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Introduction

Still Bad Indians: Archives, Violence, Story, and the Return of California Indian Studies

Mark Minch-de Leon

This special issue of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* comes out of an event organized by the California Indian Studies and Scholars Association (CISSA) to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of Deborah Miranda's field-shifting and -forming book *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. The event, *Still Bad Indians: Ten Years Later*, took place physically at UC Riverside, June 2022, in the homelands of the Cahuilla, Serrano, Tongva, and Luiseño peoples, and online in the homelands of multiple other Indigenous peoples (throughout the day we had more than 250 people tune in virtually). The presenters at the event were drawn from the deep bench of CISSA members who belong to multiple tribal communities and are affiliated with numerous higher-education institutions, tribal and state education programs, and art institutes. The schedule consisted of panels, framing discussions, readings from *Bad Indians*, a performance by Cahuilla bird singers, and a keynote by Miranda that reflected on the life of the book. This special issue is not a proceedings but rather offers a reflection of that event in the form of a dossier on *Bad Indians*. Some of the pieces included in this issue reflect directly on the event (Keliiaa), were presented at the event (Bauer, Chilcote, Lumsden, Miranda), or comment on (or perform alongside) *Bad Indians* outside of the confines of the event (Leal, Salomón, Napoli, Jackson). Some connect this special issue more directly to the book as extensions of it (Juárez's *An Esselen (Re)Creation Story*, Miranda's "Ularia's Curse").

Like Miranda's profound conception of the mosaic that allows a certain living to carry on, made from the shards of a mirror and the remains of our ways of being, we are hoping to continue picking up the pieces our ancestors left us and reframing

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the work of reflection on, with, and through them as our ongoing survival. This is to produce what the Romanian poet, Paul Celan, calls an “angle of reflection” in which the poet reflects their existence and material situation in and through language as shape and presence. “The poem holds its ground on its own margin,” writes Celan. “In order to endure, it constantly calls and pulls itself back from an ‘already-no-more’ into a ‘still-here.’” This “still-here” is the strangeness of the edge of nonexistence, the void or abyss, reflected in endurance, through its refusal. Such is the mosaic. In this sense, dynamically, the presentations, performances, and conversations that took place have sparked further thought, contributing to this angle of reflection that we collectively find in *Bad Indians* and our relationships to it. This issue seeks to capture, in content and form, something of the spirit of the original event, along with openings to further examination of the contributing authors’ creations in their study of *Bad Indians*, as a collective turn toward California Indian studies refracted through the book.

The publication of Miranda’s *Bad Indians* in 2013 was a watershed moment in California Indian studies. At the time, the field was still largely in the grip of the Western disciplines that had been founded on studying California Indians and other Indigenous people through the fields of anthropology, archeology, and history, at least institutionally. Of course, as is made clear by Miranda, California Indian study has never been defined by its institutional face. It is instead the grassroots, communal work of ancestors who survived the layered genocidal and colonial histories in what we now call “California.” This is a form of study and research that is decidedly not *about* California Indian peoples as objects but is rather oriented by and from our experiences. Scholars such as Marie Potts, Rupert Costo, Jack Norton, Ed Castillo, Greg Sarris, Frank LaPena, and various contributors to *News from Native California*, to name a few, have long been indicating this second stream that has been largely overshadowed by the Western institutional narrative. What makes Miranda’s *Bad Indians* an inflection point is the way she goes straight to the material source of disciplinary power, the archive, to reframe the history of violence documented there as part of a California Indian story first and foremost—and perhaps solely—from the viewpoint of California Indians. It was, in other words, a takeover.

