; the stakes, perhaps, are higher for the ways in which this novel might teach readers how to encounter California. In California Indian storytelling traditions, the coast is a site of balance, cyclical and liminal, requiring active human care to maintain or restore balance. Nonhuman animals are often creative/Creator figures, dynamic actors in the assertion of balance, right relationship, and belonging.

In my larger project I think about California Indian storytelling in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries within methodologies that California storytellers themselves lay out. In particular my work engages with Costanoan Ohlone Esselen and Chumash writer Deborah Miranda’s practice of making mosaics out of fragments and shards. Miranda, when confronted with the impossible task of piecing together her tribal history out of the fragments of information she found across several archives and media, writes that “if we pick up the pieces and use them in new ways that honor their integrity, their colors, textures, stories—then we do those pieces justice” (135). As I state in the introduction to this chapter, *House Made of Dawn* I find it productive to additionally think with Karuk artist Julian Lang’s practice of composing story cycles, a cultural recovery project specific to the coastal narratives and aesthetics of his northern California coastal community. Lang describes his process of making story cycles by learning about the Karuk spirit figure, Abalone Woman, by piecing together narratives from neighboring northern California coastal tribes such as the Hupa, Yurok, Wiyot, and Tolowa. Lang argues that taking the separate stories about Abalone Woman and viewing them together creates “a larger story that literally defines the indigenous world being considered” (Lang 99).

In this spirit of making story cycles to define Indigenous coastal worlds, I offer a cycle of brief stories that, when held together, animate new possibilities for the cold and dreary beach on

which Abel lies and offer him an inclusive space of belonging and healing. These texts come from the works of L. Frank, Deborah Miranda, Wendy Rose, Chumash poet Georgina Valoyce-Sanchez, an as-told-to story by Yurok tribal member Robert Spott to Theodora Kroeber. California Native stories that world the coastline are rich, representing a diverse kinship between human and other-than-human relations and emphasizing cycles of balance and care. While these might be considered minor texts, or in some cases ethnographic rather than literary texts, when brought to bear on a canonical work such as *House Made of Dawn*, they support the practice of reading the novel as participating in multiple aesthetic systems that resolve in complementarity and resolution for Abel. Bringing these readings to bear on a novel such as *House Made of Dawn* complicates the notion of Indigenous absence at the beach, correcting an erasure that was not intentional yet contributed to the continued lack of knowledge about California Indian peoples and storytelling traditions.¹¹⁶ We situate California Indian knowledges within a trans-Indigenous story to amplify its shape and decolonial possibilities. In other words, California Indian narrative traditions offer new insights and possibilities for reading American Indian and Indigenous works set in California.

As writers such as Momaday would also understand, physical and emotional connection with place is an integral component of identity formation in Native communities and for Native peoples. Momaday's own *The Way to Rainy Mountain* sets a literary precedent for recreating affective ties to lands and waters in creative writing. California Native writers have their own literary affective depictions of the beach. Contemporary California Indian aesthetic systems account for the intense physical, cultural, and spiritual fragmentation that occurred as a result of multiple, violent waves of settler colonialism between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Los Angeles coastline appears often in contemporary California Native literatures. Tongva and Ajachamen writer, artist, activist, photographer, and ti'at builder L. Frank writes often of Santa Monica in her semi-regular column, "Second Serving," published in the quarterly journal *News from Native California*. In the 2008 edition of this unusual mixed-media, mixed-genre series, Frank describes what it felt like growing up on her homelands where she was invisible, and what it felt like to return to one of Santa Monica's busiest intersections as an adult to see her Tongva language on a street sign there. Frank writes, "all people's homelands are the most beautiful but ours really is ... swimming pools, movie stars and gorgeous sunsets. Ahh, los angeles." Juxtaposed with this text is a black and white, low-quality reproduced photograph taken from inside an empty swimming pool, graffiti'd over, palm trees peeking above the pool's rim. The photographer's Converse-clad feet take center focus. The image evokes the punk skateboard scene commonly found across Los Angeles coastal California communities, especially Venice. Not the image of swimming pools and sunsets one would expect, this collage-style juxtaposition between image and fantasy description provokes readers to consider the effects of contemporary settler culture on the homelands of contemporary Indigenous peoples. For Frank, there are feelings of grief, loss, absence, and erasure, marked by the photograph's perspective from the bottom of the empty pool.

Frank continues in this column to describe the hypersaturation of her homelands with settler culture. She describes days spent "playing indians and airports" that involved "shoebox airports" and "plastic Indians on their plastic horses" "wreaking havoc" on the airport. Her homelands are the site of current-day Los Angeles International Airport; the humorous image of Indians laying siege on the airport invoke a spirit of contemporary resistance to settler presence. The most provocative passage in this issue, however, is the final segment:

the miracle of the journey showed itself on the corner of ocean and pacific, in santa monica. as I headed northward toward my home, i saw it. added to the existing signs were two words in the language of the land ... Moomat Ahiko. It is the name of our canoe. it is us. for years I have said to calif. ndns that we should put signs in our languages next to the signs in english. ("Second Serving," *News from Native California* spring 2008 p. 48).

Frank describes the feeling of seeing Tongva language in print as a street name on the Santa Monica boardwalk for the first time. Likely a road Abel, Ben, and Milly would have walked along during their daytime adventures to the beach, the newly named Moomat Ahiko reinserts a California Indian language and presence into a settler-saturated land- and seascape. Frank's column visualizes the ongoing California Indian contestations and negotiations that occur within the crowded urban spaces of Southern California.

Deborah Miranda also writes of the coast in *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. *Bad Indians* actually engages with coastal spaces in multiple capacities: historically as she reimagines missionized life, autobiographically as she recounts her early years at Santa Monica, and mythologically in her Coyote story, "Coyote Takes a Trip." As I argue in the previous chapter, the entire book is a recreation of the Costanoan Ohlone origin story in which the coast is flooded in a watery catastrophe. Situated in this way, the coast is a site of origins, of beginnings rather than endings.

In the first section of *Bad Indians*, "The End of the World: Missionization," Miranda describes the detrimental ways in which the missions reorganized the social and labor life of California Indians. A glossary of material artifacts organizes her incisive critique of the brutality of Spanish order. From "adobe bricks," to "cat-o-nine tails" and "cudgels," Miranda creates

encyclopedic entries of the material culture that constructed California Indians' first encounter with settler colonialism. In the section on "Bells," Miranda describes how the ringing of the bells organized the day's labor, equating "The voice of the bell" with "the voice of the padres" as an authority over the Indians (9). She writes: "Bells at dawn, keening. Bells ordering us to prayer, the *alcaldes* stand over us with cudgels and long canes, invoke silence. Bells direct us to breakfast, ... Bells tell us to scatter to our work, we women to laundry and looms, grinding corn or acorns or wheat, ... Bells for midday meal. *Atole* again. Bells return us to our labors, bells demand our prayers or instruction in prayer, bells determine evening meal, ... Bells give us permission to sleep" (9). The repetition of the word "bells" tolls throughout the entry, reconstructing the tedious monotony of eating and working and sleeping for the readers. The bells, "hollow stones with voices," command obedience.

But between the monotony of the routine of the bells, Miranda inserts disruption. She dreams that "Once, the bells hung silent" (9). The scene, freed from the organizing logic of the bells, takes place on the coast, and is one of intense and embodied pleasure: "The padres told us to put all else aside and join in gathering a great tide of sardines. Oh, what pleasure while we brought in that slippery harvest! For many days we waded in the surf with our baskets, salty water bathing us of dust and blood, sun claiming our bare backs. We sang lusty songs out beyond the padres' hearing; I heard laughter all around me as the young unmarried men and women, separated in day by work and at night by lock and key, exchanged more than looks. We ate sardines fresh, we roasted them in coals, wrapped in seaweed, we hung them over the fire, their rich fat dripping onto embers" (9). Here, the ocean cleanses wounds and bodies. Bodies are nourished by rich, traditional foods. Intimacy between bodies is restored. The ocean, and the coastal zone, provides solace from the rigid confines of life under Spanish rule.

