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Healing Through Grief: Urban Indians Reimagining Culture and Community in San Jose, California

RENYA KATARINE RAMIREZ

This exhibit is very informative; our Native peoples, "federally" recognized and unrecognized, full-blood and mixed-blood, from north, south, and central America, need to unite and free our minds from the colonial borders and governments imposed on our hemisphere.

—An exhibitgoer reaction, May 1996

The American Indian Holocaust exhibit is a community project organized as part of the American Indian Alliance, a group of urban Indians,¹ who first came together in the San Jose area in 1993. Rifts and tensions within the Indian community encouraged Laverne Morrissey, a strong, soft-spoken, articulate Paiute woman to form this group to bring the different factions back together.² Al Cross (Mandan-Hidatsa), an American Indian history instructor at one of the local community colleges, and Roberto Ramirez (Indio/Chicano), a social worker for Santa Clara County, organize this annual exhibit. They lead a group of Indians and non-Indians who have put this exhibit on display—each year open to the public for a week or so—

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since its first showing in 1995 at the San Jose Center for the Latino Arts. This group uses woodblock prints, drawn by the colonizer, xeroxed from books and enlarged, in order to begin to heal the hurts caused by the American Indian Holocaust.

In 1995, the exhibit concentrated on the first fifty years of the invasion of Central and South America. In 1996, the exhibit focused on the invasion of the Southeastern part of the United States, adding to some of the images utilized in the first year's exhibit. In 1997, new images were added that concentrated on the Northeast of the United States. Each successive year, the exhibit will continue to focus on different areas of the Americas until the exhibit has covered the entire western hemisphere. As Roberto explained:

In Part One we took a look at what happened with Columbus and Cortes. We started with South America, went to Central America, and now we are dealing with DeSoto and Ponce de Leon. Next year, we will be doing the Northeast part, the Mohawk, the Huron, the Iroquois. We will continue to go west and then further north up to Canada until we complete our journey through the Americas.³

The purpose of this essay is to understand this group's vision of community healing. I first learned about their vision during one of their initial planning sessions. Al and Roberto argued that the historical trauma resulting from the scattering, the death, the torture, and the rape of the American Indian holocaust experience could be healed through images, grieving, Indian-oriented history, and ceremony.⁴ Paul Rubio, a Chicano/Yaqui artist, another member of the holocaust group, argued, "It [the holocaust exhibit] is not a show. It is a healing."⁵ Part of this healing, according to Paul, is to recreate a world through spirituality that includes human beings who can act as brothers and sisters.⁶ Thus this annual exhibit as a sacred space decolonizes knowledge, reimagining culture and community, in order to transform existing social relations to create a world where Indian people can belong.⁷ As a bridge across differences, the exhibit reconnects relationships between "mixed bloods," "full bloods," Chicanos/as, and Native Americans, upsetting the construction of these groups as disconnected, homogenous, and static. Boundaries were blurred in the social imaginary of the western hemisphere, creating a

vision to unify Indians throughout the Americas.⁸

In this essay, I focus primarily on the 1996 exhibit, which was open for two weeks in May of that year. I switch from the position of the observer within the exhibit space, providing the reader with my own analysis of the exhibit images and filling in some background, to the position of discussing the reactions and analysis of Indians and others who participated in this event.

BACKGROUND

This exhibit, as a strategy to create a sense of unity across differences, is critical in a world that has systematically tried to fragment and create divisions within and between Indian and other communities. For example, the Spanish created the concepts of the mestizo, coyote, lobo, cholo, pardo, color quebrado, and many other categories to separate Indian people. These classification schemes, integral to the development of racism, favored European descent and light skin. The Spanish gave privileges to people who had mixed European ancestry. They were allowed to wear European clothing and move about more freely than indios. As a result, this system caused conflict between Indian people, as each classified group wanted to gain privileges at the expense of the others.⁹

By the turn of the twentieth century, many different groups and conflicts had been created by contact with Euro-American society. Religious controversies arose between traditionalists and Christian Indians. There were tensions between Indians who wanted to remain separate and those who wanted to interact with white society, as well as between mixed-bloods and full-bloods.¹⁰ Many tribes agreed to live together on the same reservation when they signed the same treaty. Other reservations were set up for remnants of tribes that had almost vanished because of federal policies of extermination and relocation, and the virulent impact of diseases. In California, there were thousands of landless, "unrecognized" Indians, since eighteen treaties had never been ratified.¹¹ In the 1840s, as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States acquired from Mexico the regions of California, Nevada, most of Arizona and New Mexico, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming.¹² This new border crossed Indian tribes, splitting up groups like the Yaqui.

These historical events integral to nation building in the United States and Mexico have supported divisions and tensions within and across Indian communities, between traditional and Christian Indians, urban and reservation Indians, recognized and non-recognized Indians, and full-bloods and mixed-bloods. Governments have created borders between groups of Indian people by narrowing the construction of Indian identity.¹³

The exhibit is also essential, according to Al and Roberto, because the American Indian holocaust experience has largely gone unnoticed and disregarded.¹⁴ Using the word *holocaust* was part of this group's strategy to encourage the public to open its eyes and ears and face the terror, torture, and death of Indian people throughout the Americas. They hoped that this powerful word would create a linkage between the Jewish and the American Indian holocaust experience in the public's minds. Al and Roberto hoped that the reality of this genocidal trauma would then become inserted into public awareness.¹⁶ The following description is an excerpt from my field journal concerning one of the first holocaust meetings that took place in 1994.

Prusch Park is situated right next to Story and King Avenues in the middle of the east side of San Jose, California. Next to a grayish building were a few men, wearing baggy pants and workshirts buttoned up to the top. A sign was strung above their heads with the words, "American Indian Alliance." I pushed against the glass doors underneath the sign and was greeted by the outstretched arms of my niece, Chandra, who opened the door. Seated at three or four tables were Indian people I had met from previous meetings. At one table was a group of Indian community activists, interested in organizing a public exhibit to encourage awareness about the American Indian holocaust in the Americas.

I had been coming to these meetings as part of my doctoral fieldwork, trying to understand more about urban Indian identity and issues of community healing. My own background as mixed Winnebago, Chippewa, and white, raised in a town a little north of San Jose, made my entrance into the lives of Indians living in an urban area easy and hard at the same time. I had experienced the deep honor of meeting people who had known my mother when she was active in this community in the early seventies during one of the first American Indian Alliance meetings. The easy part was feeling good, connecting with

other Indian people. The hard part was trying to figure out how to do research about Indian people and write about it in a sensitive as well as scholarly fashion.¹⁷ These thoughts came to my mind as I crossed the room and proceeded to sit at the table with those interested in organizing an exhibit. I sat with my notebook open ready to begin taking notes.