To disentangle this anticolonial and collective voice and mode of study from its institutional doppelgänger, profoundly, Miranda turns to the most abject figure in the archive, the one used as evidence of California Indian inferiority to justify colonial violence, erasure, and dispossession, that of the *bad Indian*. Through transvaluation of badness and Indianness she finds a resource for reappropriating, reframing, and radically refracting the official narratives derived from the archive. Attuned to the stories about bad Indians in the mission archives (those who misbehaved and proved ungovernable), in the anthropological archives (those who didn’t live up to an externally imposed value of authenticity or withheld stories and information or told the *wrong* stories), and in the family (the most complex of these sites), Miranda interrogates what disciplinary narratives do to the force of story, stories about California Indians, as well as what becomes of our stories in the hands of researchers. The racist representations of California Indians become, then, a deeper sign of refusal than the multicultural and neoliberal settler state and its institutions (including the literary and educational) will allow; and

the objects of knowledge are reclaimed as relational connections in the form of what Miranda robustly theorizes as “gossip”—an informal and communal, often gendered, mode of communication—for the purposes of survival.¹ With a poet’s sensibility and sensuousness toward the materiality of the text and the medium, Miranda repurposes the archive in the paradoxical form of a *tribal memoir* as a way to tell her story such that it both *is* and *isn’t* an individual story, personal and impersonal, universal and individual, remaining ambiguously both while outstripping these narrow Western binaries.

This ambiguity of the personal and extrapersonal is one of the defining forces of *Bad Indians*, as made evident by resonances between Miranda’s narrative of her personal “Armageddon” and the stories of and from *The End of the World* experienced by her people, filtered through the colonial archive. Melissa Leal, in her poetic response to the book in this issue, writing about grieving for her grandmother, describes the confusion that ensues when she remembers that *Bad Indians* is not *her* story, though it feels like it is. This because it is a collective story that mixes grief and stubborn resolve, a badness that transcends imposed, foreign colonial values of good writing and scholarship. For Leal, this takes the form of testimony, a rhetorical mode of writing and speech that intermingles the personal and the official in an uncomfortable intimacy. As she writes, “I give thanks to Deborah Miranda for opening these gates and giving us academics permission to write with our hearts. To share testimony even when we are supposed to be ‘scholarly.’” For Leal, this is a story and a testimony that also makes possible connections between Indigenous peoples across the world, as reflected in her poem read to Māori visitors from Aotearoa about the intentional naming of a child, which connects to the names of the ancestors who came before and, through the pain of childbirth, are present. “I will hear them whisper in my ear / And hear the names of all who came before me / And all who are yet to come / Those who share my blood through blood / And those that share my blood through ceremony.”

And while, like Miranda, Leal is Esselen, this confusion of the personal and extrapersonal extends to other California Indian people. Hupa scholar Stephanie Lumsden, for instance, describes buying Miranda’s book while Lumsden was a graduate student and how it became a touchstone for her, which can be seen in Lumsden’s discussion of her own ancestor’s resistance to colonial and gendered violence. *Bad Indians* speaks to California Indians; in its very title it, in fact, implicates us all, names us and gives us a form of commonality and community. It does this by resonating with that part of us that always feels like the bad Indian, the unwanted, dangerous, and yet highly generative part—what Kumeeyay poet Tommy Pico in his epic poem *IRL* calls the “dark part inside me” that feels loss but can’t exactly name it, ironically because of everything that has been lost; not unlike the song that the late Konkow poet (and close friend of Miranda) Janice Gould admits she can’t learn, the one her mother would sing and which in its absence nonetheless informs Gould’s poetry.² Loss becomes generative of story.

As Miranda describes in her keynote in this issue,

. . . we were all hungry for our own story, and I wanted the input of my family and larger community so that I could do my absolute best. . . . I cannot think of myself as the sole author of this material. This book is a collaboration between myself

and many others: first and foremost, my ancestors, whose stories emerged from archival materials never meant to carry their voices, and allowed me to interpret and document their experiences. They came to me in old papers, in microfilms, in dusty books, in internet files, old photographs, genealogical materials. They came to me in dreams, in songs, in the scent of daybreak at Venice Beach, in pictographs painted on rocks. And they are my constant companions to this day.