Within this new, vibrant coastal relational space, Miranda also demonstrates how such new Indigenous-centered relational spaces can accommodate, or manipulate, settler-imposed structures too. The establishment of an Indigenous-centered space does not necessarily preclude settler presence, in other words. Miranda describes what happens on Sunday in this scene, a day on which Catholics call for rest:

On holy day, we left the sardines in peace, went hunting for nests of seabirds that live in the rocks. We passed that day camping on the beach, small groups of us, each with its fire, roasting and eating what we had caught. Friends rested together, gossiping; daughters normally sequestered in the *monjero* leaned against their mothers contentedly; children ate their fill, slept on the warm sand with bones still tight in their fists. Our souls swam gratefully into dream, whole and unbroken. (9–10)

Again, the imaginative scene, set on the beach, describes decolonial relationships with food and human as well as non-human relations (we left the sardines alone), in terms of pleasure and leisure. Daughters lean against their mothers and friends gossip. But the *padres* are still present, shifted to the periphery of the scene, but there nonetheless: “The *padres* stood to one side, watched, laughed to see us at such ease” (10).

The scene on the beach gathering the harvest of sardines describes a site of work, pleasure, renewal, and energy that is directly juxtaposed with the lifeless monotony of the labor regime of Spanish mission life. Yet this bell-free dream is not free from colonial presence. The sardines are given rest on “holy day.” The *padres* remain present, although marginalized. The bells still work, but remain silent temporarily. Yet the scene subverts the power of the bells and centers the way the rhythms of the ocean govern and facilitate renewal.

The setting of this scene on the beach is a powerful example of survival that is not predicated entirely on pre-contact life—it represents the capacity of California Indian practices and values to thrive in spite of ongoing forms of colonial presence and domination. On its own, it reads as a scene of momentary stolen rest and pleasure. But read alongside other stories from Native California about the coast, it constellates into a broader representation of the beach as a site of restoration, healing, and grounded relationships. As we saw in the previous chapter, the coast is a place of creation and re-creation. As you may remember, the coastal world of the Ohlone peoples is flooded, causing the First Beings to retreat to the peak of Mt. Blanco until the waters recede. In Rumsien¹¹⁷ Ohlone storyteller Linda Yamane's version, Hawk takes a feather from the middle of Eagle's head and dives to the bottom of the ocean, where he sticks the feather in the ground, at which point the waters begin to recede. In the version of this story recounted to anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, Jacinta Gonzalez tells that Coyote was with Eagle and Hummingbird on the mountain peak and that they waited there until the waters receded. After they go down, Eagle asks Coyote to go down and determine whether it is safe for them to return to their homelands. After Coyote does this, Eagle expresses his gratitude and tasks Coyote with raising the people back up again. Contending stories also place Hummingbird and Coyote on the mountain peak, or Hummingbird, Crow, and Hawk, along with Badger below. Regardless of which Creators were present, the world ended in a watery flood and was re-created and raised back up after the ocean waters receded. The oceanic imbalance, a catastrophic event, serves on one hand as a prophecy for the kinds of climate-based oceanic shifts inevitably coming our way: the rise of ocean levels means the end of the world and the imminent arrival of a new uninhabitable watery world that dislocates humans and nonhumans, creating climate refugees, the way the First Beings were refugees of catastrophe in their own way.

Miranda was born in Los Angeles and lived the earliest parts of her life there. In her introduction she includes a photograph of herself and her parents, each holding one of her hands, on the beach at Santa Monica. The text overwriting the photograph describes her parents' heritage and sets up the conflict between them. Miranda's choice to layer text over the photograph—her image as a small child, smiling between two apparently loving parents—hauntingly contradicts the trauma and violence described in the text. Miranda relies on settler structures of feeling around beach culture and beach spaces to construct this contradictory effect in the book.

Miranda returns to a photograph of herself and her father on the same day on the same beach in the fourth and final section of *Bad Indians* as she describes her father's death. In a poem titled "One for the Road," Miranda juxtaposes the photograph and the poem—a young Miranda tucked against the body of her crouching, smiling father on the beach alongside an elegy for her dad. The apparent comfort and security of the photo is again contradicted and complicated by the story of her father that she has woven through the course of the memoir. Her father was violent, abusive, imprisoned, and dangerous. The joy in the photograph underscores Miranda's work to connect her father's personal abusiveness to the long legacy of violent colonialism in California that dates back to the fathers (padres) of the eighteenth century Spanish missions.

But before Miranda relegates Santa Monica as a site of loss and unmanifested dreams, she invokes it again in a Coyote story. Immediately following "One for the Road," "Coyote Takes a Trip" again utilizes the structures of feeling of the beach—Venice Beach, specifically, just south of Santa Monica—in service of a Coyote creation story. I read this section of *Bad Indians* closely in the previous chapter to demonstrate how this Coyote story transforms a soggy, watery coastal space into place to raise the people back up. The coast is a space of watery

catastrophe for many coastal California Indian origin stories, and survival and revitalization from these catastrophes is a central component of these stories.

In her 1974 poetry collection, *Hopi Roadrunner, Dancing*, Hopi and Miwok poet Wendy Rose includes a short poem titled “Grunion.” Published just five years after *House Made of Dawn*, “Grunion” is a short, six-line poem that depicts life in the liminal coastal zone whose final two lines assert that “the grunion are building / a star tunnel” (np). The poem opens with sand-dollar “trembling” as it “blows sand through sky – / dark and underground hinges – as if / nothing were important enough / to die for.” Sand dollars often “eat” granules of sand to weigh themselves down so they do not drift off in a current, especially in tidal zones where the ocean is constantly in motion. The grunion are building a pathway—a tunnel—to the stars. “Hinges” refer to movable joints that open and close or connect linked objects.

This poem is accompanied on the following page by a sketch of a grunion hatched from its egg. Within the body of the fish is a self-portrait of Rose, her face opposite the grunion’s, her hair paralleling the dorsal fin of the grunion. Wrapped around the now-empty eggshell is a blossom with a sunrise, a Hopi-inspired sun. The broken eggshell also appears to look like Earth from the perspective of space, creating the aspect of contracting scales between the small and the universal. Inside the grunion, Rose travels the tunnel between the hyper-local and the universal herself; she is larger than the world that restricts her sense of belonging and identity, has broken free from the shell that contained her. I am compelled by the parallels between this image of Rose’s birth into life and the image of Abel’s body “breaking open to the roar of the sea” (109). Read alongside Rose’s poem, Abel’s breaking body opens the possibility that this brokenness is a pathway to new life, a rebirth rather than a death. Rose’s evocation of the grunion in her own poetry suggests that this “metaphor” in Momaday’s novel functions as something in the

California-based locality of the grunion within the novel that supports the imaginative act of constructing an identity through words.

