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One Fragment at a Time: The Literature of Deborah Miranda and Wendy Rose

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California is the golden state: a land of Malibu sun-tans, Hollywood, Disneyland, and of recent, the Silicon Valley kingdom where Apple, Yahoo, and Facebook reign supreme. The draw of the Pacific Coast, the fertile San Joaquin valley, and the numerous frothy rivers that flow from Sierra Nevada ice-caps, have long summoned settlers seeking wealth and sunshine. Yet swept beneath tiny granules of California sand and contemporary cloverleaf highways of asphalt lies a covert past of massacre, rape, and domination that led to one of the most devastating Genocides witnessed by man (Madley 449; Lobo, Talbot, & Morris 140). Decades of exploitation, discrimination, and de-humanization are part of a little-known, suppressed California history which led to the near-destruction of the Indigenous California population. It was a near-destruction so complete that Native Californians still struggle to reconfigure the devastation and fragmentation of their Indigenous Californian heritage. Deborah Miranda and Wendy Rose, two descendants of California Indigenous tribes, have embarked on a quest to re-build, re-claim and re-define their (Native) place in the world. It is a quest that defies the very structure of colonialization. Both are generations removed from California-of-old, and its once-vibrant Indigenous culture filled with spirit and life; yet both wield a power through pen, through poetry and prose. Moreover, both Rose and Miranda provide an Indigenous perspective to California's recorded history that challenges the implied premise of "savages" and "bad Indians," inspiring all-around understanding and inciting change. Through their poetry, their literature, and their reflections of the past, in *Bad Indians* and *Bone Dance*, Deborah Miranda and Wendy Rose respectively re-write and re-create California's fragmented indigenous past, one fragment at a time.

In *Bad Indians* (2013), Deborah Miranda records her personal history, including that of her California Indian ancestors. She provides her reader with facts: excerpts of letters, scribbled notes, as well as her own rich narratives, commentaries, and poems that provide an accurately detailed, yet relatively unknown, historical perspective on the shattering of California Indian communities since contact (172). Miranda's work, as Kelly McCormick asserts in *Reimagning Space, Community, and the Body in Deborah Miranda's Bad Indians; a Tribal Memoir and Elissa Washuta's my Body is a Book of Rules* (2016), is "both for and in conversation with the other California Natives trying to recover what has been lost and imagine a sovereign future" (5). At the same time, as McCormick points out, Miranda's efforts are part of a wider effort, which is why she uses the pronoun "we" throughout her memoir. Miranda explains, "I say 'we' because my efforts here are part of a much wider circle of California Indian peoples and allies talking back to mythology, protesting, and making waves" (Miranda xx).

Undoubtedly, Miranda's retelling achieves her purpose: "protesting" and "making waves" as she challenges the written and recorded California history and its all-too-colonized perspective. In other words, the idyllic fairy tale where California Indians "wander" into the missions, celebrate good-times with the gold-miners during the Gold Rush and then toast to the triumph of the Transcontinental Railroad (Meyers-Lim 45; Trafzer and Lorimer 1). Sadly, these subsequent (false) perceptions replace a more gruesome truth, for California Indians were continuously portrayed as "uncivilized" throughout history: "dirty, animal-like, and something less than human beings" (Meyers-Lim 45; Trafzer and Lorimer 2).

To be specific, California Indians were "Bad Indians," as Miranda references in the title to her memoir. She details these misconceptions carefully, all the while re-visiting her familial California Indigenous past. As Miranda explains in her introduction:

All my life, I have heard only one story about California Indians: godless, dirty, stupid, primitive, ugly, passive, drunken, immoral, lazy, weak-willed people who *might* make good workers if properly trained and motivated. What kind of story is that to grow up with? (xvi)

One sentence later, Miranda answers her own question: "The story of the Missionization of California" (xvi).