This hunger for stories and the generative poetics of loss extend well beyond the colonial borders of “California” and through the sustaining and sometimes complex relations Indigenous peoples make with each other, making kinship within queer Indigenous and two-spirit communities, descendant communities, and other Indigenous communities affected by missionization. As contributor Amrah Salomón writes, while speaking about the poem “Lies My Ancestors Told for Me,” “The felt examples of the poem, its concrete sensory images are both general enough that many descendants will relate to them but also strategically specific in locating the practices of evasion and fugitivity that shaped the experiences of surviving the gold rush and the formation of California as annexation by the United States.” She further notes, “I come back to the poem often because it is also my own family’s story, demonstrated for me by my grandfather, who was O’odham at home and Mexican in public.” This felt example and connective tissue speaks to the reach of *Bad Indians*. Rather than a condemnation that would foreclose our possibilities, with the figure of the bad Indian Miranda has carved a path to possibility by passing through the violence and the loss, and doing so collectively, through multimediation, coming out the other side renewed despite and because of it, making it both *ours* and *not ours*.

The watershed moment Miranda marks with *Bad Indians* begins and/or crystallizes an archival turn in California Indian studies, one that has been ongoing, as she notes, at least since the first anthropologist sought to record one of our ancestors. Even before that moment, the turn was effected in the unruliness of bad Indians who were being documented as part of a disciplinary practice in the missions. Speaking of the photographic archive created by salvage ethnographers in the early twentieth century, Ira Jacknis notes that “California Indian people are now the most interested” researchers in this archive.³ These are complex images that document the racial sciences that ground the development of the anthropology field as well as the discourse of disappearance that continues to justify colonization and genocide in California. For this reason, these archives now appear as a shameful reminder to anthropology of its past; and yet this “history” is deeply present for California Indian people, who often find images of our ancestors when researching. Colonial and often violent and condemning documents are frequently uncovered by California Indians who perform research for tribal histories, family genealogies, federal recognition petitions, tribal enrollment, and land-claim cases. Research in these archives can be distressing but at the same time are deeply personal, as these are sites where we often learn of the experiences of our ancestors.

Katie Keliiaa, in her contribution, discusses the panel on the archive that she moderated at the symposium, noting the significance of archival research for California Indian peoples. In her article, she strongly asserts ownership of the archive by and for California

Indian people as a resource for “telling, healing, and bringing truth to light” and as part of the endurance of Native storytelling. Keliiaa begins with an epigraph by Cutcha Risling Baldy: “The archive is ours and full of our voices. . . . When we’re in there together with the peoples who made it for us, we are there because they made sure that, despite the fact that they were living through an ongoing genocide, . . . they were going to carry anything that they could forward for us.” This reappropriation of archival materials and voices for California Indians and purposes echoes Miranda’s foundational relationship to the archive of Isabel Meadows. In an article on Meadows, Miranda writes,

I argue . . . that the immense and powerful reservoir of these materials is actually Isabel Meadows’s body of work, establishing her as a storyteller, scholar, and cultural activist who essentially uses Harrington as a note-taker for communicating with future Indian communities. My aim is to restore Meadows to her rightful place as author of her own stories, move those stories from the category of “social sciences” to the more appropriate category of “literature or expressive culture,” and show that Isabel has a clear purpose in depositing these stories with Harrington: to preserve information from ancestors in ways she knew would provide necessary information for future generations.⁴

From this perspective, what Keliiaa, Baldy, and Miranda are referencing is an archive of resources for survival and for the continuation of social, political, and cultural relationships created by our ancestors who anthropologists arrogantly referred to as “informants” for their Western science. Keliiaa weaves together a description of the panel, analysis of Miranda’s book, and her own narratives of research in the archive, both intentional and accidental, to describe the complexity of such research, as many encounters in the archive for California Indians occur because of our intimacy and proximity to our ancestors and the past, and can dredge up painful stories.

Like Keliiaa, who writes about her dive into the Stewart Indian School archive to find the histories and experiences of her grandparents, William Bauer, one of the panelists and a contributor to this issue, also addresses the importance of the genealogical project of the archive for California Indian people. In his article, Bauer offers a map of the archive used in *Bad Indians*, the difficulties and twists and turns, to show how Miranda employs what Saidiya Hartman calls “critical fabulation,” a necessary turn to story in the face of the elisions and violence of the archive. To demonstrate this mode of writing, Bauer discusses how he found in the Court of Indian Offenses file at the National Archives in San Bruno, California, the arrest records for his great-grandmother (for fornication), and he uses this difficult encounter to reframe the archive and show how Indigenous people’s bodies were surveilled in gendered ways. This example, for Bauer, offers an “always assumed” approach to the archive in which one must always assume the existence of Indigenous people even when there are spotty or nonexistent records, to reimagine what isn’t said in the often difficult presences that do exist. The confrontation with the intractability of the archive is both impersonal, due to the form, but also deeply personal in its highlighting of the relationships that Indigenous people have to it. As Bauer writes, “*Bad Indians* is a book about relationships. Miranda reminds [us] of the intimacies and relationships between Indigenous