Al sat to my right. He leaned back slightly in his chair and quietly spoke, "Indians need to heal. Indians have not had a chance to deal with the pain. . . . We (as Indian people) need to begin to deal with our own painful history."

Roberto sat across from Al. He wore a white tee-shirt with a picture of Columbus landing and Indians standing on the shores looking at the first explorer. Across the bottom of his shirt was the proclamation, "Columbus did not discover America, he invaded it 1492-1992." Roberto sat forward in his chair, glanced around the table, and responded, "The holocaust affected all of the indigenous people from the north and the south. I keep thinking about the Taino people. The Inca lost millions of people. There must be pictures of the killing. Researchers, teachers, and students need to pull together. We need to develop a professional, well-done exhibit." Roberto continued, "When was the last time you saw the word *genocide* and different peoples across the Americas represented? We could pick out fifteen tribes throughout the Americas. I would love to show a picture just like this one. (He holds up a black and white drawing of Indians having their hands cut off.) That's real traumatic, that's genocide."

Al looked up from his place at the table and explained, "When they put us on reservations, there was genocide. Mothers had babies who were weak. The food supply was limited. Their whole way of life was taken away. Indians died from European diseases. The connotation was that Indians were inferior." His voice had a tinge of sadness. Roberto spoke to the rest of the group in an adamant tone:

Genocide comes in many different forms. A big exhibit breaks down genocide. There is living and dying on the reservations. We could show the disease. What is going on in the Americas today? In Chiapas, they are taking the land away from the Indian. When I look at this picture of Indians having their hands cut off, it makes me aware. We need to respect the land. We need to respect the creator. I was educated in white schools. I see a picture of genocide and I cry

for my people. Millions of Indians died. This exhibit will help us deal with our feelings.... We have to deal with our grief.... This kind of exhibit has never been done before.

Al slowly picked up a stack of papers and then set them down. He carefully began to speak,

We have to figure out the first step. Maybe we can show the exhibit at the Indian Center, maybe here at Prusch Park. Drinking and then people getting in car accidents, those behaviors come from this historical situation. The exhibit can address this. It is just like grief. You go crazy for awhile. There is so much pain. Indians used to cut their fingers to deal with grief.... We don't have any time to deal with our feelings. People need to sit back and get a shock. We need to think deeply about all that has happened. This exhibit is going to arouse a lot of emotions. We need to preface the exhibit, like this is going to shock you. We haven't had time to go through a grieving process.... Until you can be honest with other people, respect other people, can we become a full person. In our schools, we need to be taught what was omitted.... First, we heal the Indian community. The larger community will benefit. The term *holocaust*, is acceptable. The American public will accept it.... We will not leave out the southern hemisphere. We don't want to perpetuate any stereotypes.¹⁸

This conversation made me sit back in my chair. Hearing about the need to face the death of our Indian ancestors, to grieve and thereby heal, made my throat tighten and my heart ache. As I sat with these community activists, I remembered my own experience with grieving: the shock, the anger, the denial, and the gradual acceptance. I thought about the policeman who had stood at my doorstep two years before with a small yellowish scrap of paper in his hand with my mother's name scrawled on the wrinkled edge, asking me whether I knew the name he so coldly pointed to. The end of her life was announced to me by this uniformed messenger, standing without emotion. The deep, wracking pain and surreal quality of that moment of my own personal grief sent a shiver of recognition down my spine as I listened to the conversation about collective genocide. I thought about how Indian people have had to go through the continual erasure of our presence, our names, and our histories by the dominant society. My mom's

beauty, knowledge, history, her connection to all of her relations as a Winnebago/Chippewa woman seemed to have no meaning or importance to this police officer. The searing pain of loss that pierced my chest had been intensified by the dehumanization of my mom's beautiful name, Woesha Cloud North.

I felt a sense of connection to these community activists, who were talking about a deep collective wounding that spanned the centuries of suffering for Indians and Chicanos/as in the Americas. The all-encompassing nature of this kind of grief made me sit up with interest and wonder. I thought about some American Indian psychologists and Indian community members who had named this suffering that results from physical and cultural genocide, "soul wound."¹⁹ They argue that the core of American Indian awareness—the soul where dreams, mythology, and culture emerge—is wounded from the holocaust experienced throughout the Americas. This wounded core impacts the emerging dreams and mythology of a people. The manifestations of this collective soul wound they theorize include Indian peoples' suffering from high rates of suicide, alcoholism, and dropping out of school.²⁰ During these initial planning sessions, Al, Roberto, and others created an exhibit as a strategy to begin to heal from this long history of genocidal terror that the term *soul wound* describes.

URBAN INDIANS IN THE POPULAR IMAGINATION

These community activists organize this exhibit surrounded by a public imagination that is often tainted by negative portrayals within the media. A recent *San Francisco Chronicle* article, "A New Trail of Tears,"²¹ characterizes urban Indians as doomed victims of modernity. A black and white drawing of an American Indian man with long, straight hair tied back, wearing baggy, wrinkled clothes and moccasins, sitting atop some city skyscrapers, is placed next to this article. His back is to the city as he looks wistfully out into some far distant mountains. His old-style clothing seems to reflect a rejection of modern ways of dressing and living. He is stuck sitting atop the urban landscape, unable to integrate into modern life. This article seems to communicate the narrative that Indians cannot be modern or be traditional. He is left outside of the modern landscape and outside of his ancestral home.

The journalist, Michaela Jarvis, ends this article by describing India, a twenty-six-year-old Sioux woman whose life story is about "failure, pain and problems and drifting on the streets." India, raised on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota, moved to the city with her mother, and ended up living in group and foster homes until she was sixteen years old. She is described as having two pockets of scar tissue in the crook of her arm, homemade tattoos on each of her knuckles, a chipped front tooth, skin sprinkled with pockmarks, and wearing long shorts and sneakers with no laces. India "hooks up" with a man with three children. What India and her man have in common are "messed up childhood's and addiction to drugs." India's life "falls apart" when her boyfriend is sent to prison and she loses her apartment.

India has become a problem person, who cannot seem to fit into the urban setting and who has no redeeming qualities. She lacks a sense of her own power, and is dependent on her man for stability. India represents the segment of the Indian community, the wanderers, who seem to be stubbornly unable to find their place in the urban landscape and who suffer from the most failure and deprivation.