The colonialization of California began in the seventeen hundreds with the Spanish Mission system. California children are required to study this era in the fourth grade, including the California Missions. However, the history written in California textbooks is slanted, and furthers colonialism's Euro-American cause, lessoning and even denying any wrong-doing at the hands of the first mission padres, settlers, gold-seekers, and government officials (Trafzer and Lorimer 4). Benjamin Madley, in "Understanding Genocide in California Under United States Rule, 1846–1873" (2016), suggests that a deeper examination is needed to reconstruct history, one that is based on existing knowledge and adds new research "in order to understand the full picture for the United States and the entire Western Hemisphere" (460). Still, Madley agrees that "it is beyond doubt that California Indians endured genocide under U.S. rule" (460). Yet if recorded history is curiously absent regarding violence and cruelty towards the Indigenous population in California, the raw data and facts reveal a different story.

The California Indian population was harshly impacted by colonization. Westward expansion, the California Gold Rush, and government-endorsed manifest-destiny policies spelled disaster, as disease, relocation, and starvation, as well as government-endorsed massacre led to a near-extinction of Indigenous populations (Madley 460; Lobo, Talbot, & Morris 140). The number of California Indians dropped from 310,000 in 1770, to 20,000 in 1900, a decline of 90% (Lobo, Talbot, & Morris 140). Furthermore, the Natives that survived experienced a loss of language and culture and inherited a legacy of Euro-American domination and intergenerational abuse. And *this* California history -- the California history left out of the textbooks -- is the history Miranda explores in *Bad Indians* (2013).

Miranda writes of the California Mission system where her ancestors, seven generations earlier, toiled as part of the enslaved (Indigenous) labor force (9). The agricultural Mission system was dependent on this free labor, and to this end, the mission padres wholeheartedly embraced strict discipline and dire consequences if they were not obeyed. Miranda recounts the words of Padre Lasuén, who took over for Padre Serra as President of Mission San Carlos. In correspondence to his homeland, Lasuén explains that California Natives were "sub-human," something akin to savages. Miranda cites Lasuén's words, "It is evident that a nation (of Indigenous Californians) which is barbarous, ferocious, and ignorant requires more frequent punishment than a nation which is cultured, educated and of gentle and moderate customs" (11). Miranda delves further, explaining the padres' favorite tools of "frequent punishment" and even including detailed pen and ink representations, along with an objective, matter-of-fact definition of each torture device. The impact of Miranda's illustrations and descriptions is gruesome in its simplicity. Even more disturbing is the fact that the tortures were implemented for the slightest of infractions, including: flogging (whipping), solitary confinement, hanging upside down, stocks and hobbles, branding, mutilation and even execution for the more serious crimes of running away or resisting (Miranda 12).

There is no mention of Lasuén's system to tame the "ferocious and barbaric Natives" that contributed to the genocide of the California Indians in today's 4th grade California history book (Miranda 11). As Madley (2016) explains, little has been published on the genocide of the California Indians, although many scholars from "anthropologist Russell Thornton to historian Ben Kiernan" have addressed the subject (452). Instead, students read a romanticized version; one where indigenous natives wander into the Spaniards' camp, become converts, and then construct a mission out of adobe bricks for the kindly padres. Nicole Myers-Lim, mother and author of "Educating Elementary School About California Missions and the Perpetuation of Genocide" (2014), asserts that a more accurate re-telling would include words such as "kidnapping" and "forced labor." She further asserts that if some California Indians did come into the missions willingly, they would not have stayed, due to the excessive punishment and the cruelty of the padres (Meyers-Lim 45). In *Bad Indians*, Miranda illustrates the excessive punishment and padre cruelty referenced by Meyers-Lim in a first-person reimagining of her ancestors' daily mission life:

At the giving end of whip, he taught us to care for and kill cattle, work fields of wheat and corn and barley, make adobe walls for our own prisons, build the church, the monjero, storerooms – promised it all to us if we would just grow up, pray hard enough, forget enough. (Miranda 19-20)

Miranda's version of the California mission experience is further explored in the work of fellow Native Californian poet, Wendy Rose. As Rose illustrates in her poetry, the saga of abuse and violence did not end with the mission system; instead, the exploitation followed the Indigenous Californians to death and beyond.