scholars and the archive and the relationships we find and create with those who we [encounter] in that archive. At its core, *Bad Indians* is a family history.” This is a mode of family deeply interwoven with archival powers and colonial forms of governance and their ongoing effects.

These relationships are not always easy or clear, mediated as they are by documents that were created to record the condemnation of Indigenous people, the demand to disappear or to live lives under severe constraint. In this sense, Keliiaa puzzles about the ethics of such research when the abundance of documentation in the archive was created for colonial purposes without community use or distribution in mind. Research often requires linguistic and other cultural knowledge and skills that were directly targeted by colonizers’ assimilation efforts, an “act and tension that will forever remain within the archive” and “a universal experience shared in the California Indian community.” In relation to her work on the archive of California Indian women that were part of the outing program in the Bay Area, Keliiaa further notes, “It is harder to know if Native women knew I would be coming to learn their stories and tell their truths. In some cases, it is harder to know if Native women would have appreciated my view into deeply painful moments of their lives.” This ethical question gets to the heart of the issue of the archival turn and Miranda’s profound and foundational approach to rethinking the archive as story and, subsequently, to placing writing outside the terms of representation and in a relational mode.

For Miranda, part of the reframing of the archive as literature or expressive culture operates through the everyday experiences and emotions of California Indian people, including negative feelings. These take the form of what Dian Million calls *felt theory*, or theorizing done by everyday people based on feelings as part of a practice of survival and continued social relationships.⁵ In Miranda’s keynote, she describes the catastrophic effects of colonization and genocide as being like a tsunami that stretches across space and time, altering everything and leaving wreckage and survivors in its wake. The trauma that occurs in the tsunami’s long afterlife is, paradoxically, for Miranda, a source of connection and story, one that she taps into with *Bad Indians*: “Young Indigenous people, in particular, had powerful responses to the stories in the book; for some, this was a rare opportunity to openly express the grief so many of us have held locked within.” A number of contributions in this issue address these difficult emotions: Leal’s meditation on grief; Bauer’s references to Million’s felt theory in discussing the emotions that seep out of the archive, including those rare moments when California Indian people incarcerated at the missions were able to find time to be together outside of the gaze of the padres and the incessant ringing of the church bell; and the rage and anger felt by Indigenous people such as Ularia, who, in the excerpt from *Bad Indians* in this issue, “Ularia’s Curse,” takes revenge on a settler for stealing her and her people’s land by appealing to a river. These emotions spill out of the archive and work through research and writing, through reading and collective study, offering in Ularia’s case what Sarah Deer and Jodi Byrd emphasize as an Indigenous feminist sense of rage, one that manifests in Ularia’s curse through collaboration with a nonhuman relative.⁶ The inclusion in this issue of “Ularia’s Curse,” a reprint from *Bad Indians*, is in part meant to reflect the poetics of Miranda’s book through its extension as well as the collective mode

of feeling that the selection embodies. For Miranda, the important question is about how to ride this tsunami of grief and trauma, and *Bad Indians* indicates that riding it cannot be done alone. Together, we must cling to the flotsam and jetsam of the destruction to stay afloat (and perhaps let the river do its work of revenge).