This traditional Indian man, as a doomed victim within the story of modernity, will have to give up his culture and his identity in order to become a "modern man." Becoming a modern man is a taken-for-granted end to a painful yet essential break from the past into the present that is supported throughout the social sciences.²² Contained within the continuum between the traditional and the modern is an evolutionary framework that places the traditional, who is less sophisticated, less civilized, and inferior, at the bottom and the modern, who is more complicated and superior, on the top. Problems in urban adjustment are understood to result from the inability of individuals to go through this continuum smoothly. These individuals are said to suffer from culture conflict, are caught between two worlds, and are viewed as being marginal. This continuum is also embedded within an assimilationist model which demands the construction of the modern national subject to be white, culturally pure, and homogenous. Assimilation is based on the assumption that less powerful groups must lose their distinct identities and become more like the dominant group. In this case, it is assumed that this Indian man must take on the traits of the dominant group in order to become a part of the urban landscape. But, even if this traditional man in the

newspaper article attempts to assimilate, the dream of belonging is taken away every time he encounters racism as the rest of the world pushes him out as the Other.

Negative strands of epistemological thought are also present within the past academic literature. For example, in 1970 Mark Nagler assumes in *Indians in the City* that urban Indians in Toronto, Canada do not have a culture. He writes,

While Indian culture was once a finely patterned mosaic, today it appears to be nothing more than a patchwork of meaningless, and unrelated pieces. This disintegration is primarily the result of the influences of alien ideas or influences.²³

This points to classic anthropology's assumption that authentic Indian culture is static and must be "pure" and "uncontaminated" from all modern influences. This leads many to believe that Indians in urban areas are people without culture.²⁴

Static notions of culture and identity have continued within more recent studies of urban Indian communities.²⁵ For example, Danziger, in his 1991 book *Survival and Regeneration*, confines Indian culture into particular regions. He supports the assumption that Indians' movement to cities cuts them off from reservation culture and that urban areas are dangerous, causing the urban Indian to be caught within the "menacing" atmosphere of urban life. He writes,

How did Indian newcomers to the Motor City, cut off from reservation sanctuaries and shocked by opposing values, meet the challenges of urban adjustment? Each migrant reacted uniquely to the menacing metropolis; some personal adaptation periods took longer than others, for example, and not all went smoothly, as suggested by the poverty of many native families as well as their comparatively low educational achievement and persistent problems with alcoholism. Generally, the process involved two steps; learning about the dominant society's different values and life-styles, and cultivating new friendships to replace those back on the reservation.²⁶

Danziger, by using the word *replace*, seems to assume that Indians cannot keep their relationships on the reservation through communication, such as by telephone calling and trips back and forth, once they move into the city. In addition,

Danziger calls the reservation a “sanctuary.” This word reminds the reader how Indians have been rooted in the soil of their reservations within the popular imagination. Arjun Appadurai, in “Putting Hierarchy in its Place,” discusses how anthropologists have tied people to places through ascriptions of Native status. He writes, “Natives are not only persons who are from certain places, and belong to those places, but they are also those who are somehow incarcerated, or confined, in those places.”²⁷ Placing Natives within an ecological niche incarcerates them as well as romanticizes them, which explains Danziger’s use of the term *sanctuary*. It is assumed that rare animals and birds live in sanctuaries and so do Indian people. Like the wildlife, the Native is an object of the popular imagination and a field of inquiry for the tourist as well as the anthropologist. The Native can then be animalized, romanticized, and spiritualized.

Indians as Problem People

Native people are often romanticized when they live within the “incarcerated” zones,²⁸ but when they leave they become problems to be fixed. Urban Indians who have lost their bodily connection to their homelands are treated as exiles within the popular imagination. They are treated as if they have forfeited their morality.²⁹ The “pathologization of uprootedness” can take on moral, medical, and political forms. Liisa Malkki in her 1997 article, “National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees,” argues that “uprootedness” is upsetting within nationalist cultures which assume that the world should be contained inside sovereign units and nations. She argues that anthropologists have supported this spatial arrangement of peoples and cultures, assuming a disjunction, a division between peoples, cultures, and nations. People “out of their place” upset these assumptions. Humans are supposed to have roots. Urban Indians, as displaced people, have become anomalies who need to be corrected. It is assumed that if they become modern, their problems will somehow go away. In the Danziger study, alcoholism was one of these problems. The underlying political, economic, and social forces that have created these “problems” are forgotten.

In contrast, scholars have recently argued that American Indian culture, community, and identity are reinvigorated

through travel, communication, and development of networks.³⁰ From our own research in San Jose, Jane,³¹ a Navajo woman in her forties, seems to have multiple homes; Jane and her two sisters moved from their reservation in Farmington to Fresno and back to San Jose. They describe their movement as “follow the leader.” Their sense of community and identity is not bounded in space, but includes many points of location, including their reservation.³² Thus, according to this research, urban Indians are not problems to be fixed, but are creative actors who maintain their own senses of community and identity.

In the newspaper article, “A New Trail of Tears,” the Muwekma Ohlones, who have lived in the San Francisco Bay Area since before the Europeans first came to California, were not even mentioned, contributing to their erasure.³³ But Indian people do not disappear when they enter the urban landscape. Silko, in *Yellow Woman and a Beauty in the Spirit*,³⁴ explains that even in the middle of the city, the power of Indian culture comes from a shared consciousness that continues on and on, beyond the death of one or many. Thus, I also argue that urban Indians are not doomed victims of modernity, people “without culture,” but are powerful actors, creating a consciousness to unify our community across differences, working to heal the hurts within ourselves and others caused by the American Indian holocaust. The following is a description of the 1996 American Indian Holocaust exhibit, also taken from my field journal.

The words, “The American Indian Holocaust Exhibit II,” were boldly painted underneath thick green poster paint, completely filling a black outline of a map of the Americas, situated behind a glass case next to the entrance. When I opened the doors to enter the exhibit, a cool pocket of air, saturated with the sweet aroma of sage, rushed toward me and enveloped my body. Small globes of yellow light, illuminating enlarged images of genocide and terror in the otherwise darkened room of the community center, also met my eye. I looked to my left and saw the words, “Invasion of the Americas by Britain, France, Portugal and Spain,” typed on a large map of the western hemisphere. The names of the explorers DeSoto, Ponce de Leon, and Columbus were also typed on this black and white image next to the sites and dates of their invasion of Indian lands. I looked in front of me and saw a small table with a guest book situated on top of its wood surface. Above this table was a large white cardboard sheet where Al Cross had written the



PHOTO 1:
THIS SIGN, PLACED
NEXT TO THE
ENTRANCE OF THE
EXHIBIT, ILLUSTRATES
THE HOLOCAUST
PROJECT'S HEMI-
SPHERIC APPROACH.

PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY RENYA RAMIREZ

multifaceted purpose of the exhibit: to bring out the “other story” erased from the historical record, debunk the European myth of discovery, disrupt the romantic and nostalgic stereotypes constructing Indian people as “remnants of the past,” and provide a space for the descendants of the American Indian holocaust to grieve the loss of millions of lives. This placard ends, “And lastly, we, as Indians, will need to build memorials to the lives that were lost in the holocaust, as a reminder of our history and that our vigilance must be kept at all times to see that like history is not repeated. Only then can we as a people move forward to live lives that are fulfilling and sacred as lives could be....”