I turn now to stories from more distant beaches and further back in time. Take for example the story of “The Inland Whale,” told by a Yurok tribal member who went by the name Robert Spott (although that was not his real name) to Theodora Kroeber, the second wife of famed salvage ethnographer Alfred Kroeber. Theodora Kroeber collected and published a series of oral stories from northern California tribes in a book titled *The Inland Whale* in 1959. The story depicts a whale named Ninawa who has become trapped in a lake because the world had become out of balance; the ocean transgressed the coastal border and surged inland, carrying her with it. Ninawa’s story parallels the story of a young Yurok woman named Nenem and her son, Toàn, who had been ostracized from their community because Toàn had been born out of wedlock. Nenem and Toàn camp at Fish Lake one night after being shunned from attempting to join the tribe at the World Renewal Ceremony. Ninawa, herself an illegitimate whale although in a different sense, feels compassion for them and transfers some of her own strength to Toàn. As a result, Toàn grows to become a handsome and skilled hunter and artisan and is eventually accepted back into the community. Ninawa the whale never returns to the ocean, but eventually, with the help of tribal elders, moves into a larger lake with room to swim.

When Spott relayed this story to Theodora Kroeber he explained that the story was intended to teach him to be compassionate to those who are worse off than he (Kroeber, *IW* 163).¹¹⁸ Spott’s aunt Fanny, who was present during this conversation, added that whales end up inland when there are not enough Yurok people in the world to dance the earth down, explaining that “the earth tips too far and the ocean comes up the river. Even whales could come into the river when it is this way.” Spott’s and Fanny’s different interpretations of this story suggest

the consequences of both social and ecological balance going awry. As in Abel's case, the chaos of these events require a ceremonial intervention to restore balance. Through dancing, Fanny explains, the people kept the whales "outside where they belong" (162). But even when Nenem and Toàn are denied participation in the ceremonial World Renewal Dance, Ninawa is there, outside of traditional structures, but able to offer an alternate mode of power and belonging that eventually helps restore them to their tribal community. Like the grunion for Abel, Ninawa acts as a proxy for Toàn, providing him with the power to continue on until his relationship with his tribe is restored through ceremony again. The argument that the grunion are proxies for Holy Beings is not new; other prominent scholars such as Laguna Pueblo writer and scholar Paula Gunn Allen and literary scholar Susan Scarberry-Garcia have argued persuasively that the grunion function as proxies for the holy people within Navajo and Pueblo cosmologies. What's new in my reading is that the concept is *also* upheld by California Indian cosmologies as well.

When these distinctly different stories are drawn into intentional juxtaposition, an alternate view of coastal spaces to that of the one represented in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* emerges. While the imagery and setting of this beach scene aptly underscore the very real pain and alienation of Abel's life, they also encode possibilities for restoration and renewal in cyclical structures of belonging through California Indian narrative traditions. It is particularly through the possibilities of kinship between human and other-than-human relations, such as the grunion, that Abel's eventual restoration to his tribal community is foreshadowed. As in L. Frank's "Second Serving," the longstanding circular, ancestral links between human and place are affirmed through riding—that is, learning to balance on—"tubular" waves. And as in Robert Spott's version of "The Inland Whale," we can understand that the beach is a site of balance, that whales can act as proxy to kin, and both place and kin can bring balance to chaos. Together these

stories impose narrative order on a space represented as one of alienation and chaos, affirming both the possibility that the beach, with its own social and cultural organizing stories, offers Abel a pathway back to belonging while also rendering the beach as a vibrant storied California Indian world.

In this admittedly unwieldy series of readings I am attempting to articulate that Abel's night on the beach can be read in a way that integrates California Indian epistemologies of belonging, care, and renewal into this scene. Further, this reading opens provocative new opportunities for thinking about other American Indian literatures that similarly, and often unintentionally, situate narratives on Native lands without acknowledging the place's original inhabitants. I see Abel's proximity to the grunion in the night on a Los Angeles beach as an exciting opportunity to expand our scholarly methods for accounting for place and remaining responsible to the original peoples of those places.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to create an alternate view of coastal spaces to a typical reading of Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*. While the imagery and setting of this beach scene aptly underscore the very real pain and alienation of Abel's life, they also encode possibilities for restoration and renewal in cyclical structures of belonging through California Indian narrative traditions. It is particularly through the possibilities of kinship between human and other-than-human relations, such as the grunion, that Abel's eventual restoration to his tribal community is foreshadowed. As in L. Frank's "Second Serving," the longstanding circular, ancestral links between humans and place are affirmed through riding—that is, learning to balance on—"tubular" waves. And as in Robert Spott's version of "The Inland Whale," we can understand

that the beach is a site of balance, that whales can act as proxy to kin, and both place and kin can bring balance to chaos. Together these stories impose narrative order on a space represented as one of alienation and chaos, affirming both the possibility that the beach, with its own social and cultural organizing stories, offers Abel a pathway back to belonging while also rendering the beach as a vibrant storied California Indian world. As a way of concluding, I offer a summary of the work I see my reading doing, which is that through the intentional juxtaposition of diverse California Indian representations of coastal relationalities, a defined California Indian world shifts into focus that then productively expands conversations around one of the most canonical American Indian novels.

I do not seek to question the trauma of Relocation but to affirm that in the chaos and unfamiliarity of a new, urban setting, which Momaday likens to being tossed by the waves of a sea, there are patterns and relationships that held and are holding Indigenous peoples. Learning to see them is the key. The aesthetic traditions of Navajo and Pueblo cultures, and the integration of California Indian traditions and stories, especially centered on the grunion, constructs frames for recognizing markers of presence of California Indians and California Indian traditions, opening up new interpretive possibilities, whether or not Momaday intended them.

Conclusion: City of Ghosts

On March 5, 2021 the streaming service Netflix premiered a children's animated television series called *City of Ghosts*. In the show, developed by Elizabeth Ito, a team of multiethnic children living in Los Angeles seek out the city's various ghost stories and learn more about the hidden histories of Los Angeles along the way. The Ghost Club is comprised of Thomas, age seven; Eva, age five; Zelda, the lead detective; and Peter, age six. Their ghost hunts lead them all over the city's rich and varied past, from Koreatown to Venice Beach to Leimert Park. Episode four, however, stands out for its topic: "Tovaangar." The show's producers collaborated with members of the Tongva tribe and included Tongva members in the cast, including Craig Torres, Megan Dorame, and Mercedes Dorame (who all play animated versions of themselves), L. Frank (who plays Aawkut, the raven), and Honor Calderon, who plays a child and descendant of the Tongva, Jasper. The episode's premise is that Jasper hears a mysterious song in the park, and the Ghost Team decides to help him uncover the mystery source of the voice. In their search for clues they encounter Tongva tribal member Mr. Craig, who teaches the Ghost Team that all beings—including animals and plant life—have voices, and then offers a history of Tovaangar. As the six of them continue searching for clues, Craig calls in his friends and fellow tribal members, Megan and Mercedes, to help better understand and interpret the voices of Tovaangar. Eventually their search leads them to Aawkut, the source of the song and an ancestor in the form of a raven, voiced by L. Frank. Aawkut teaches the Ghost Team to sing in the Tongva language. Significantly, and despite the show's central emphasis on ghosts, all the Tongva characters are living and contemporary tribal members. The character Craig reframes the concept of "ghosts" when the children ask him if he talks to ghosts by explaining, "I don't call them ghosts, or spirits,

but, our ancestors are a *form* of spirits.” In his explanation Craig bridges the past with the present while refusing the historicization of the Tongva people; he activates Tovaangar as a living, dynamic, and *singing* Indigenous place.

This episode is part of the generative creative work that has ceaselessly flowed out of California Indian communities, but it also illustrates an exciting leap in interest in productively-based relationships in recent years. *City of Ghosts* illustrates how non-Native writers and producers are increasingly demonstrating a willingness to listen to and collaborate with California’s tribal communities to center Indigenous voices. In the time since I started this dissertation, exciting works such as the “Tovaangar” episode of *City of Ghosts* are increasingly emerging, educating broad audiences about California as Indigenous land. New scholarship has and continues to emerge, and a field of California Indian Studies is burgeoning, producing an entire new generation of California Indian scholars working toward their PhDs, as well as many others pursuing non-academic paths toward reclaiming narrative control over their histories and lives.