Lumsden, in her article, details the entanglements among gendered colonial, land-based, and environmental violences addressed in the relationship between Ularia and the river as a way to detail the gender-specific and more-than-human forms of resistance against the settler carceral state. Discussing the scars Lumsden's grandmother received when attempting to leave her soldier husband, who cut her cheeks as punishment, Lumsden writes, "Hupa women's stories of gendered violence, resistance, and survival, fraught as they are with grief and rage, connect us to homelands in profound and painful ways." Noting that Miranda doesn't shy away from the stories of sexual violence written in the archive and passed down and shared between family and community members, Lumsden asserts the importance of such stories for recovering genealogies of resistance. This is intimately entangled with what Miranda describes in *Bad Indians* as a parallel genealogy of violence in which religious, colonial, and sexual violence pass down through intergenerational harm. Lumsden elaborates on this idea by emphasizing Indigenous women's modes of resistance, telling the story of Tsewenaaldin woman, who was attacked by a group of US soldiers and who defended herself by wounding one of them with an elk horn tool used for cleaning eels. This is an act that Lumsden sees as moving relationally to defend nonhuman kin, the land, and descendants. As Miranda writes, "This is the paradox of colonization: survivors are often sharpened to a fine edge by the sacrifices of their ancestors and love for their descendants."

This interconnection between violence and resistance, of finding in the histories of violence resources for ongoing resistance and communal living and knowing, also informs the form of the book. *Bad Indians* is a radically open text. An assemblage of archival documents, stories, photographs, sketches, a children's coloring book, all glued together with Miranda's poetic organization of the materials and writing, it is made up of shards that make possible a reassembling. These are fragments with which a world can be remade, though stubbornly holding onto their fragmentariness. The genealogy of violence that Miranda traces through these materials and through her family history disrupts the linear and monological narrative. Stories turn. And then turn again. As Miranda writes in her keynote, telling the story of how *Bad Indians* was made, "I realized that I was smack in the middle of a story whose origin went clear back to the moment my ancestors first laid eyes on those Franciscan missionaries and Spanish soldiers. Worse, I had just admitted to myself that this book required all these fragments and visual materials—the flotsam and jetsam of that original event—to even begin to convey the complexity of what the ancestors were telling me." It's a story that she admits is *not over yet* and probably can never be over, because each one of these fragments already tells an infinite story.

With the symposium we tried to capture something of this openness as well as mark the specificity of place through performance with readings of excerpts of *Bad Indians* by Melissa Leal; a reading of the play *Iya: The Ex'celen Remember* by Luis xago Juárez; and a closing by the Cahuilla Bird Singers. The inclusion in this issue

of excerpts from both the play (depicting the Esselen creation story) and from *Bad Indians*, together with the creative reflection by Leal, attempts to blur the boundaries between the publication and the symposium with their interconnecting pieces. It is meant to be dialogical and poetic in form and content and to indicate the lack of closure and the continuousness of both the text and the event without falling into the trap of representation and its closure. In this sense, the inclusion of the excerpt from the play *Iya* in this issue, a play about the tribe to which Miranda belongs, offers greater context for the relational mode of Miranda's "tribal memoir" and as an extension of the story of the Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation (OCEN). *Iya* is influenced by the work of Louise Miranda Ramirez, chair of OCEN as well as Miranda's sister, who has worked diligently and brilliantly to steer their undocumented tribe to protect the burial and sacred sites of their ancestors in one of the wealthiest real estate markets in the country, Monterey County. The excerpt depicts the Esselen creation story, which, echoing other California Indian creation stories, tells of a rebeginning after a flood and the struggle to repopulate and recreate the world with its remainders. Coyote's usual shenanigans intervene, threatening to upend the whole project, but, by accident, through the fleas that take up residence on his body, life nonetheless finds a way. The creation story and the excerpt from *Bad Indians* expand the text and its poetics in different ways, but speak to the book's capaciousness, connectivity, and relational and collage-like form.

Olivia Chilcote's contribution in this issue takes this dialogical mode a step further by engaging *Bad Indians* and Miranda directly in conversation. Taking a series of questions posed by Miranda in *Bad Indians* about a photograph (titled "The Belles of San Luis Rey") that pictures three elderly California Indian women as a provocation, Chilcote expands on *Bad Indians* by, in a sense, filling in the record. A member of the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians, Chilcote dives deep into the archive to tell these women's stories, to produce "a Luiseño-centered reconstruction." Noting how the "centenarian fantasy" that fetishizes Indigenous people of great age (the reason these women were featured in the image and held a local celebrity status) supports an extinction narrative, Chilcote emphasizes a paradox in the emphasis on the women's age in the photo because it also highlights their survival despite all odds. This is a transvaluation that enacts the spirit of Miranda's work of reframing the archive through story.