Inspired by the 1977 excavation of Mission Santa Barbara, when archaeologists discovered human bones in the adobe walls, Rose's poem, "Excavation at Santa Barbara," takes on newfound relevance today as post-millennial archeologists and native tribes continue to argue over who owns history when ancient native bones are accidentally unearthed (Sand 45). In this manner, Rose's words are timeless. In fact, they serve as a graphic, yet thought-provoking reflection on the impact of colonization on the Indigenous converts at the Santa Barbara Mission.

In "Excavation at Santa Barbara," Rose narrates the archeological discovery of indigenous bones through the expert eyes of an archeologist on the brink of a major scientific discovery. Objectivity is present in the voice of the narrator for the first four lines. Here, Rose places the reader in the shoes of the archeologist, "My pointed trowel / is the artists brush" (1-2). As she guides her reader onward, the voice and tone changes, building in excitement as bone fragments and human features come into focus. Karen Tongson-McCall, in her article for the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, "The Nether World of Neither World: Hybridization in the Literature of Wendy Rose," comments on the alternating identities of Rose present in the poem; for example, anthropologist, native, Catholic, artist and poet. These many identities of Rose the narrator conflate in "a synergetic critique of objectification and appropriation" (Tongson-McCall 19). At times her identities wrap, tangle, and separate, yet all the while they remain an effective and powerful storyteller, enlightening and inspiring her readers.

Tongson-McCall speculates that "Excavation at Santa Barbara" displays an early "giddiness" and a "naiveté" that stimulates excitement in the discovery to come (19). She suggests that the excitement dissipates into a darker tone because of Rose's choice to use the early past-tense verbs "excited" and "wanted":

How excited I am

for like a dream
I wanted to count myself
among the ancient dead
as a faithful neophyte (6-10)

According to Tongson-McCall, the tense change forebodes a "potentially distressing lapse into knowledge amidst this backdrop of religious serenity" (19). Tongson-McCall is correct in her assertion regarding Rose's foreboding tense-change; however, "religious serenity" is not the appropriate explanation for Rose's detour. For although Rose's word choice of "faithful neophyte" effectively illustrates the exploitation of the bones sentenced to an eternal bed of adobe, Rose's foreboding change of tense is intended for the lines that follow her "neophyte" point of reference. After all, the description that follows, "resting there and in love / with the padres / and the Spanish hymns" (11-13), reminds the reader that the Indigenous bones are still imprisoned, due to civilization and colonization.

Sensory rich details reveal a darker, even unsettling picture of the excavation, from "finger bones scattered like corn" (17) to "Marrow like lace "(14) and "ribs interlaced like cholla" (18). With each word and sentence the reader uncovers Native bones along with narrator, following the process action by action. Still, with every movement Rose-the-Archaeologist makes, whether stroking and prying on the aged adobe, or crouching in white dust, her state of mind is constant and steady. The result is haunting, a quality orchestrated by Rose-the-narrator, who, despite the objective point-of-view, is eerily connected to the bones' memories.

Rose references herself -- the fictional archeologist-narrator -- as a hungry scientist whose livelihood is dependent on the blanched and brittle bones of "men and women asleep in the wall" (48). And just as the skeletal remains are revealed to the archeologist, fragment by fragment, so too, is the discovery revealed to the reader, amidst potent metaphors and similes (Tongson-McCall 18). The words of the poem evoke the cruel and inhumane marriage between science and humanity, all the while illustrating the exploitation of the native skeletons. Even today, Rose's poetry is powerful, and its message continues to resonate:

I the hungry scientist
sustaining myself
with bones of
men and women asleep in the wall
who survived in their own way
Spanish swords, Franciscans
and their rosary whips (45-51)