When I set out to write this dissertation, I centered my work around questions such as: What would it look like to create a project that amplifies the visibility and legibility of California Indian literatures? How do the creative works of California Indian writers and artists contribute to ongoing efforts to assert cultural, political, and legal sovereignty? How do the aesthetic and formal innovations of writers and artists across Native California participate in broader conversations about American Indian and Indigenous literary arts? As I developed the work in these pages, my primary interest was to focus on the exciting, innovative, and future-forward creativity of the writers and artists I was researching. But within such exciting works I also continued to bump up against the always-present specter of “extinction.” And I was bumping up

against “extinction” because each writer was grappling with extinction’s haunting, looming, lingering presence. As the relationship between Ishi’s storytelling, Rose’s poetry, and Miranda’s provocative memoir emerged through this work, a through-line of writers grappling with the complexity of presence also emerged. Was Ishi’s refusal to give his real name a foundation for Rose’s struggle to name her own Native identity (hence her compulsion to identify as a “breed”)? Was it the same compulsion Miranda felt to, in turn, find and name all her ancestors? How does Abel’s presence on a Los Angeles beach during Relocation provoke questions of belonging in a social geography that invisibilizes California’s original inhabitants?

It felt precarious to maintain a balance between emphasizing literary innovation without underscoring and parsing out the narrative and structural foundations that continue to support and circulate the pernicious myth of extinction. Given that one of the central commitments of this project is to provide educational content for students to learn better histories and literatures of California tribal communities, however, it felt crucial that part of this project help readers understand the structural bedrock of dominant discourses about California Indians in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. I see the through line of California writers grappling with extinction as an invitation to future students and readers to interrogate their own relationship to these structural myths. How do we, as students and as readers, based on our own identities, benefit from California’s violent erasure of its original inhabitants? Where are we complicit, or, where do we experience the same oppressive refusals of our sovereign identities? Beyond this, I want my readers and my students to learn how to *listen* to California Indian writers, artists, and storytellers. Throughout this project I have underscored and emphasized that the narratives I include here ought to be understood on their own ground, through their own systems of knowledge and relationality. This means learning to recognize when California Indian writers—

and Indigenous writers more broadly—assert refusal. How do we, who are refused some dimension of knowing, learn to sit with and accept the sovereign limitations of knowability? The act of listening, and of learning to sit in responsible relationality with, the stories that California Indian writers and artists choose to share when they publish or display creative works, is the work of becoming responsible allies and community members. This is so beautifully represented in *City of Ghosts*, as the Ghost Team gathers around Craig to listen and, with respectful curiosity, to ask questions about what they do not understand. When Craig introduces himself as Tongva, one of the children interrupts to ask, “Tongva? What’s Tongva,” to which Craig replies, “Tongva is a name we use today, the Indigenous people of the Los Angeles basin. ... Before the missions we had many names that came from the many villages here.” Or, as Craig explains that the Tongva believe their relations are humans as well as other-than-human kin, the children exclaim: “Like lizards or clouds?” “Or roly-polies?” This kind of dialogue models curiosity, respect, and a willingness to learn that establishes a new foundation for learning that includes California’s Indigenous peoples in the past, present, and future.

There is a generative tidal swell of energy behind California Indian studies and expressive cultures in 2021 as I conclude this project, which *City of Ghosts* illustrates, and it has its origins in the same moment that this one also began. It is hardly surprising that others like me identified a vacuum of information and scholarship within this area of study at that moment back in 2016: Deborah Miranda’s *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, had come out barely three years earlier, in 2013, and epitomized both what we knew was a profound lack of knowledge about California Indian pasts, presents, and futures, but also the power and possibility of what could be accomplished when those stories were *written by California Indians*. There is something about *Bad Indians* that broke open the dam of curiosity and catalyzed a field; it was immediately

recognizable as the kind of thing readers were looking for and prepared to read. Since then, William Bauer Jr. published *California Through Native Eyes* (2016), and Cutcha Risling Baldy published *We Are Dancing For You: Native Feminisms and the Revitalization of Women's Coming-of-Age Ceremonies* (2018), both further energizing a new generation of emerging California Indian scholars and ally scholars such as myself who saw the potential to start expanding a field and filling in the gaps named in *Bad Indians*. As a literary scholar working within the broader field of American Indian literary studies and the Indigenous humanities, it does not surprise me in the least that *Bad Indians*, as a creative text, became one of the central catalysts for this new wave of scholarship. Miranda's provocative and innovative text moves across disciplinary boundaries and invites readers to sit down, get curious, ask questions, and position themselves as learners as she tells her story. The broad reach of her book, plus its intention to serve as an educational response to the mission project, expanded the potential power of the book to transform the way California public schools educate their children, which in turn creates space in the academy for emerging scholarship about California Indian communities and narratives, such as this project.

I see the central intervention of this project as identifying how California Indian writers and artists strategically pivot between personal, tribal, and trans-Indigenous forms of storytelling to simultaneously affirm the ongoing survivance of *all* California Indians even as each works to recover, reclaim, and dream up new tribally-specific narratives. By creating a literary history of twentieth and twenty-first California Indian literatures I see my contribution to this field as affirming that the energy we are seeing in 2021 is supported, affirmed, and held by an entire genealogy of ancestral writers, artists, and activists, and that the work will continue to build, intervene on, and rewrite California histories, presents, and futures.

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Notes

¹ Many thanks to Patrick Morris, reference librarian at the Newberry Library, for tracking down the details of this map for me during COVID closures. Reference librarians are heroes.

² “Survivance” is Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor’s now commonly used term that combines the concepts of survival and resistance. Vizenor first introduced the word in his 1999 book, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*.

³ Journalist Carey McWilliams 1949 book, *California: The Great Exception*, places California on a pedestal of exceptionalism that continues to saturate contemporary Californians’ sense of identity.

⁴ The French description of Isola de California describes it as the largest of all the Pacific islands—“la plus grande de toutes les Isles.” In an otherwise detailed description of place and people, it is simply stated: “Les Habitations de Californie ne nous sont pas connues,” or, “we are not familiar with the habitation styles of California.” Indeed, the Isle de Californie is the least mapped space on the North American continent.

⁵ Forbes, Jack. *Native Americans of California and Nevada*, 39.

⁶ In *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* Miranda includes an image of a bond paid by the federal government for the “suppression of Indian hostilities” and claims that “California ultimately approved over \$1 million in such bounties” (46).

⁷ By using the prefix “re” within the parenthesis I draw on the work of Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman also utilizes this prefix formulation in her 2013 book, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nation*. Goeman writes, “(Re)mapping ... is the labor Native authors and the communities they write within and about undertake, in the simultaneously metaphoric and material capacities of map making, to generate new possibilities” (3). Goeman, in turn, is drawing on the work of Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, whose foundational book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* originally published in 1999, argues that Indigenous research projects should remember, revitalize and regenerate, represent, reframe, restore, and return. (Re)mapping links the work of creating a new narrative landscape to the work of decolonizing Indigenous California.

⁸ Krista Comer, in *Landscapes of the New West* (1999) describes California as “its own world, its own problematic” echoing scholars such as Rifkin and Hackel who I previously mentioned as identifying the missions as the footprint for a policy of settler colonialism that appears different than the rest of the nation state. Comer further states that given these “unique” distinctions—“its economic might and corresponding political clout, its population density and diversity, its unusual history of class formation and politics, its home-base relationship to Hollywood, its enormously varied ecosystems, or its strange culture of hypercommerciality expressed so often through affinity for ‘the natural’—the “dominant California story ... is, fundamentally, one of paradise lost” (68).