The last three contributors address the question Miranda poses about Meadows's authorship in the archive and the form this question takes in relation to writing and research and their broader effects on community and relationality. Amrah Salomón's article emphasizes Miranda's work in *Bad Indians* as a queer Indigenous feminist poetic against the grammar of genocide. Emphasizing queer forms of relationality embodied by the text and its commitment to nonheteropatriarchal genealogies, Salomón analyzes the bad Indian as both a poetic and a pedagogy which emerges from nonfederally recognized tribal descendant experiences. She writes, "In its polyvocality and its archival and narrative mosaic form, it is a many-layered multiverse, circular, regenerating, and expansive," one that "demonstrates a deep cyclical relationality with bad Indian ancestors" which "pushes us to continue to find new ways to be Bad Indians ourselves, while also working within the difficulties of how one becomes and was forced to become bad in the first place."

In Salomón's reading of *Bad Indians* can be heard a mode of story that operates in a minor key within an already minor discourse, connecting the social and epistemic positions of those who belong to one of the eighty-one tribes in California seeking federal recognition to the experiences of other nonrecognized Indigenous peoples. This minor within the minor challenges closed identities and narratives that reproduce colonial borders. In this sense, *Bad Indians* begins within a strained positionality, Miranda's complex relation to identity and, specifically, to her father, who is both a manifestation of patriarchal violence and the connection she and her family have to their Esselen and Chumash ancestors. This is a highly mediated relation that requires one to hold together different senses of badness: those who didn't live up to the demands of being a "good Indian," demands that come in many forms, together with those ancestors who have been harmed and pass on that harm, whom Miranda describes as having become destroyers in order to survive. This conflicting sense of badness cannot and perhaps need not be reconciled; rather, it helps form the affectively difficult relations that make up the mosaic, a mosaic that Miranda makes clear is made of shards that still cut. This is a call to be California Indian in such a way that challenges the colonial terms of recognition, offering instead a relational, nonidentitarian, and anticolonial perspective and sense of belonging.

This complex configuration can be further highlighted by the perspectives of Indigenous border studies and Indigenous border abolition movements, important sites of anticolonial activism, scholarship, and artistic creation (and their intersections). This scholarship and movement produces an angle of reflection that refuses to naturalize colonial borders and the nations they define, in this case Mexico and the United States, putting critical approaches to borders into conversation with critical Indigenous studies and anticolonialism. Note the important work of scholars such as María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo and Felicity Amaya Schaeffer who, drawing on Jodi Byrd's important insights about how empires are formed through the production and dissemination of the figure of the savage, show how national borders become naturalized against indigeneity, through transnational cooperation and war-making. Indigenous people and our relational worlds become the unthought, the impossible, at best a project for assimilation and recuperation, and yet necessary in order to manage indigeneity and colonial claims to land. Communities also become disconnected from each other through the violence of the border. Within this framework, the very term "California" becomes contested as a locus for a bounded identity, disrupted by the competing colonial histories and uses of the term as well as, of course, their palimpsestuous layering over the stories and relations of Indigenous peoples who have lived in these homelands since time immemorial. Yet state boundaries, genocidal and colonial histories, discursive operations, and the violent ambiguities of colonial languages have produced an unstable identity for differential and collective world-making and anticolonial work.

Accepted narratives of Native American and Indigenous studies are also challenged by shifting the perspective away from the settler state as the horizon of intelligibility (while, of course, keeping in mind the real effects of settler colonization) and toward Indigenous modes of being and continuance in specific places despite the shallow timespans of occupations. Taking Salomón's suggestion that *Bad Indians* operates as a pedagogy, the book simultaneously asks us to consider what is being taught,

which texts, and according to what knowledge systems, perspectives, and imaginaries. Miranda echoes calls by Native scholars such as Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Craig Womack, and Robert Warrior to attend to Native stories in specific homelands as the source of literature, expressive culture, and knowledge. She joins other anticolonial scholars such as Ngūgī wa Thiong’o and David Lloyd in calling for curricula that bring to prominence the stories of the land’s original peoples and beings. In doing so, Miranda simultaneously challenges disciplinary holds on the archive and authoritative claims to interpretation, who or what should be considered an author or creator, as well as the imaginary of nations. The phrase “bad Indian” undoes these sorts of institutional and governmental hierarchies and values and calls us to place the stories of our ancestors and nonhuman kin, particularly the most vulnerable, at the center of any and all education and social formations in California in a relational manner (Ngūgī’s “concentric rings of relevance”). First peoples, first stories.