The final moments (and the realization) of the poem is gut-wrenching: the ancient bones, buried deep inside the walls, are not only survivors of Spanish swords and Franciscans with rosary whips, but survivors of a genocide still ignored by history (Madley 452; Trafzer & Lorimar 17). More horrific, the ancient "sleeping" bones of men and women – the "Bad Indians" Miranda references -- are still serving time for "being Indian." Even beyond death. Rose's use of the word "survivor" allows her readers to experience the injustice for themselves. This point is central to the poem's strength and effectiveness, for the images she creates linger. Like Miranda in *Bad Indians*, Rose uses phrases such as "Spanish swords" and "Franciscans and their rosary whips" to condemn the mission system (50-51). She also describes, with tragic detail, how the California Natives that turned Neophyte "…died among the reeds / to wait, communion wafers / upon the ground, too holy / for the priests to find" (52-55). Finally, in the last lines of the poem, Rose urges her reader foreword, to uncover the final injustice bequeathed

upon the mission Indians: the final goodbye-punishment of the rosary-worshipping Franciscans. She states the facts with seven words, and then repeats each line, allowing the statement to echo:

> They built the mission with dead Indians.
> They built the mission with dead Indians.
> They built the mission with dead Indians.
> They built the mission with dead Indians. (56-59)

In "Excavation at Santa Barbara," Rose comments on the price the California Indians of the Santa Barbara Mission paid, in death: their bones paid the ultimate price of colonization. As a final act of insult, the bones of the deceased continue to further the cause that murdered them; for they provide the bony structure-support to the mission walls that enslaved them. This final act of domination is horrific -- a tragic consequence of the California Indian Genocide.

In her preface to *Bone Dance*, Rose explains her mixed-blood ancestry and names a handful of her Euro-American ancestors, "Margaret on the wagon train from Missouri in the early 1850's, Joseph, born in an Irish castle, and Henrietta, whose Scottish father had been raised by Sir Walter Scott" (xii). In contrast, her reference to her California Miwok ancestry is anonymous, tragic, and silent. Still, she describes their anonymous presence as strong, persistent, and searching: "The muted voices I have always heard, Miwok ghosts, who remain around the redbud branches, following the Merced River to the sea and back, as they search for what they are searching for" (Rose xii). The crimes of colonialism, embedded deep within California's history, resonate for Rose and she yearns for change.

Deborah Miranda also addresses the legacy of colonialism and the emotional inheritance of trauma – the anger, guilt, and shame -- that passes to each subsequent generation. In *Bad Indians,* Miranda reaches back and unabashedly recounts her childhood and her Esselen-Chumash father, a direct descendent whose mission ancestors survived disease, dislocation, starvation, abduction, reservations, massacres and more (Madley 449). Miranda recalls her father's temper and "bad boy" tendencies -- the alcohol, the women, and the rage -- that later led to imprisonment for rape and battery. These she credits to his mission heritage. Miranda illustrates her father's intolerance and rage by recounting the words he spoke to his young son, who wet the bed:

> You want something to cry about? You want the belt?" our father yells, embarrassed by his cowardly son, this son he waited half a lifetime to have, this son who carries on the family name…Flogging. Whipping. Belt. Whatever you call it, this beating, this punishment, is as much a part of our inheritance, our legacy, our culture, as any bowl of acorn mush, any wild salmon filet, pilillis fried and dipped in cinnamon and sugar, cactus fruit in a basket. (34)

Miranda's father inflicts upon his son the same generation-old anger, rage and shame that was inflicted on him. Like his early Esselen and Chumash (mission) ancestors, Miranda's father struggles with emotional residue spurred from civilization. In Miranda's words, "…my father's arm rises and falls in an old, savage rhythm learned from strangers who came with whips and attack dogs, taught us how to raise our children" (Miranda 35). Sadly, the inter-generational transfer of abuse that passes from one generation to the next is a byproduct of colonialism. Although violence and abuse can be justified or lightly reasoned away, the abusive behavior of Miranda's father, seen in the context of Miranda's narratives and commentaries, inspires only sympathy for her father, the abuser, and the unfortunate legacy he inherited. And just as the trauma of anger and abuse followed one Native generation down to the next, so, too, did the label "savage" continue to be passed down in Euro-American Californian society.