⁹ P. xii in foreword by Lewis H. Lapham.

¹⁰ The concept of “(re)builds and (re)worlds” derives from both Maori theorist Linda Tuhiwai Smith, whose foundational book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* originally published in 1999, argues that Indigenous research projects should remember, revitalize and regenerate, represent, reframe, restore, and return. Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman and Hupa scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy have extended Smith’s employment of (re) to think with concepts such as (re)mapping, (re)writing, (re)righting, and (re)riting.

¹¹ Brooks’ 2004 study, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Spaces in the Northeast*, is a seminal text in place-specific Indigenous literary studies. Other regional foci include the Native South, The Plains (Great Plains, Northern Plains), New England; The Pacific Northwest, and so on.

¹² Historian Ben Madley’s 2017 book, *American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe*, affirms that tribal-national identities in California are complicated and often not the best heuristic to use when considering California Native identity formations, given the litany of colonial acts designed to eradicate California’s Native peoples: “Amid the terror and mass murders of 1846–1873, dislocation and tribal fluidity characterized California Indian life. ... As a result, it is not always possible to precisely identify California Indians by their tribe during these turbulent, poorly documented, and often chaotic years” (Madley 15).

¹³ Tatonetti defines Indigenous assemblage as “intensely relational” networks of “pasts and presents that fluidly intersect, overlap, and rearrange through the *felt* experience of history and memory” (146). For more see her essay, “Indigenous Assemblage and Queer Diasporas in the Work of Janice Gould,” found in *The Queerness of Native American Literature* (2014).

¹⁴ In his 2018 book, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*, non-Native literary scholar Mark Rifkin attempts to “pluralize temporality so as to open possibilities for engaging with Indigenous self-articulations, forms of collective life, and modes of self-determination beyond their incorporation or translation into settler frames of reference” (ix).

¹⁵ When I say trans-Indigenous, I am drawing from the work of literary scholar Chadwick Allen to define a reading practice that intentionally centers Indigenous worldviews and interpretive methodologies while decentering Western modes of reading texts by Indigenous writers.

¹⁶ “*Secret/Wish*, the problem of the object in relational aesthetics.” *Critical Arts: A South-North Journal of Cultural & Media Studies*. Vol. 29, no. 3, 2015, pp. 342-356.

¹⁷ See Susan Bernardin’s insightful essay, “Acorn Soup is Good Food: L. Frank, *News from Native California*, and the Intersection of Literary and Visual Arts.”

¹⁸ See Allen’s 2012 work, *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies*, published by University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁹ The term “last wild Indian of North America” comes from the title of Theodora Kroeber’s widely-read 1959 publication about Ishi, *Ishi in Two Worlds: The Last Wild Indian of North America*. The phrase plays upon the dominant assumption in settler culture that American Indian communities had inevitably vanished from the continent in order to make way for settler progress.

²⁰ In his exhaustive account of California Indian genocide, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe*, settler historian Benjamin Madley describes eleven separate militia or vigilante attacks on the Yahi Yana peoples between 1849 and 1871. As I explain in the introduction to the dissertation, the term “genocide” was applied to the structural violence against California Indians immediately following its introduction to the UN in 1961 (incidentally the same year that Theodora Kroeber’s book, *Ishi in Two Worlds* is published). But though the term did not exist at the end of the nineteenth century, California Indians such as Ishi lived the intimate realities of such policies.

²¹ The Society of American Indians, one of the first organized pan-Indian groups of American Indians, first met in Columbus, Ohio in 1911 to address issues facing contemporary American Indians, such as health care, education, and rights.

²² Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor makes the argument that there were two Ishi's, the myth and the person, in his essay, "Ishi Obscura," published in *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. He writes, "Ishi was never his real name. ... Two tribal men were captured, two pronouns in a museum, one obscure and the other endured in silence" (126).

²³ For "specimen and spectacle," see Cutchu Risling Baldy's explanation in *We Are Dancing For You* on page 76. For "harbinger of extinction," see Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan's essay "The Kill Hole" in her 1995 collection, *Dwellings*. For "literary foil," I am referring to Cherokee writer Geary Hobson's novella, *The Last of the Ofos*. "Postindian warrior of survivance" is a reference to Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor's extensive work on Ishi's legacy, which includes two essays, a play, and a university building name, and which I discuss later in this chapter. Canadian settler playwright Henry Biessel, as well as Luiseño performance artist James Luna, both center the legacy of Ishi's emasculation and imagine, without factual support, Ishi as a virile and sexually frustrated man for whom genocide had left him unable to seek or fulfill sexual pleasure. Anthropologist Orin Starn argues in his 2004 book, *Ishi's Brain: In Search of America's "Last Wild Indian"* that the broader American Indian activist community view Ishi as more of an Uncle Tom—that is, an assimilationist who sold out to settler culture—than a Geronimo, or figure of broad Indigenous resistance. James Luna calls Ishi the first "street Indian" in his 2016 performance, *ISHI: THE PERFORMANCE ARCHIVES*. Esselen and Chumash writer Deborah Miranda compares Ishi to a whale of an unknown, and perhaps endangered species, whose song scientists recorded, and sounds unlike any other known whale's song. And Lakota writer Kurt Schweninger locates a poem about Ishi as the prelude to the most recent collection of published California Indian poetry, *Red Indian Road West*.

²⁴ Anthropologist Ira Jacknis first makes the argument for treating Ishi's archive like an autobiography in his essay, "Yahi Culture in a Wax Museum," published in Clifton and Karl Kroeber's 2003 anthology, *Ishi in Three Centuries*. Jacknis is the first to speculate on Alfred Kroeber's and Edward Sapir's notes on Ishi's particularity around recording session protocols, suggesting that Ishi was encoding a Yahi storytelling ethic into the act of recording.

²⁵ Silko, Leslie. *Storyteller* p. 123.

²⁶ Bauer Jr. describes hunters of Ishi first as vigilante murderers, followed by salvage anthropologists such as Alfred Kroeber, followed by California Indians themselves seeking recognition under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

²⁷ From playwrights to anthropologists, mostly male settler writers have pursued deeper knowledge of Ishi's interiority and intimate knowledge of the land.

²⁸ Kroeber and Kroeber, *Ishi in Three Centuries* xv.

²⁹ The term "imperialist nostalgia" comes from anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, and means the longing for a lost "Other" culture that disappeared when settlers replaced the Original peoples of a place. The dominant settler culture then desires to recuperate a romantic version of the lost culture.

³⁰ These phrases were repeatedly used in *San Francisco Call* articles about Ishi.

³¹ O'Brien describes the processes of monumentalizing as symptomatic of lastness, and in Ishi's case this is certainly true: Gerald Vizenor worked hard to rename the anthropology building at UC Berkeley after Ishi, ultimately only succeeding in naming the courtyard after him. Read through O'Brien's observations on the role of monumentalizing, Vizenor's efforts, while made to ensure Ishi's intellectual contributions to Berkeley remain visible, may also tokenize Ishi's legacy as monumental rather than as the intimate and private storyteller that he *also* was.

³² Baldy analyzes the relationship between salvage ethnography and the systemic destruction of California Indian cultures and traditions in her book, *We Are Dancing for You: Revitalizing Native Women's Coming of Age Ceremonies*. As a California Indian woman Baldy experiences the lingering and pernicious effects of Kroeber's imposition of settler values on Native women (79).

³³ These claims come out of the August 26, 1912 and November 11, 1911 issues of *San Francisco Call*, respectively.

³⁴ *SF Call* volume CXI—no. 46.

³⁵ *SF Call* September 6, 1913.

³⁶ Justice, Daniel Heath. *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*.