Michelle Napoli’s *koya-’aklanna* (“song-story”) does precisely this while also reflecting on her own research process, in relation to her work of reconnection as a Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo person. Engaging in study of Indigenous methodologies and human-to-nonhuman relations specific to her peoples, she offers different senses of the archive, weaving together her poetry with her own paintings. In this way, Napoli’s piece also resonates with the form of *Bad Indians*, specifically Miranda’s use of multiple media and her profound metaphor of the mosaic in its many reflections and potentiality for making a new whole out of loss. Like Ularia’s collaboration with the river (or Lumsden’s story of a bear that, with its intentional actions to destroy a cop car, asserts the All Cops Are Bastards slogan!), Napoli describes continuing and/or reconnected relations to oak trees, acorns, and woodpeckers that challenge the colonial understanding of archives and monuments. By doing so, she offers a relational and more-than-human collective sense of memory and decolonization, one in which “the general’s house is filled with holes.” Napoli’s *koya-’aklanna* manifests a shift from scarcity and loss of language, culture, and land to one of abundance and possibility with the acorn—“They are rolling off my kitchen table, overflowing my backpack, bookshelves / the cup holder in my car . . . / I put them in my pockets.” Relations and knowledge overflowing; the tree as both producer of and storage site for acorns; language as a blanket; dreams as research. Like Miranda, Napoli speaks to how ancestors work in collaboration with media, materiality, and other beings to make survival possible, to open anticolonial horizons, and to continue our ongoing relations with them.

Miranda’s use of found items and texts, such as the damning language of Junípero Serra, government documents, and newspaper clippings describing genocidal violence against Indigenous peoples rearranged into poetic form, pushes the concept of *poetry* past its literary and institutional meanings. No longer bound by the cutting edges of genre and literary form, between knowledge and creativity, the thresholds bend and blur as Miranda carries into her treatment of these violent documents something of the energy of poetry without its definitions or commitment to Western values. This energy is the continued relation to an essential indeterminacy of form, matter, meaning, and media: the porosity of *the general’s house is filled with holes*. Miranda’s indiscriminate use of anthropology, history, and literature, of media and archival

documents of all sorts (including deeply Indigenous ones such as rock art), teaches us something about California Indian studies, not just as an interdisciplinary space to study California Indians but as an actively adisciplinary one that refuses consolidation of forms through institutionalized knowledge production and its infrastructures. In this sense, the collection of texts in this issue does not simply present work by differently trained scholars and authors and their interpretations of Miranda's text through disciplinary lenses. Rather, *Bad Indians* disorients the force of disciplinarity so that this issue, in the different interpretations by these authors, offers a collective angle of reflection by California Indians and allied Natives and accomplices—a mosaic, in line with Miranda's reorientation of California Indian studies.

This insight helps us understand something about Miranda's restoration of Isabel Meadows's authorship of her stories. Rather than simply an assertion of Meadows's agency (though it is certainly that as well), it asserts the collective nature of story and the importance of transmission across generations, as gossip. This is made possible by acknowledging that story comes from anyone and any being, and the value of the story is not to be decided officially, hence the significance of some of the more difficult stories that Miranda and Meadows both recount, particularly those of sexual violence, as described by Lumsden in this issue. The importance of this shift is not just a literary one in the narrow sense, of the production of literature as a product. The shift away from stories as data and evidence doesn't necessarily mean they immediately become literature or even literary, rather Miranda's return to an essential indeterminacy challenges these very categories and their institutional and racial-colonial separation. These stories also cannot be classified solely as counternarratives, caught in the thrall of colonial domination, as noted by Salomón in her piece, but offer us an entirely different pathway toward reassemblage and regeneration, one paved by our ancestor's refusals, made possible by the fleas on Coyote's back. *Bad Indians*, then, cannot simply be thrown onto a syllabus, but must reorient what is meant by knowledge and its production in an anticolonial context, affecting all of the materials around it and our social relationship to learning. It asks us to consider what modes of knowledge are being reproduced in a colonial context and in the aftermath of genocide and its ongoing destruction, teaching us how to teach, read, study, and write as bad Indians.