Fifty or so prints included dogs hunting down Indian people, Indians being hanged and burned alive, Indians getting their hands and noses cut off by the Europeans, and Indians resisting the Europeans with spears. A corner of the room was devoted to honoring the plants important to Indian people from the Southeast area. Potted green plants, mounds of brown dirt, and drawings of cornfields overtook this part of the exhibit. Sepia-toned pictures of Indian women covered another wall. Drawings of weapons used by the Europeans hung on an opposite wall from these beautiful faces of Cherokee and Seminole women. Draped from the floor to the ceiling was another huge map of the Americas, again painted in green. There were numerous maps of the United States. The first chronicled “De Soto’s Trail of Destruction.” The second showed the removal of

Indian nations to Oklahoma. The third portrayed the sites of the worst epidemic outbreaks for Indian people. The final map showed the gradual depletion of Indian lands and the location of present Indian reservations. A wall, dominated by a large drawing of a twenty dollar bill, documented the Trail of Tears. Finally, a map of the Americas, again hung from the ceiling to the floor, included the location of Indian tribes before the invasion of the European. At the end were three-by-five cards tacked onto the wall, where the public had written their comments.³⁵

Healing

In this section, I will discuss how the holocaust group used the colonizer's own images and then inserted indigenous perspectives in order to undermine dominant representations of Indian people. In this way, the organizers were attempting to decolonize knowledge. They were also struggling to portray indigenous versions of the world. In the following, I will provide examples of how the holocaust group re-coded images originally drawn from a Eurocentric point of view.

At the entrance, Al Cross told the public that the exhibit's purpose was to tell the "other story."³⁶ Roberto explained,

We are doing a photo exhibit. We go through books, pull out the history that has been recorded by woodcuts. The Europeans did the drawing. If you see a picture, they show the destruction small-sized. We blow the picture up, so the images look like human beings. We want to show how they used the dogs. Columbus used dogs also. They used dogs to eat the flesh off the Indians. The dogs were trained to attack the Indians on sight. They tore everybody apart. We start with Columbus. We change the words. Columbus did not discover us. He invaded us, raped our women and children. We take a picture of the dogs. The dogs chopping up the people. We blow it up 24" by 24". We use what the Europeans wrote about us and we just change the words. We change the words to our perspective.³⁷

Al Cross explained that the colonizer drew Indian bodies to look like European bodies.³⁸ Indian people were drawn to appear weak, while the conquerors were drawn to look masterful. Indian men's bodies were feminized and Indian women were

sexualized. Both groups were portrayed to look submissive to communicate European control. However, Al, Roberto, and others, by enlarging these images and placing these enlarged drawings next to words printed on white sheets of paper, inverted their original purpose. Now these images exposed what the colonizer had done and told the story from the perspective of Indian people. In this way, this group acted to decolonize history.

The holocaust group also placed the words of a Spaniard, Michele de Cuneo, who traveled with Christopher Columbus, on the walls of the community center. They were typed onto a white sheet of paper and enlarged to be read by the public. His words were:

I captured a very beautiful Carib woman who the admiral (Christopher Columbus) gave to me.... I wanted to put my desire into execution.... She did not want it and treated me with her fingernails.... I took a rope and thrashed her well.... She raised such unheard screams.³⁹

I read these words and knew they were not about sex but about violence, power, and the control of Indian women as well as the land. The "empty" lands were seen as "virgin" territory yet to be explored.⁴⁰ The virgin lands, symbolized as female, were to be penetrated and raped by male explorers. In these traveler accounts, Indian women were described as extremely beautiful, their sexuality open and unashamed, unburdened by European guilt. This "very beautiful" Carib woman, like the landscape, is imprisoned within Michele's sexual fantasy and imagination. Without shame, he describes his beating of her and is somehow surprised by her screams. She is not a human being, capable of feelings and pain, but an object to help him put his "desire into execution." This group made visible this rape of an Indian woman, humanizing her, and in the process decolonizing knowledge and disrupting patriarchy.

Suzanne Smith,⁴¹ a white nineteen-year-old college student, displayed an oil painting done by Alfred Jacob Miller in 1845 as part of the exhibit on Indian women. In the painting, an Indian maiden is wearing a knee-length, white buckskin dress. Her hair is neatly brushed and cascades down the back of her dress. In the background is a dark-skinned Indian woman with shoulder-length, tousled hair, bare-chested, with a red blanket wrapped around her waist. She is sitting crouched on the ground, leaning away from the center of the painting, which

highlights the Indian maiden's hand passively holding the hand of the trapper. This woman seems to be fearful, wanting to stay away from the spectacle taking place between the Indian maiden and the trapper. The unkempt, messy, disorganized, cowering woman represents the savage squaw. The other, who is beautiful, clean, and submissive, represents the Indian maiden or princess. An Indian warrior, in the background, holds a pipe in his outstretched hand, waiting to give it to the settler.

Suzanne re-coded this image by telling the public that this painting projects the common misperception that Indian women had romantic relationships with white men. She discussed this on a sheet of paper and attached it to the wall underneath the color photocopy of Miller's nineteenth-century painting.⁴² She explained,

I wanted to put it [the painting] in some kind of context of how it all had been distorted. That just so struck me. This is so ridiculous. The painting was so how we see history. That's how history is taught in the schools. That would be a common picture if you were talking about Pocohontas. You see this young maiden. To show how deep the gap of what we are taught and what really went on. Present the public with something they could relate to. Okay, I have seen this before. Then go to the next pictures and the quote about how understanding our history is so important. I wanted people to see how that really translated. To watch how distorted our own views are. How people still have a romanticized idea of what went on that they [Indian women] were just given away to white men who came over.⁴⁴

Suzanne explained what guided her actions. She first wanted to show the distorted representation, and then began to re-code this twisted version through words. She placed the image next to a quote about history, hoping to encourage people to become conscious of their own Eurocentric assumptions. She wanted the public to realize first that Indian women have been wrongly represented. Then she wanted to insert Indian women's perspectives into public awareness. In this way, Suzanne also worked to decolonize knowledge.