³⁷ Hogan's essay is riddled with misinformation. It identifies Ishi as a "Yana" Indian, claimed his tribe was "undiscovered" in the Mill Creek region of northern California, and suggests that Ishi was "found, finally, by surveyors" (110). Ishi is Yahi, a related yet distinct tribe from the Yana. Settlers and anthropologists alike knew of the existence of his tribe in the region, and Ishi was not found but walked himself into the town of Oroville.

³⁸ Vizenor's theoretical works include *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (1999); *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* (1998); *The*

Trickster of Liberty (1988); and *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance, Postindian Conversations* (1999) among others.

³⁹ Million, Dian. “There is a River in Me: Theory from Life” (2014).

⁴⁰ This is the opening line from Vizenor’s 1999 essay, “Ishi Obscura.”

⁴¹ *The Daily Californian*, October 25, 1985: 1.

⁴² Owens. “Courting” 138.

⁴³ Vizenor sent his 1992 proposal directly to Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien. This second proposal was forwarded to a committee, and met with silence, at which point he wrote to the Chancellor again. And, three months later, he wrote a third time, “yet again, this time a bit more heatedly: ‘Consider the sense of resentment and anger that you might feel if your reasonable initiatives to honor a tribal name and emend institutional racism were consigned to the mundane commerce of a campus space subcommittee’” (Owens 138).

⁴⁴ Simpson describes this as operating within a triple or quadruple consciousness, that produced an unwitting “endless play” in the sessions that “went something like this: ‘I am me, I am what you think I am, and I am who this person to the right of me thinks I am, and you are all full of shit, and then maybe I will tell you to your face’ and ‘Let me tell you who you are.’ There was an enjoyment in this” (Simpson 107).

⁴⁵ Jacknis writes, “these recordings contain Ishi’s autobiography. They are the only words we have from Ishi directly in his own voice, reflecting his personal concerns” (261).

⁴⁶ Vizenor, *Native Provenance*, used to describe Eastman’s autobiographical aesthetics, applies here as well.

⁴⁷ Garrick Mallery was an ethnologist who wrote *Picture-Writing of the American Indians*, originally published in 1893 and republished by Dover Publications in 1972. Mallery’s work on picture-writing describes “a mode of expressing thoughts or noting fact by marks which at first were confined to the portrayal of natural or artificial objects” and “one distinctive form of thought-writing” (25). I include Mallery’s work in this genealogy because he situates picture-writing as an intellectual project that expresses cultural knowledge or ideas, however unable contemporary scholars might be in deciphering them. In the twentieth century, Krupat, Wong, Allen, and others have extensively built on the idea of autobiography as a form of cultural storytelling that extends beyond textual, English-language writing.

⁴⁸ For example, the Society of American Indians gathered for the first time in October of 1911, just one month after Ishi's emergence into California's settler society. The SAI was the "first pan-tribal and national political organization to be active during the twentieth century" and whose central issue was "how Native nations might assert sovereignty while also participating in public discourse as members of the United States" (Vigil 368, 369). The contrast between the goals of this pan-tribal organization and the struggles Ishi encountered in San Francisco starkly juxtapose the uneven experiences of American Indian peoples across the United States and underscore the challenges California Indian tribal communities faced for recognition in the early twentieth century. Many members of SAI including Charles Eastman and Gertrude Bonnin among others, authored autobiographies that challenge settler myths of vanishing, primitive Indians and center Indigenous cultural values and ways of knowing.

⁴⁹ Miranda, Deborah. "Dildos, Hummingbirds" p. 138.

⁵⁰ Miranda, "They were tough" 376. In both of Miranda's articles, she articulates the limitations of historical trauma frameworks in interpreting Native women's writing. In "Dildos, Hummingbirds, and Making Her Crazy," she argues for the inclusion of the erotic in the reading, writing, and interpretation of Native women's writings, because bodies, desire, and sex are powerful refusals of extinction and archeology. In "They were tough," Miranda analyzes Isabel Meadows's stories within the context of Athabascan scholar Dian Million's felt theory and the importance of affect, emotion, and their lived experiences and emotional lives.

⁵¹ Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor describes the limitations of discourses such as historical trauma as narrow frames that foreclose on aesthetic resistances.

⁵² Certainly, Rose's central focus on surviving genocide is shared by Native writers and artists in California and beyond. For instance, it calls to mind the provocative 1987 art piece by Luiseño performance artist James Luna, "Artifact Piece," performed at San Diego's Museum of Man, in which Luna presents himself as a living artifact in a museum display.

⁵³ The reference to her "enforced distance" from Hopi culture comes from Laguna scholar Paula Gunn Allen's engagement with her work in *The Sacred Hoop*.

⁵⁴ If this is the case, Wendy Rose is California Indian on both sides of her parents' families. Rose explores the multiple possibilities and ambiguities of her parentage in her 2002 collection, *Itch Like Crazy*.

⁵⁵ Rose, Wendy. "Neon Scars." *I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Authors*. Eds. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1987, pp. 253-261.

⁵⁶ The poem, "Robert," published in *Halfbreed Chronicles*, is about nuclear scientist Robert Oppenheimer. "Walking on the prayerstick," in *Lost Copper*, describes the intimacy between corn and seed and bodies and potentiality (4). Ghosts appear across many of Rose's poems. On one hand, *Itch Like Crazy* is an ongoing conversation with her deceased ancestors. But ghosts appear lingering around redbud bushes and Bear Valley landscapes throughout other works as well.

⁵⁷ Her poetry collections include: *Hopi Roadrunner Dancing*, published in 1973 by The Greenfield Review Press; *Long Division: A Tribal History* published in 1976 by Strawberry Press; *Lost Copper*, published in 1980 by Malki Museum Press (and nominated for the Pulitzer Prize); *What Happened When the Hopi Hit New York*, published in 1982 by Contact II Pubns; *The Halfbreed Chronicles*, published in 1985 by West End Press; *What the Mohawk Made the Hopi Say*, published in 1993; *Going to War With All My Relations*, published in 1993 by Entrada Books; *Now Poof She is Gone*, published in 1993 by Firebrand Books; *Bone Dance: New and Selected Poems, 1965-1993*, published in 1993 by The University of Arizona Press; and *Itch Like Crazy*, published in 2002 by The University of Arizona Press.

Rose's critical essays include "Just What's All This Fuss about Whiteshamanism, Anyway?" *Coyote Was Here* (1984); "The Great Pretenders: Further Reflections on Whiteshamanism." *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization and Resistance* (1992); "For Some It's a Time of Mourning," *Without Discovery* (1992).

Her published study on *Aboriginal Tattooing in California* in 1979 offers a unique study of tattooing practices across California tribal traditions. Between this project and her dissertation, a comprehensive annotated bibliography of the literary works written and published by Native authors in the United States since 1700, Rose's academic publications at Berkeley raised awareness of *living* Native traditions and cultural practices, in opposition to the study of bones and material culture decontextualized from their living communities.

⁵⁸ Rose originally proposed to do her annotated bibliography in the English department at UC Berkeley but was told that Native literatures were not Literature, so she did it in the anthropology department.

⁵⁹ *The Sound of Rattles and Clappers* published nine of Rose's poems. *The Dirt is Red Here* published several of Rose's poems, and *Red Indians Road West* published two.

⁶⁰ Bruchac, Joseph. *Survival This Way: Interviews with Native American Poets*. Arizona UP, 1987.

⁶¹ Kachinas, she explains in a footnote, are Hopi holy people who have certain identities and roles in Hopi culture. However, she notes that "Builder Kachina" "is one that is not part of the Hopi tradition, but is part of my imagination" (127).

