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Agencies at War: Marshaling Places, Objects, and Sonorities in the Alta California Missions

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Agencies at War

Marshaling Places, Objects and Sonorities in the Alta California Missions

Naomi Sussman, Advisor Ernesto Capello

4/15/2012

1769, Spanish Franciscan Junípero Serra initiated the missionization of Alta California. To transform California into a Spanish territory, Franciscan missions evangelized indigenous peoples. While traditional Alta California mission histories emphasize either Franciscan abuses or saintliness, reifying Native American subordination, most contemporary scholarship accentuates mutual hybridization but minimizes colonial power dynamics. Through archival and secondary research, this thesis argues that spatial interplay expressed neither syncretization nor unadulterated domination, but instead competing agencies within a physical and social “contact zone.” In this Alta Californian “contact zone,” material and sonic culture reinforced the continuous struggle for authority in the missions.



Mission Santa Barbara. Image by Author.

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Introductions

As we were becalmed, the Indians fulfilled their desire to treat with us. With all of them before us, they got together in twenty-one canoes, which according to the Count contained in all about 150 Indians, all corpulent and robust, even the more elderly; there were two canoes filled with women and some small children that they carried at the breast, and the elderly. The women are good-looking, and in their mouths they have a bar that looks like a lip, of painted conch shell, that is affixed to a piercing in the lower lip, which is very ugly... In a big canoe, 14 or 15 arm lengths long, came one man posing as Captain with twenty-two Indians, accompanied by music of tambourine and drums, all of them dancing and shouting... I asked them a thousand times if we could anchor but they didn't understand me; their responses seemed to say that there was much to eat, and drink, that some of our people should go to land, and they begged us to come in their canoes. Two of them came aboard to whom we gave bread and cheese. It was a very enjoyable afternoon... We longed to mount a cross on this stop but the time didn't allow for it.¹

-Don Esteban José Martínez of the Frigate Santiago Alias the Nueva Galicia Alta California, 20-21 July, 1774

¹ Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Guadalajara 516:58 ("Diary of the Frigate Santiago Alias the Nueva Galicia, 20-21 July, 1774) ("Como nos quedamos en calma tubieron los Yndios logrados su deseo de tratar con nosotros conellos, entodo el resto delatando se juntaron veintey un canoas que según Conté había en todas como ciento y cinquenta Yndios, todos corpulentos y robustos aun los de maior edad; dos conoas llenas de Mugerres, y algunos muchachos pequeños que traian de el Pecho, y maiores; las mujeres son vien parecidas traian en la boca una tablilla que parecía labio, de una concha pintada, el labio de abajo lo tienen aguxercado donde se afirman la tablilla, cosa mui fea... en una canoa grande de 14 a 15 de codos venia uno representandose...Capitan con veinte y dos Yndios, con música de Pandero y Sorraja, bailando y gritando todos... Yo les hize mil preguntas afin si podiamos fondear pero no me entendieron, y sus respuestas hieran decir que había mucho que comen, y Veber, que nos fueros a tierra algunos de los de nuestra jente se entraron en sus canoas los obsequieron mucho, y de ellos vinieron dos aborde a quienes se les regaló Pan y Queso; fue tarde mui gustosa... siempre entrabamos con la Esperanza de Montar la Cruz de Christo en este paraxe pero el tiempo no pribo de este deseo como se ira adelante.")

The passage above captures the prevailing themes of the many missionary and explorer diaries detailing early Franciscan expeditions to Alta California, the territory spanning from San Diego to Monterey. Don Martínez remarks on indigenous music, dress, boatcraft, framing the entire “enjoyable afternoon” in paternalistic expectation. According to the account, the interaction began when the Californians “fulfilled their desire” to treat with the Spanish; later, interpreting gesture and a language he did not understand, Martínez conjectures that the Indians begged the Spanish to land and partake of food and drink. The music is less song than “shouting;” the women’s lip piercing, which “is very ugly,” spoils their good looks. Martínez’s observations suggest that the Native Californians sought—even invited—Spanish colonialism, enacted and symbolized by the cross the expedition longed to mount.

Alta California mission historiography traditionally interprets these sorts of accounts in one of two extreme veins, both of which date almost from the missions’ founding. The most mainstream perspective, initially propagated by the missionaries themselves, celebrates the tone of benevolent tolerance illustrated in the passage above and the years of guidance that followed. The other extreme, initiated not by indigenous Californians—whose voices have been largely excluded from the traditional record—but by colonial competitors, denounces the Franciscan missions as exploitive and oppressive institutions who, like Martínez, manipulated indigenous voices to justify their enslavement.² Ironically, in the 1890s, after decades of neglect, the state of California reappropriated the Alta

²James P. Rawls, “The California Mission as Symbol and Myth,” *California History*, Vol. 71, No. 3, Indians of California (Fall, 1992), 343.