Suzanne further discussed that through this juxtaposition she hoped to make visible Indian women's lives and experiences that have been left out of the historical record.⁴⁵ She explained that by placing modern-day images on the walls of

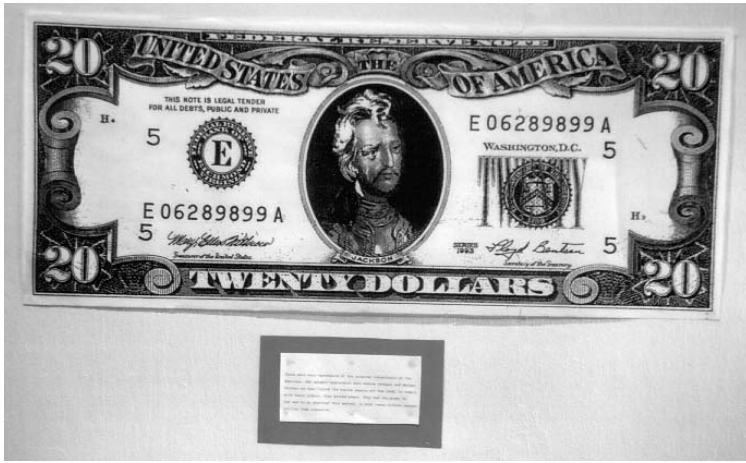
the community center, she wanted to counter the common assumption that Indians have been exterminated. Her fear made sense, since the dehumanizing logic of racism hinges on images of Indian people stuck in the distant past, completely exterminated, or caught in damaging stereotypes of the present as “dirty Indians,” alcoholics, stupid people, squaws, Indian maidens, or as some kind of new age shamans.⁴⁵

In conducting her research, Suzanne found that very little had been written on Indian women.⁴⁶ She also discovered that Indian women had multiple leadership roles. They were midwives, artists, basket weavers, and horticulturists as well as mothers and bearers of tradition within tribal communities. She honored these roles by describing them on rectangular pieces of paper and placing them on the exhibit wall. In this way, she again acted to disrupt the silencing effect of patriarchy. She explained to me how she chose the pictures to place on the walls of the exhibit hall. She said,

I took them [the pictures] from historical books. Some of the pictures just really struck me. Something about the women’s faces. Some of them had an intense stare going in their eyes. It really felt like resistance. I tried to balance it with the different roles. Some who did pottery and women who were horticulturists, and women that were spiritual leaders. Putting them up, I felt really thankful to them. I wanted their names to be remembered. It was really cleansing. I felt really grateful and a tremendous amount of respect for their faces in this really public space to let people see who they were and what they had done because they are silenced. They are nonexistent. To make people see them felt really incredible. It felt like it was more about them, not about me doing my little exhibit. Just putting them up there and letting them speak for themselves.

For Suzanne, it felt cleansing to bring Indian women’s knowledge and experience into the public eye. She felt a deep respect for “who they were and what they had done.” Suzanne described an increased sense of well-being making Indian women visible. Suzanne’s experience shows that inserting Indian peoples’ lives back into history, and back into public life, can be a healing experience for all people.

A group of American Indian students from San Jose State opened up the border between the United States and Mexico when they brought together the barbarity of the European



PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY RENYA RAMIREZ

PHOTO 2: EVONNE WILSON (NAVAJO) AND SHELBY COREY, BOTH STUDENTS AT SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY, CONCEIVED THE JACKSON/CORTES DISPLAY AT DESCRIBE HISTORY FROM AN INDIAN POINT OF VIEW.

invasion of South, Central, and North America through a double-faced image. On one wall of the community center, a huge twenty dollar bill met my eye; etched on the back was President Andrew Jackson. Half of his face was covered by the face of Hernando Cortes. In the 1500s, Cortes conquered the Aztec empire and seized Mexico for the Spanish crown, savagely exterminating Indian people along the way. Three hundred years later, President Jackson forcibly removed the Cherokees, making thousands walk the Trail of Tears from the Southeast to Oklahoma.⁴⁷

For me, this image linked the brutality of the conquest of Mexico and the U.S. policy to drive Indians from their homelands onto tiny pieces of reservation land. Placing these two histories together made me, an Indian from the north, feel a sense of solidarity with Indians from the south. This double-faced image points to these students' and the holocaust project's hemispheric approach. They were not allowing national borders to interfere with their portrayal of colonial history.

Spirituality carved out a sacred territory supporting the creation of positive visions for the future. Every evening spiritual people would offer a blessing before scholars, poets, or community members gave presentations about the American Indian holocaust. One night a Native spiritual leader, Mary Hyatt, stood up and held an abalone shell with wafts of smoke

and the aroma of sage spilling over the shell's edges. She walked into the center of the exhibit hall and stood in the middle of a group of Indians, Chicanos/as, and whites, offering a blessing to the four directions. She pointed the abalone shell in each direction, praying for each woman nation. Her voice got taut, and tears began to flow down her cheeks as she prayed for women to be able to heal from all the hard times they have had to go through. Mary reminded the audience how each woman has a special place inside, pointing to her womb. She prayed that women could heal and protect this special place. After she was finished with her blessing, the circle broke up and people found chairs to sit in, while others stood to listen to the presentation.⁴⁸

The aroma and smoke from the sage created a sacred space within the exhibit hall to encourage healing and transformation through prayer and emotion. Having a place to cry, having one's grieving accepted and listened to by others, does not happen often enough. With her blessing Mary opened up the trauma that Indian women have had to suffer through. The womb has been portrayed as the site of injury resulting from male settlers penetrating Indian women's bodies and the land. Mary pointed to her womb and prayed that this trauma could be healed. For me, by opening up this site of trauma, the womb could then become transformed into a site of healing.

Mary prayed for all of the women nations, the four races of people, represented by the colors red, yellow, black, and white. This prayer reminded everyone of the importance of healing the human family—that women from all colors have suffered from a history of violence. Mary and her husband Jack (Cherokee/African American) have participated in sun dances for a number of years. Mary brought Native spirituality into the exhibit, which in this case supports envisioning interconnection among all of the women of the world.

HEALING THROUGH GRIEF

Native people need to go through a grieving process in order to go on with their lives in a sacred manner, explained Al and Roberto. During an interview, Roberto urged the descendants of the holocaust experience, Indians as well as Chicanos/as, to call up and face the genocide in order to begin to trust each other and begin to work together. Roberto explained,

There has been something that has gotten between us and that's the truth. We have not dealt with the truth. We have not dealt with the white man confusing us, throwing us over here, throwing us over there and making us look in these other directions, and not deal with the truth. The truth is what happened to us. What started this whole thing is the genocide and the holocaust. Until we heal,... until we deal with the pain, and the loss, the profound loss, we can't move ahead. We will always move like we are distrustful... We have only learned what the white man is going to teach us, but until we can get around that and go through the pain of what we have gone through, we will be stuck.⁵⁰

Roberto's geographical metaphors of scattering—"throwing us over here, throwing us over there"—were physical as well as psychic. Indians and Chicanos/as have been scattered, sometimes unable to see who and what has caused divisions among them. Through this process of facing the "truth," the genocide, the site of wounding, can be transformed into a site of healing and empowerment. Healing *through* the pain, and the profound loss, is essential to begin to live life not distrusting others.