⁶² Here the imagery of blood is evocative of Momaday's language of "blood memory" and Rose clearly identifies strongly at this moment in her life with the cultural and spiritual roots of the Hopi cultures.

⁶³ The section, "Academic squaw: Reports to the world from the ivory tower," in *Lost Copper*, for example, is a mapping of her experiences as a Native, female student at Berkeley.

⁶⁴ It is like Vizenor writes in "Ishi Obscura" in *Manifest Manners*, that the miners were the savages.

⁶⁵ This writer might gently push back against this claim by arguing that the only thing harder is to be a scholar writing about Wendy Rose writing about how hard it is to write about herself.

⁶⁶ Aikau, Hokulani and Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez. *Detours: A Decolonial Guide to Hawai'i*. Duke UP, 2019.

⁶⁷ He is cautious not to essentialize "California Indian" in the way that made Cahuilla historian and activist Rupert Costo "rail" against the term's neglect of the tribal nature of the people (Bauer Jr. 25).

⁶⁸ "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" is a proverb commonly attributed to General Philip Sheridan, although its origin cannot be definitely traced. For more on the genealogy of this statement see Wolfgang Mieder's "'The Only Good Indian is a Dead Indian': History and Meaning of a Proverbial Stereotype." *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 106, no. 419, 1993, pp. 38–60.

⁶⁹ Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*.

⁷⁰ Tatonetti defines Indigenous assemblage as "intensely relational" networks of "pasts and presents that fluidly intersect, overlap, and rearrange through the *felt* experience of history and memory" (146). For more see her essay, "Indigenous Assemblage and Queer Diasporas in the Work of Janice Gould," found in *The Queerness of Native American Literature* (2014).

⁷¹ In his 2018 book, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*, non-Native literary scholar Mark Rifkin attempts to “pluralize temporality so as to open possibilities for engaging with Indigenous self-articulations, forms of collective life, and modes of self-determination beyond their incorporation or translation into settler frames of reference” (ix).

⁷² Miranda, Deborah. *Indian Cartography*, 1998, p. ix.

⁷³ The Routledge Handbook of Narrative Theory’s entry on “Polyphony” cites Bakhtin’s use of polyphony and heteroglossia as interrelated concepts that center the idea that all utterances contain multiple, layered, multi-voiced possibilities. Aczel, Richard. “Polyphony.” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Routledge, London, 2010.

⁷⁴ Dean Rader, in *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI*. University of Texas Press, 2011.

⁷⁵ Harjo’s poetry in collections such as *A Map to the Next World* (2001). Howe’s works such as *Shell Shaker* (2001), *Miko Kings* (2007), and *Savage Conversations* (2019). Erdrich’s polyvocal novels such as *Love Medicine* (1993). Vizenor’s *Heirs of Columbus* (1991).

⁷⁶ In California, Indian-run newspapers, mobilized as sites of organization and activism, began early. Two Cherokee writers and journalists founded and contributed to two California newspapers still in circulation today: Edward Bushyhead founded the *San Diego Union Tribune* in 1868 while John Rollin Ridge founded what became the *San Francisco Herald* and the *Sacramento Bee* in 1856.

⁷⁷ *Smoke Signal* is not a digitized archive. Hard copy archives are located at Sacramento State University as well as UC Davis. I may have the opportunity to work with hard copies of some issues in March 2021 if I return to Sacramento, as Professor Terri Castaneda has generously offered to let me use her copies on her back patio. I hope to access the archive in a future, non-COVID, era. In the meantime, I am working with secondary references made by Castaneda in her book chapter, “Making News: Marie Potts and the *Smoke Signal* of the Federated Indians of California.”

⁷⁸ These groups organized and reorganized based on the politics of recognition as defined by the federal government and this remains a provocative representation of tribal identity formation in California in the mid-twentieth century. The question of who counts as a tribal nation in the post-genocide era is grappled with during these cases. See Florence Shippek’s article, “Mission Indians

and Indians of California Land Claims” in the 1989 special issue of *American Indian Quarterly* on California Indians for more.

⁷⁹ Shipek, “Mission Indian and Indians of California Land Claims.”

⁸⁰ P. xv. Daniel F. Littlefield and James W. Parin. *American Indian and Alaska Native Newspapers and Periodicals, 1925–1970*. Greenwood Press, 1986.

⁸¹ Castaneda defines “pan-tribal” in the following way: “an intergenerational family tradition of leadership, artistry, or activism, set within a larger context of tribal ties to one or more of the many autochthonous groups whose ancestral lands comprise California, contained within the still larger context of the inclusive ethnic grouping now commonly referred to as ‘California Indian’ (113n3). In her use of the term “pan-tribal” Castaneda references Edward Castillo’s work, “Twentieth-Century Secular Movements” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 8: *California*.

⁸² Terri Castaneda comments extensively about the invocation of Plains aesthetics in a California context, noting that the Hollywood production of the Indian flattens representation of all Native peoples within this aesthetic tradition. But more than a flimsy stereotype, the Plains Indian aesthetic was redeployed as a symbol of subversion and resistance.

⁸³ Craig Womack writes extensively about the use of dialect in the works of Muskogee Creek journalist, Alexander Posey. He argues that “Posey’s dialect provides a language that is immediately familiar to Creek ears; one that resonates with the sights and sounds of Creek country. It provides a vehicle for Creek thought that is meaningful to a Creek audience. It deprioritizes outsider discussion *about* Creeks in favour of dialogue within the community toward the end of an evolving Creek intellectual and political life” (Womack 50). “Alexander Posey’s Nature Journals: A Further Argument for Tribally-Specific Aesthetics.” *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. Vol. 13, no. 2/3, summer/fall 2001. Pp. 49–66.

⁸⁴ Costo disapproved of AIPA’s affiliation with the BIA in order to secure financial support. Potts responds by admitting BIA support is less than ideal but also feels confident that *Smoke Signals* and the FIC have remained successfully independent of the BIA and so long as she retained her editorial role both would continue to operate unbound by federal restrictions (Castaneda 102).

⁸⁵ This has since become a common method of reclaiming lands. In 2020 the Esselen tribe of Monterey County purchased 1199 acres of land in Big Sur for \$4.5 million, one of the largest private land reclamation purchases in California history.

⁸⁶ Warburton, Theresa. "A Similar Place: Resistance and Existence in Twenty-First Century Black and Native Women's Memoirs." *Cultural Studies <-> Critical Methodologies*. Vol. 17, No. 1, 2017, pgs. 41–49.

Furlan, Laura. "The Archives of Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures*.

Bernardin, Susan. "Acorn Soup is Good Food: L. Frank, News from Native California, and the Intersections of Literary and Visual Arts." *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol. 27, no. 3, fall 2015, pp. 1–33.

Martinez, Shanae. "Intervening in the Archive: Women-Water Alliances, Narrative Agency, and Reconstructing Indigenous Space in Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*" *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol 30, nos. 3-4, 2018, pp. 54–71.

Rifkin, Mark. *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2017.

⁸⁷ Hackel, Steven. *Children of Coyote*, 16.

⁸⁸ Hackel, Steven, 16.

⁸⁹ Miranda, Deborah. *Indian Cartography*, ix, 1998.

⁹⁰ Hackel, Steven, 26.

⁹¹ Miranda, Deborah. "'They were Tough, Those Old Women Before Us': The Power of Gossip in Isabel Meadows's Narratives." *Biography*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2016, pp. 373–401.

⁹² Coyote is gendered differently depending on the tribal context of the particular Coyote narrative. I follow Gonzalaez and Soto, as well as Miranda, in their use of the male pronoun to refer to the Coyote of the Costanoan peoples. For more on Coyote's gender specificity and fluidity see Baldy's article, "Coyote is Not a Metaphor."