The end of missionization did not offer a reprieve for Indigenous Californians. In fact, the discovery of gold and California's new statehood led to the opposite. Trafzer notes that Legislature passed in 1850 "forced California Indians into subordinate legal, political, social, and economic positions, authorized their indenture" (qtd. in Teran 24). According to Jackie Teran in *The Violent Legacies of the California Missions: Mapping the Origins of Native Women's Mass Incarceration* (2016), the purpose of the Legislature was twofold: "to get rid of California Indians and exploit their labor" (24). It also resulted in an atmosphere of "lawlessness" where white men were "the law unto themselves" and violence against Indians, particularly California Indian women, flourished (Teran 24). While the passage of time wrought change for the new state of California, the exploitation of the Indigenous tribes continued.

Miranda illustrates the second-class "savage" class of Natives in a series of letters, written in 1930, by A.P. Ousdal, Doctor of Osteopathy in Santa Barbara, to J.P. Harrington, of the Smithsonian Institute. Ousdal recounts a poverty-stricken patient, Juan Justo, an aged Indian suffering from neglect and severe gangrene. He writes of his work caring for, and x-raying, the aged Native, a task which gives him a disturbing sense of happiness. He alludes to a possible Smithsonian research-exhibit, referencing deceased members of Juan Justo's tribe that could be included in the exhibit. Ousdal writes to J.P., "There are two burial mounds near the city that we ought to excavate; I believe that they are rich in deposits of bones and skulls…I am anxious to compare those skeletons with Juan's – they are of the same tribe" (103)

Neither physician-researcher Ousdal, nor J.P. Harrington, Smithsonian researcher, linguist, ethnologist and a specialist in the native peoples of California, considered Juan Justo part of the Euro-American, *homo-sapiens* group; in fact, they refer to Juan Justo as a "savage," something to be studied and cataloged. Juan Justo's after-life remains, his bones, meant profit for both the osteopath and the researcher -- exploitation in the finest. Ousdal's association with Justo, the poverty-stricken Indian suffering from a serious case of gangrene, was motivated primarily by the premise that the doctor could add Justo to his collection-study of California Indian bones. As Odal writes in a later correspondence to J.P.:

> He (Justo) is improving, but with a gunnysack in the window and a leaky roof. During the rainy season his palace on the dump is not any too inviting. He had to move his bed to the far corner of the shack the other day; to protect himself he has an empty cement bag which he slips over his feet at night beside his regular bed clothes…I was hoping to have his picture in the nude soon. Once I have that, with the headdress you are making up, and your manuscript, my book will be ready for publication. I am hoping that when he wanders with the spirit of his fathers and has no use for his old bones, that they may become the property of the Smithsonian Institution. That has been my aim since I knew the man. (qtd.in Miranda 103)

Jose Justo's case-study illustrates the contemporary (1930) exploitation faced by Indigenous California-Americans. The experience and exploitation of Jose Justo also resonates in Wendy Rose's specimen-collecting poem, "Three Thousand Dollar Death Song." In the poem, Rose almost narrates Justo's plight-to-come, as she describes the degradation of the (seemingly) "non-human" Indigenous remains. Like Miranda, she comments on the plight of Indigenous Americans and the conflict between contemporary science and humanity. In fact, Wendy Rose provides a sort of counter-argument that contrasts with the 1930 correspondence between Dr. Ousdal and J.P. Harrington of the Smithsonian. Through Rose's poetry, readers can feel the emotional pain of the Indian bones, sentenced to a nothingness between death and burial. She

alludes to the collective mind-set of a Euro-American society that refuses to recognize Native Americans as human beings, regardless of their proven human DNA, sinew and bone. After all, to Euro-American society, Indigenous bones were one notch above a circus side-show -- their calcified remains prized objects to be reserved for museums. Therefore, their bones were sentenced to eternal rest under the looking-glass confines of a display case.