During one of their initial meetings, Al discussed how this exhibit could provide a place for people to start the grieving process, providing them a space to deal with their emotions.⁵¹ He further discussed that grieving can begin after Indians go through a "shock." This shock is to face the reality of the genocide, and is part of what Roberto named "facing the truth." After facing this truth, Al argued that Indians and others can then begin to be honest with each other, respect one another, and become full human beings.⁵¹

The holocaust exhibit is a place for Indians, Chicanos/as, and others to reconnect with the memories that the dominant world has denied them. According to Al, the wounding created by these repressed memories makes Indians "go crazy," causing drinking and car accidents.⁵² Facing and going through these emotions and memories that have been submerged by the dominant society entails a reenactment of forgotten moments in history.⁵³ Using images, ceremony, prayers, and words, the holocaust project works to help people process these submerged memories that have caused a deep wounding.

Facing death as part of facing the truth is essential to begin to heal, explained Roberto. Facing death as a healing practice is seen as an oxymoron for many in American society. Death is seen as scary, to be hidden in our sterile, florescent-lit morgues

and the dark shadows of our funeral parlors. For many, deceased bodies are presented for short hours of visitation, and funerals last just a morning or an afternoon.⁵⁴

This fear of death is in sharp contrast to the Winnebago wakes I attended as a child, when my relatives' bodies were brought back into the home and ceremonies were performed to help their spirits pass over to the other side. These wakes lasted four days and four nights. Death was seen as a part of life's cycle, and this four-day vigil was as much for the souls of the dead as it was for the living. I remembered when my beautiful sister, Trynka, was brought back into her home, gracefully lying, wearing her Winnebago powwow outfit of brilliant colors, celebrating her Winnebago soul in a large wooden casket. She had died tragically of breast cancer at the young age of thirty-eight, the age I have just turned as I sit at this computer, trying to write about healing through grief. Her male relatives carried the heavy casket across the threshold of her home with the rest of her family watching; my breath stopped, wondering if I could handle seeing her beautiful body without movement or breath. The funeral director hesitated before leaving and told us how unusual it was to bring a body home to be honored for an all-night wake. I thought of this as I sat listening to this conversation between Al and Roberto. I remembered that death was seen as a natural course to be experienced through the deep healing rituals and ceremonies passed down from the ancestors. These ceremonies have helped me face the shock of my own loved ones' deaths and helped me heal through the grieving process. Within my own experience with death and dying, this group's plan to help Indian people grieve through the use of photographs of Indian peoples' suffering and death as they offered blessing, ceremonies, and prayer made sense.⁵⁵ Death is not to be hidden in the shadows, but proper ceremonies need to be performed for the spirits of the ancestors to be able to rest in peace, so the bereaved can once again move on with their lives. Blessings were invoked during the exhibit to help the souls of the ancestors, many of whom were violently tortured and killed, to cross over to the spirit world and be at peace, explained Roberto.⁵⁶

"MIXED IDENTITY AND THE HOLOCAUST"

The holocaust group also used the reality of mixed identity to work to bring together groups of people. For example, during

one evening, Paul Rubio brought into a public forum an issue that has plagued Indian communities for a long time. He gave a presentation entitled "Mixed Identity and the Holocaust." He began, "Mixed bloods and pure bloods, we have a division within Native American society. I am hoping for a healing along these lines."⁵⁷ Paul then discussed how both sides of his family tree were represented, the Spanish and the Indian, on the images on the walls of the community center. He explained,

I see my relatives hanged and chopped up and burnt, killed and boxed up. Their native spirituality being taken away from them. I also see some more of my ancestors there doing the chopping up. I have to educate myself about how I identify myself with this clash of cultures. That's what I am trying to do, the way I live, identify more with the culture that took care of this mother earth for generations rather than the one that tried to destroy other peoples and destroy the earth and use it up quicker before it could replenish itself. This is what these images do to me. When I recognize that both of them are inside of me still today then I can start to manage those things and not be so destructive to my fellow human beings.⁵⁸

In his presentation, Paul urged others to connect to "the culture that took care of this mother earth rather than the one that tried to destroy other peoples and destroy the earth." He encouraged others to develop a consciousness that reimagines culture to live in harmony with the earth. His strategy for cross-cultural communication was to valorize his own experience of mixed identity. He communicated his relationship to all sides of this "clash of cultures." He was not getting stuck claiming one aspect of his identity over the other and urged others to connect to a culture "that took care of this mother earth." Mother earth became a central category to develop an awareness to create a respectful world.

During an interview, Paul further discussed the importance of honoring all parts of himself: the Indian, the Chicano, and the Spanish. He argued that much pain results from people wanting to label and pull out one piece of themselves to represent their entire sense of identity. He explained, "I think the labels create some of the hurt. They allow people to narrow their identity down to something that is at odds with something else."⁵⁹ Paul celebrates difference within himself, letting go of the teachings of Western culture dependent on static categories in the construction of otherness.

Through his presentation, Paul provided a means to avoid the replication of the binary categories that Europe imposed on the colonized throughout the world, causing conflict between groups of people. Paul turned the ambivalence of living within contradictory frameworks—the Chicano, the Spanish, and the Indian—and rather than getting stuck within a place of negativity and contradiction, he worked towards reconnecting to a healing consciousness which becomes a synthesis that is greater than the sum of any one of its parts. Paul acknowledged the difficulties living as a descendant of these different experiences, but rather than rejecting one or another, he uses their synthesis to move towards the creation of a qualitatively new social order.⁶⁰ This new social order is grounded within a world infused with indigenous knowledge, spirituality, and philosophy. Through prayers, words, and images, this group created a space that conceptualized belonging from indigenous perspectives.

Al, Roberto, Paul, Mary, Suzanne, Laverne, and others are working to revision⁶¹ culture to create a world that Leslie Marmon Silko foretells in *Almanac of the Dead*.⁶² Through their healing practice, this group reimagines a world that includes all human beings who can respect each other and the mother earth. Silko argues in *Almanac of the Dead* that love for the earth and for each other needs to guide our work towards social change. She argues that mother earth will eventually purify herself from all the wounding from Eurocentrism, which has ripped open her flesh and confused her children. This wounding has scattered people, created conflict, and numbed people from feeling love for each other, the land, and themselves. She describes a renaissance of culture and community that comes from the peoples most excluded by the dominant world. Loving relationships with the land and each other will support a renewal of community that will reclaim the Americas as foretold by the indigenous prophecies that guide her book.

Prophecy guides the actions of Laverne Morrissey, the leader of the American Indian Alliance, and Roberto Ramirez. She envisions the day when the community will heal and there will be a “coming together time” of all the races. Roberto Ramirez, an Aztec dancer, feels a responsibility to work with Indian people from the north as he follows the old Zuni prophecy that Indians from the south will bring the scattered back together again.