⁹³ Schöler, Bo, ed. *Coyote Was Here: Essays on Contemporary Native American Literary and Political Mobilization*. Seklos, University of Aarhus, Aarhus, 1984. Print. 9, 10.

⁹⁴ Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*, originally published in 1999, has become a foundational work advocating for the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and thinking in academic research spaces.

⁹⁵ Baldy, Cutchá Risling. *We Are Dancing for You*, 5.

⁹⁶ I use the term “narrative wisp” to describe the narrative fragments Miranda collects to construct her mosaic. In doing so I follow Anishinaabe writer and scholar Gerald Vizenor use of the term, which he uses to describe Native American literatures as “understudied landscapes ... storied with narrative wisps and tribal discourses” (“Trickster Discourse,” *American Indian Quarterly* 1990). Vizenor in turn adapts the phrase from Jean-Francois Lyotard, who uses the phrase to describe the “mass of millions” of stories people tell which become “collected together to constitute big stories and sometimes disperse into digressive elements” (Lyotard, *Instructions pannes* quoted by David Carroll, “Narrative, Heterogeneity, and the Question of the Political: Bakhtin and Lyotard,” in *The Aims of Representation*, edited by Murray Krieger (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 85). In my work, this term productively implies agency for the narrative—that is, the narrative contains the capacity to transgress, or refuses to be contained in settler paradigms.

⁹⁷ Miranda, Deborah. ““They were Tough, Those Old Women Before.”” *Biography*, 2015.

⁹⁸ Million, Dian. “There is a River in Me: Theory from Life.” *Theorizing Native Studies*, 34.

⁹⁹ Qwo-Li Driskill argues that Indigenous Two-Spirit and GLBTQ people assert “uniquely Native-centered and tribally specific understandings of gender and sexuality as a way to critique colonialism” (69). I follow their use of the term “Two-Spirit” to signal that Miranda engages gender and sexuality in “Coyote Takes a Trip” in this way, to complicate colonial formations that exclude non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality.

¹⁰⁰ In fact, watery worlds are the point of origin for many California tribes. See Kroeber’s “Indian Myths of South Central California,” 167–250.

¹⁰¹ I define literary scholar Chadwick Allen’s productive term trans-Indigenous to mean that we can helpfully use one tribal or Indigenous worldview to help us understand another. Here I suggest that it is helpful to use the Costanoan creation story to think about the ways “Coyote Takes a Trip” maps Chumash space and waters.

¹⁰² Here Simpson draws on professor of political science and Yellowknives Dene First Nation scholar Glen Coulthard’s definition of grounded normativity as a rooted, interconnected means by which Indigenous struggles are waged and expressed, through individual and collective action against empire.

¹⁰³ Punning on borderlands, Walker theorizes Hawai’ian surf zones as “boarder-lands,” or spaces that remained contested during the period of colonization and annexation at the end of the 19th and remain contested into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These boarder-lands are spaces where “Hawaiians subverted white hegemony by enacting their Hawaiian sovereignty” (10), whether by maintaining the traditional practice of surfing or upsetting racial and sexual expectations of US settlers. Walker cites Susan Lee Johnson’s work, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (2000), on the southern mines during California’s Gold Rush, describing the multiracial social contours of the mines before US took control of the region. Walker explains that according to Johnson, the “Chinese, French, Navajo women, Mexicans Blacks, and Anglo-Americans living in the region violated American social expectations of how each race and gender should behave” (10).

¹⁰⁴ In *As Long As Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock* Colville scholar Dina Gilio-Whitaker points to the “Save Trestles” campaign against a toll highway that would have shifted the coastal geography responsible for the world-class surf break, Trestles. Whitaker notes, however, that the Acjachamen tribe’s participating in this activism to preserve a sacred site called Panhe was instrumental to the California Coastal Commission’s decision that the project would have “‘unmitigable’ effects on sacred lands” (148).

A 2019 *High Country News* article depicts Pomo gatherers of abalone seaweed, and shells for ceremonies and food, explaining that “the stakes are high: Indigenous peoples risk jail time, tens of thousands of dollars in fines and the lifetime loss of state hunting and fishing privileges for doing what they’ve always done in this area” (Debra Utacia Krol, np). “An Indigenous way of life for these California tribes breaks state laws.” *High Country News*. 17 Sept. 2019.

On October 21, 2019, Eureka City formally returned the largest island in Humboldt Bay to the Wiyot tribe, who had been actively working for repatriation since 1970.

¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, the grunion run was first documented by settler scientists in YEAR off Cabrillo Beach, the same site, or adjacent to the site, where there this scene is likely depicted.

¹⁰⁶ Blackhawk, Ned. “I Can Carry On from Here.”

¹⁰⁷ William Bevis. “Native American Novels: Homing In.” *Critical Perspectives on Native American fiction*. ed. Richard Fleck, Three Continents Press, 1993.

¹⁰⁸ Bevis 16.

¹⁰⁹ Piatote, Beth. "No Spoiler Alerts." *PMLA*, vol 135, no. 3, 2020. Pp. 575–580.

¹¹⁰ This would be the most direct route from Bunker Hill to the coast via public transit in Los Angeles.

¹¹¹ Albeit one that participates in the dislocation of Native presence and reasserts white dominance over these spaces. While it may seem an odd departure from the first part of the chapter, modern surf culture is a colonial enactment used to naturalize and justify settler/surfer claims to surf zones up and down California's coastline. We cannot disentangle California Native dispossession and erasure in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries from surfing, and we cannot consider beaches without engaging with surfing.

¹¹² Incidentally the collapse of the POP pier created a new landscape of pleasure, escape, and counterculture for the skate and surfboard scene. Out of its detritus a distinct counter-culture surfing and skateboarding culture emerged, evolving from its suburban complicity in conformity culture into a radical counterculture made famous by *Dogtown and Z-Boys*.

¹¹³ White land developers blocked a Black land development collective from owning beachfront property in 1924, causing decades of tension between the communities.

¹¹⁴ Allison Rose Jeffers's 2020 book, *Living the California Dream: African American leisure sites during the Jim Crow era*, is a great resource for understanding White/Black relationships to beach and leisure spaces. There is little written about Relocation and Indigenous forms of leisure.

¹¹⁵ Leland Wyman *The Mountainway of Navajo* p. 5.

¹¹⁶ Momaday is hardly alone in perpetuating this erasure. Other writers, from nineteenth-century Cherokee writer and journalist John Rollin Ridge in what is known as the first California novel, the 1854 *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta*, uses California as a setting yet centers the plight of Mexicans in Gold Rush era California rather than California Native peoples. In her 1983 novel, *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows*, Paula Gunn Allen similarly sets the novel's events in Los Angeles without acknowledging its original inhabitants. Beyond the realm of literature, Hollywood was another perpetuator of Indigenous erasure in California. At the turn of the twentieth century, just as Ishi's story hit the newspapers, Amerian Indians from across the country were relocating to Los Angeles to participate in a booming Western film industry. The population of American Indians working for film producer Thomas Ince grew so large that according to Dakota historian Philip Deloria's 2004 book, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, the

community sought federal recognition at “Inceville.” The irony of relocated American Indians seeking federal recognition on Tongva and Chumash lands at a moment when California Indians had almost no political or legal grounds to assert sovereignty illustrates how pervasive the narrative of extinction had already become, and why it was easy for someone such as Momaday to inadvertently perpetuate such a myth by the 1960s.

¹¹⁷ There are multiple spellings for the tribal name, Rumsen or Rumsien. Yamane is one who insists on including the “i”.

¹¹⁸ Spott, like Ishi, never actually gives his true name to Theodora Kroeber. This act of what Audra Simpson terms “ethnographic refusal.”