In "Three Thousand Dollar Death Song," Rose examines the exploitation of "savage" Indigenous bones for profit. Just as the early California Mission system was dependent on the labor and the lives of Natives to elicit a profit, so, too, were the Scientific Museum Institutions dependent on after-death Indigenous remains. In "Three Thousand Dollar Death Song," Rose begins with an epigraph from a written record: *"*Nineteen American Indian skeletons from Nevada…valued at $3000. – Invoice received at a museum as normal business. 1975*."* In this, Rose comments on the colonialist system that created the artifact, utilizing an impersonal voice that soon evolves, then contrasts with the more emotionally-involved voice that brings her reader to a fine-point brutal awareness of the crime. Robin Riley-Fast in *The Heart as a Drum Continuance and Resistance in American Poetry* (1999), comments on Rose's powerful, yet very focused anger in "Three Thousand Dollar Death Song," an effect that provokes a potential re-definition in society. As Riley-Fast explains, the "poem's body forces a recognition of the bodies and lives of Native peoples, and the horrors that made some of these artifacts "available to collectors" (17)

In the first lines, Rose writes of the cash – the bills, coins, and checks, -- and its impact on *her* Indigenous remains:

> Through my body it is goes
> assessing each nerve, running its edges
> along my arteries, planning ahead
> for whose hands will rip me
> into pieces of dusty red paper,
> whose hands will smooth or smatter me
> into traces of rubble. Invoiced now (10-16)

In the flow of currency, Rose speculates that her Indigenous fate, like that of her ancestors, will be decided by cash. Her body will be separated – bone by Indigenous bone - by an unknown pair of cash-holding, Euro-American hands. Her words illustrate the could-be fate of poor Jose Justo. At the same time, Rose focuses her simmering anger in a manner that inspires change in society (Miranda 102; Riley Fast 17). Boldly, Rose connects the exploitation of her ancestors' bones with the early structures of colonization designed to facilitate domination and submission. She writes, "As we were formed to the white soldier's voice / so we explode under white student's hands" (lines 23-24).

Following Rose's reference to "white soldier's voice" and "white student's hands" (line 24), the reader is thrust into the perspective of the bereft Indian bones, who are, as Riley-Fast comments, "the imagined voices of the dead" (17). From this first-person point of view, the reader can internalize the plight of the bones, mere fractions of an indigenous skeleton whose days of sinew and nerve have long passed. It is a tragic resting place that Rose illustrates:

> Death is a long trail of days
> in our fleshless prison.
> From this distant point
> we watch our bones auctioned
> with our careful quillwork (25-29).

As the aged bones lie in wait, on display for all who care to gaze through the glass, Rose guides her reader farther, to (the Indian's) "shot-down horses" (31), and we are reminded of the earlier white soldiers who "formed" the Indians, and the "students" in whose hands "exploded" Indian bones (24).

It is with abrupt awareness that we continue reading, unable to deny the connection between centuries of colonialism. Rose's accuracy and anger, as well as her power in presenting the crime is thorough and effective; however, the sentencing is unexpected, if not bittersweet. Her words, "Our memory might be catching, you know…" (line 40), changes pace, and amidst the recitation of stolen artifacts – "arrowheads," "dentalgia," and "clam shell beads" – the shift is unmistakable. The reader is suddenly aware of the latent potential of Native American society and culture to rise up once more. In the reference to bones and artifacts marching out of the museum door (line 45), Rose leaves her reader with a little glimpse of hope: maybe the imprisonment *can* come to an end. Maybe the bones *can* be released and reunited with their fragmented skeletal pieces in one final Native burial. After all, they *have* served their time. Rose's final message reverberates with the last line of the poem. With five simple words, the reader is coerced to true understanding and Rose's lesson in humanity is evident: the consequences of colonialization for Indigenous Americans amounted to "a universe of stolen things" (line 55). In this final statement, Rose "redefines margins and centers, both to empower self and community, and to instruct her audience" (Riley-Fast 66).