Along these lines, Cj Jackson's contribution to this issue looks closely at the poetics and form of *Bad Indians*, specifically how story takes the form of poetry, to emphasize what they call Miranda's practice of "re-storying," "a way of retelling stories without abandoning their subjectivities, and without falling into the constraint of rules that determine stories must have a particular 'structure'; must be 'accurate and unchanged'; and must always, in those precise retellings, represent some sense of 'truth.'" For Jackson, Miranda's writing pushes past the institutional definition of poetry toward fabulation (akin to Bauer's insight on the book's relation to historiography and the archive) and toward the reconfiguration of being and knowing *as* and *through* story. This takes, for instance, the form of the found poem that, Jackson notes, emphasizes surviving as an ongoing process of searching, one that also challenges the codification of truth and its opposite, resonating strongly with the creation story always being a re-creation story using spare parts. Jackson notes Miranda's use of the double

bind confronted by ancestors, a dilemma between bodily death or disappearance into another identity for the sake of survival, as a fundamental ambiguity at the heart of telling survival's story, of surviving with and through story. In doing so, Jackson reads Miranda's poetic reuse of archival documents and their represented violences in poetic form as a profoundly transformational force of renewal.

This force informs the refusal enacted by bad Indians, who pave the way toward being and knowing otherwise, and who are the source and center of Miranda's text and, by extension, California Indian studies. To write alongside these bad Indians is not just to survive but also to write *with* survival, to stay with survival's difficulty as another way forward, to continue to be bad Indians by embracing the mosaic as our collective angle of reflection. In this way, the negative emotions that Miranda addresses in her poetry and poetic reframing of difficult stories in the archive illustrate the role of writing in its infinite relation to *still surviving* and *having no end in sight*. This informs our relationships to the past, present, and future, as well as to our ancestors, to our nonhuman kin, and to the archive. Like the series of essays Miranda published on the research she did for *Bad Indians* (extending it indefinitely and emphasizing the book's necessary incompleteness, what she calls its "spawn"), the work of California Indian studies is to continue to fulfill the difficult promise made by our ancestors. By simply continuing, we allow that intransitive action to transform our relations and our modes of knowing and being to be reflected in what it means to *continue*, to embrace the infinitive form as an ongoing inflection. After Miranda, and because of her, engaging in California Indian studies means following this ongoing turn she has mapped out for us. It is to fulfill the promise of being, and continuing to be, a bad Indian.

NOTES

A NOTE ON THE COVER. Tongva artist Weshoyot Alvitre created the cover art of this issue based on the original cover of *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, which featured an image of Deborah Miranda as a small child sitting on a pony and wearing cowboy attire. Alvitre's cover here includes an homage to the original, with her father as a small child on a pony. Alvitre includes distinctly recognizable California Indian signifiers, such as the basket, abalone shell, and implements from *Bad Indians* in the form of a mosaic background. I am especially delighted that Alvitre's original artwork connects this issue to a particular place: So much of Miranda's book is connected to Los Angeles, where Miranda was born and where much of *Bad Indians* was written, in Tongva homelands.

1. Deborah Miranda, "They Were Tough, Those Old Women before Us: The Power of Gossip in Isabel Meadows' Narratives," *Biography* 39, no. 3 (Summer 2016).
2. Deborah Miranda, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2013), E131.
3. Ira Jacknis, "Alfred Kroeber and the Photographic Representation of California Indians," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 20, no. 3 (1996): 41.
4. Deborah Miranda, "They Were Tough, Those Old Women before Us: The Power of Gossip in Isabel Meadows' Narratives," *Biography* 39, no. 3 (Summer 2016): 374.
5. Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013).
6. Jodi Byrd, Sarah Deer, Sarah Haley, and Durba Mitra, "Rage, Indigenous Feminisms, and the Politics of Survival," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 46 no. 4 (2021): 1057–71.