Some Reactions to the Exhibit

Pushpins held up small cards on the wall at the end of the exhibit. People had written their reactions to the exhibit in pen as well as in pencil. Many who attended were touched by the exhibit and wanted to express their feelings. Here are three examples:

As a white man I am tempted to say that I am sorry. But instead I'll say it not as a white man, but as a man. I'm sorry for all the horrors man inflicts on men. I didn't do these things but I am sorry others did, as others do. I guess I'm just ashamed sometimes to be a human being.

This exhibit is very informative, our native peoples, "federally" recognized and unrecognized, full-blood and mixed blood, from north, south, and central America, need to unite and free our minds from the colonial borders and governments imposed on our hemisphere.

"Mexican" is simply a term given by non-Indians to conveniently divide the Indians, north and south of the false border, Mexicanos accept what you really are!⁶³

These reactions as well as others point to the exhibit fulfilling its healing purpose. The national borders and narratives creating divisions among Indians, Chicanos/as, whites, and others were opened up, supporting the creation of an imagined community infused with an indigenous consciousness that spanned the Americas. Some non-Indians could face looking at Indian history with both eyes and hear the cries of pain across the generations, echoing throughout the darkened hall of the exhibit. On the exhibit wall, the message written by "a white man" apologized for the horrors of history. He focused on his own sense of humanity to bridge the racial categories that have separated us, pointing to a strategy to heal from the holocaust. Denying the reality of the holocaust experience is harmful to non-Indians as they are living a lie. Opening and facing this lie is a healing experience.

Tacked on the wall, the second reaction to the exhibit seemed to verbalize the exhibit's essential purpose: to help Indian people reimagine a hemispheric as well as inclusive sense of Indian community that crosses "colonial borders." Thus, the healing space of the exhibit hall supported the bridging of boundaries between groups divided by nationalist pro-

jects. The women were remembered to help us envision a world that includes all colors of humanity throughout the Americas and heals mother earth.

The third reaction points to how the boundary created by the U.S./ Mexico border became permeable. By valorizing the Indian part of Mexican identity, the potential exists to build unifying bridges across populations that have been divided by the creation of the dominant version of the mestizo. The writer argues against Spain's method of incorporating the huge Indian population in Mexico. This mixture from a dominant perspective is a whitening process, trying to pull Mexicans from their Indian origins. By not valorizing their Indian origins, the mestizo often views the Indian as inferior, uncivilized, at the bottom of society. The writer demands that "Mexicanos" accept the Indian aspect of their identity and learn to connect with their Indian relations across national borders. The writer is urging people to reconnect with the Indian, the aspect of Mexicano/a identity that has been relegated as the premodern.⁶⁴ In this exhibit, an indigenous identity was asserted and became a site of healing, supporting connections between Indians, Chicanos/as, and others. This exhibit, therefore, seemed to realize its goals for healing as evidenced by some of these reactions.

The annual American Indian Holocaust exhibit, a "journey through the Americas," supports the creation of a hemispheric community reconnecting relationships across national and group boundaries, utilizing Indian-oriented history, experiences of mixed identity, grieving, art, and ceremony to envision a society in which mother earth and all her relations can heal from the five-hundred-year-long holocaust. Al, Roberto, Mary, Paul, Laverne, and others are living by a healing con-



PHOTO 3:
THE SHIRT WAS MADE TO
COMMEMORATE THE EXHIBIT.

PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY RENYA RAMIREZ

sciousness that connects back to the mother earth to guide their actions. Roberto explained, "The mother earth is suffering and it is going to take all of us to come together to heal her. We cannot do it by ourselves. The four colors must come together as one and deal with the truth and begin the healing."⁶⁵

NOTES

1. The term *urban Indian* is problematic, since it supports the assumption that Indians living in urban areas form their sense of community bound to the geographical region of the city. This is not true. Indians form their senses of community across geographical boundaries, including their reservations, and in this article the entire hemisphere. Thus, I use this term with caution.

2. "Sacred Circle: Laverne Morrissey heals community rifts," *Metro*, 14-20 July 1994.

3. Field notes, May 29, 1996.

4. Field notes, October 13, 1994.

5. Paul Rubio, interview, May 28, 1996.

6. *Ibid.*

7. See Mary Pratt, "Daring to Dream: Re-visioning Culture and Citizenship," *Working Paper Series* 41 (Stanford Center for Chicano Research Center, Stanford University, April 1993). Pratt argues for the need to decolonize the Americas and revision culture and citizenship from an indigenous perspective; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 37. He discusses the politics of transfiguration. This is a transformative exercise where subordinated groups reimagine a new social order and social relationships both among themselves and with their oppressors. The holocaust exhibit is just such a reimagining; Mary Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992). She uses the term "autoethnography" to describe how indigenous people insert their own perspectives within dominant representations of themselves in order to decolonize knowledge. This exhibit is an example of autoethnography.

8. Victoria Bomberry, a Muscogee/Lenape/Choctaw/Chickasaw scholar has named this reimagining "western hemispheric consciousness." Her forthcoming dissertation, "Indigenous Memory and Imagination: Thinking Beyond the Nation," discusses this reimagining of Indian community as part of indigenous knowledges that interrupt the negative constructions of Indian peoples throughout the western hemisphere.

9. Jack Forbes, *Aztecas Del Norte: The Chicanos of Aztlan* (Davis: University of California Press, 1973), 189.

10. Vine Deloria, Jr., *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 187.

11. Al Logan Slagle, "Unfinished Justice: Completing the Restoration and Acknowledgment of California Indian Tribes," *American Indian Quarterly* 13 (1989).

12. Wayne Moquin, ed., *A Documentary History of the Mexican Americans* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971).

13. See, e.g., Annette Jaimes Guererro, "Federal Indian Identification Policy," *The State of Native America* (Boston: South End Press, 1992); Teresa O'Neill, *Disciplined Hearts: History, Identity, and Depression in an American Indian Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Alexander Ewen, "Mexico: The Crisis of Identity," *Native American Voices: A Reader*, eds. Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot (New York: Longman, 1998). Ewen focuses on the categories in Mexico that weaken the political power of Mexican Indians.

14. Field notes, October 13, 1994.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. There has been much discussion in Indian communities about researchers taking knowledge from Indian communities without proper approval. See Devon Mihesuah, "Suggested Guidelines for Institutions with Scholars who Conduct Research on American Indians," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 17 (1993): 131-140.

18. Field notes, October 13, 1994.

19. Eduardo and Bonnie Duran, *Native American Postcolonial Psychology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 24-25.