In "Excavation of Santa Barbara Mission" and "Three Thousand Dollar Death Song" Wendy Rose uses the power of poetry to call attention to the injustices faced by her Californian Indigenous ancestors. In a (2003) *News from California* interview with Margaret Dubin, Wendy Rose comments on the power of words to incite change. She states, "I think the power of poetry lies in the ability of people to focus on it (poetry) and let it (poetry) catalyze change" (Dubin 50). For the reader who discovers the poetry of Wendy Rose -- with its images of bones, trapped and buried in adobe -- the words almost demand change, and justice. In her last comment in the interview, Rose appears to reference both "Excavation of Santa Barbara" and "Three Thousand Dollar Death Song." When prompted to give advice to the next generation of poets, she replies, simply, "Listen to voices. If people have some idea about where they come from, if they go to those places, they can listen for those voices" (Dubin 50). Rose's advice should not be exclusive to poets: We should listen for the voices of the past, and *not* through the confines of a glass display case or crumbling adobe walls. Yet in this lack, comes triumph for Rose, for her poetry has power to catalyze change and re-define her Indigenous California past.

Towards the end of her memoir, Deborah Miranda makes peace with her newly-deceased Esselen-Chumash father, and examines the process of forgiveness, and non-forgiveness. She recounts a day on the beach in Monterey, when she stood with her sister in an impromptu funeral ceremony. As her sister Louise tossed beads into the waves for their father's memory, each sister silently recited a prayer, and a pod of dolphins entered the bay, circling twice (174). It was then that Miranda recollected the man, her father, and whispered, "Take him with you…Take him back. Let him be innocent again" (175). She recounts the coolness that washed over her after the experience. She explains, "That's how I imagine forgiveness feels, when it comes, *if* it comes" (175). Forgiveness -- even the "if" of forgiveness that Miranda references -- is the first step in assimilating the fragments of a past dominated by colonialism into a vibrant, yet accurate, California Indigenous identity.

Through their literary works, *Bad Indians* and *Bone Dance*, Deborah Miranda and Wendy Rose, respectively expose the traumatic past and exploitation of California's Indigenous

population. Their poetry and prose present an image of California's first inhabitants which is contrary to the long-standing, mythological invention of "Bad Indians." Their words serve a crucial need for society by providing an opportunity for California society to heal from a volatile past; from the earliest Missionization and the silent bones of Indians buried in mission walls, to the California Gold Rush and Westward expansion that furthered the myth of the "savage," and, lastly, the subsequent Euro-American profits pocketed in the name of capitalism, a last reminder and remembrance -- taken from the "savage" bones they created. In the end, the words of Miranda and Rose add to California's Indigenous heritage by inspiring change.

Three years after Deborah Miranda published *Bad Indians* (2013) and twenty-two years after Wendy Rose published *Bone Dance* (1994), the remains of "587 prehistoric people and thousands of important artifacts," some of which dated back to the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt, were discovered in a neighborhood ironically called Rose Lane (Sand 2016). They were found in a $55 million-dollar development in the city of Larkspur, north of San Francisco. Although the trove of artifacts unearthed that day could have provided scientists invaluable insight into the prehistoric culture and habits of the Coast Miwoks, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR) objected, stating that the idea that "cultural artifacts belong to the public is a colonial view" (Sand 45). So, instead, the venerated artifacts were quietly returned to their resting place, in a reflection of the changing power of Native Tribes in California society. It is also a reflection of the continuing legacy of Native California writers, Rose and Miranda, whose words continue to inspire the creation of a new and empowered California Indigenous identity. One fragment at a time.

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