20. Ibid.. 45.

21. Michaela Jarvis, "A New Trail of Tears," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 March 1996, Sunday edition.

22. Assumptions of evolution and assimilation are interwoven throughout much of past academic literature with becoming a modern man as the end to a painful process. See, for example, Joan Ablon, "Relocated American Indians in the San Francisco Bay Area: Social Interaction and Indian Identity," *Human Organization* 23 (1964): 264-304.; Joan Ablon, "Retention of Cultural Values and Differential Adaptation: Samoans and American Indians in a West Coast City," *Social Forces* 49 (1971): 385-93; Edmund Danziger, *Survival and Regeneration: Detroit's American Indian Community* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991).

23. Mark Nagler, *Indians in the City: A Study of Urbanization of Indians in Toronto* (Ottawa: Canadian Research Center for Anthropology, Saint Paul University, 1970), 20.

24. For a fuller discussion of people without culture, see Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 198.

25. See also, e.g., Joan Weibel-Orlando, *Indian Country, L.A.: Maintaining Ethnic Community in Complex Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996). Weibel-Orlando categorizes Indian people as "progressive," "traditional," "full blood," and "mixed blood." These static categories fit within acculturation and Eurocentric models of blood quantum. She does not problematize the history of the designations of mixed-blood and full-blood as devices used by the European to divide and conquer Indian people. The European cat-

egorized Indian people, coming up with these static terms to encourage conflict among Indian people throughout the Americas. This exhibit attempts to break down these static categories and valorizes Indian peoples' experience of mixed identity.

26. Danziger, *Survival and Regeneration*, 33.

27. See Arjun Appadurai, "Putting Hierarchy in its Place," *Cultural Anthropology* 3:1 (1988): 37, who uses the term *incarcerated*. He argues that this process of incarceration marginalizes Native people.

28. Ibid.

29. Liisa Malkki, "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees," *Culture, Power, and Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

30. See, e.g., Renya and Gilbert Ramirez, "Native American Community and Identity in San Jose, California," Paper delivered at the American Education Research Association (New Orleans, Louisiana, April 4-8, 1993); Kurt Peters, "Santa Fe Indian Camp, House 21, Richmond California: Persistence of Identity among Laguna Pueblo Railroad Laborers, 1945-1982," in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 19:3 (1995): 33-70.

31. The name has been changed to protect Jane's privacy.

32. Renya and Gilbert Ramirez, "Native American Community and Identity in San Jose, California."

33. See, e.g., Alan Leventhal, et al., "The Ohlone Back from Extinction," *The Ohlone Past and Present*, ed. Lowell John Bean (Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press, 1994), 297-336. They discuss how anthropologists determined the Ohlones to be "extinct." Static anthropological models have contributed to this wrong assumption; David Gomez, "The urban Indians who have always lived here: This Land is Their Land," *San Jose Mercury News*, 1 September 1991, West section.

34. See Leslie Marmon Silko, *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

35. Field notes, May 22, 1995.

36. Field notes, March 27, 1996.

37. Ibid.

38. "Indian Holocaust: History Seen Through Natives' Eyes," *San Jose Mercury News*, 23 May 1996, Peninsula section.

39. Field notes, May 22, 1996.

40. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 3.

41. This name has been changed to respect Suzanne's privacy.

42. Suzanne Smith, interview, June 18, 1996.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Robert E. Berkhofer, Jr., *White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 86-91.

46. Ibid.

47. Field notes, May 22, 1996; "Indian Holocaust: History Seen Through Natives' Eyes," *San Jose Mercury News*, 23 May 1996, Peninsula section.

48. Field notes, May 21, 1996.

49. Roberto Ramirez, interview, December 15, 1994.

50. Field notes, October 13, 1994.

51. This group's healing practice attempts to change our future, which is so closely linked to confronting and reclaiming the violent history of our past, breaking through social amnesia. See Howard Winant in *Racial Conditions: Politics, Theory, Comparisons* (Minneapolis: University of California Press, 1984). He argues that racial time is signified by an absence, a collective amnesia in relation to the history of subordinated peoples. Modernity was framed within capitalist development, which focused on economic relations. Thus, racialized time has been submerged. People then become unable to understand how the entire history of the development of capitalism has hurt Indian people. Native people must connect their emotions with knowledge that has been submerged, to face the loss of millions of Indian people, so everyone can begin the healing. Only with this confrontation at the site of wounding can people begin the individual and collective healing process and face the future.

52. Field notes, October 13, 1994.

53. See Francisco Alarcon, "Reclaiming Ourselves, Reclaiming America," *Without Discovery: A Native Response to Columbus*, ed. Ray Gonzalez (Seattle: Broken Moon Press, 1992), 32. He writes, "In order to understand history and be able to exorcise the past, we need to relive in flesh and spirit this history. We need to re-enact all the misunderstandings, confrontations and contradictions, all the suffering and havoc brought about by the so-called discovery of this continent." The holocaust exhibit is part of this reenactment.

54. See Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). She argues that grief is hidden in Western society so as not to interfere with capitalism and the need for people to work. Grieving is seen as interfering with capitalist production.

55. See Michelle Rosaldo, "Toward an anthropology of self and feeling," *Culture Theory: Essays on mind, self, and emotion*, eds. Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). She argues that experiences of emotion are inherently cultural rather than psychobiological. Her anthropological conceptualization of emotion is that emotions are themselves aspects of cultural systems that are of strategic importance to analysts, who are concerned with the way people shape their world.

56. Roberto Ramirez, interview, December 15, 1994.

57. Field notes, May 29, 1996.

58. Ibid.

59. Paul Rubio, interview, May 28, 1996.

60. See Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Book Company, 1987), 79, 80. She discusses the new mestiza consciousness as a place where the self attempts to work out a synthesis between opposing frameworks. The result is "greater than

the sum of its severed parts.”

61. Mary Pratt uses the term, *revision*, in “Daring to Dream: Revisioning Culture and Citizenship.” Renato Rosaldo also uses *revision*, in “Cultural Citizenship, Inequality, and Multiculturalism,” *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights*, eds. Bill Flores and Rina Benmayor (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997). I use *reimagine* and *revision* interchangeably.

62. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead: A Novel* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

63. Field notes, May 22, 1996.

64. This claiming of a space by Chicanas/os within the exhibit is not to take away rights that are set aside for American Indians in the United States, but rather acts as a site to decolonize categories created by the European that have caused divisions between groups of people. I want to thank Paula Moya for a conversation regarding this issue during the 1998 Chicana/o Colloquium, March 10, 1998 at Stanford University. For further discussion of this issue see, e.g., Ines Hernandez-Avila, “An Open Letter to Chicanas: On the Power and Politics of Origin,” eds. Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird, *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing in North America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

65. Roberto Ramirez, phone interview, February 13, 1996.