California Missions as symbols of a glorious past. Like the Franciscans before them, academic curriculums portrayed indigenous Californians much as Martínez does in the above account: as humble, ignorant creatures easily bought with bread and cheese.³ On the contrary, disparaging early nineteenth-century rhetoric resurfaces today in scholarship addressing the violations that Native Californians experienced at the hands of the Franciscans.⁴ Both perspectives indicate historiographical trends that reinforce ongoing colonial projects.

Beyond the evident self-interest motivating these accounts, which reconfigure the Californian space into places favorable to the author, both extreme perspectives actually perpetuate oppressive colonial traditions. The first view reduces California natives to uncivilized inferiors, evoking their savagery with material and sonic indicators such as the “ugly” lip piercing or wild “shouting” in the passage above. The second propagates the lament for the “vanishing Indian,” or, as Matthew Restall dubs it, “native desolation,” a myth that ostensibly mourns indigenous devastation even as it discredits contemporary Native Americans and obscures indigenous agency both in the past and in present.⁵

Scholars reacting to these models, such as James Sandos in his book *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the California* (2004),⁶ excavate indigenous agency by accentuating hybridization. This trajectory echoes

³ Rawls, “The California Mission as Symbol and Myth,” 354-356. For further discussion of constructed, romantic histories, see Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁴ Rawls, “The California Mission as Symbol and Myth,” 358.

⁵ Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

⁶ James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

broader indigenous studies such as Richard White's "middle ground" model, which posits that initial altercations eventually produced a tempered, syncretic community.⁷ He dubs the process of interaction and moderation the "middle ground," or a hybrid conceptual space in which two disparate cultures grapple with and accommodate each other. According to White, both groups seek congruencies (real or imagined) between the disparate cultures in order to comprehend and facilitate the relationship. Thus, although Native Americans and European missionaries acted within an unequal power structure, both contributed to the new hybrid culture. This analytical framework elucidates distinct native agencies and emphasizes their continuing contribution in modern culture.⁸ However, this model goes too far in the other direction—White is so intent on redistributing colonial agency that he minimizes the power dynamics implicit in colonial structures.

Rather than representing the products of a teleology of syncretization, the California missions were characterized by uneasy coexistence, with actors achieving "middle grounds" at most on an individual and tenuous basis. Indeed, in this thesis, I will argue that aural, material, and above all spatial interplay expressed not an erasure of difference, but instead competing agencies and constant negotiation within a colonial "contact zone." This concept of a "contact zone," defined by Mary Louise Pratt as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of

⁷ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 50-53.

⁸ See the introduction of White's *The Middle Ground*.

power,” acknowledges the inequity and violence implicit in colonialism.⁹ Within this space, however, indigenous peoples can still express agency through the process of “transculturation,” or the selective appropriation of mechanisms of the dominant in order to pursue traditional native agendas.¹⁰ Although Native Californians could not forestall the imposition of Spanish culture, they could determine to what extent they incorporated these cultural attributes, and, most importantly, how they used them. Thus, indigenous people deployed Spanish cultural tools to assert their own agency.¹¹ By foregrounding the moment of “contact,” which was continually duplicated throughout the colonial period, Pratt emphasizes the tense, improvisational interaction between colonizer and colonized, rather than a monolithic domination or hybridization narrative.¹² Over time, the character and tools of the Spanish and indigenous actors changed, but their driving motivations remained distinct.

Although the social spaces Pratt describes are intangible, the “contact zone” also encompasses a real physical place: the indigenous pre-Contact landscape, the Eurochristian landscape, and the physical site of confrontation within the Missions themselves. In this tangible “contact zone,” which comprises a key element of my analysis, it is not a unified, hybrid conception of place, but rather the competition *between* various places, that defines the space. Consequently, within the shared white walls of the mission compound, spatial

⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (USA: Routledge, 1992) 7

¹⁰ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6. Pratt owes her discussion of “transculturation” to Fernando Ortiz; for further discussion of this concept, see his work *Cuban Counterpart: Tobacco and Sugar* (London: Duke University Press, 2003)

¹¹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6.

¹² Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7.

constructions abounded and battled for supremacy; indigenous and Spanish actors fought to assert dominion over not only the social status quo, but also the place in which it manifested. These objectives reinforced each other, shaping the trajectory of material, sonic, and spatial custom in the missions.

Structure and Theoretical Framework

My thesis demonstrates that the Alta California missions comprised not syncretic “middle grounds” but “contact zones” by drawing upon place theory, material culture studies, and sonic culture analysis. The scholarship surrounding these fields abounds in post-modern historiography. Although I will elucidate these theoretical foundations further in the chapters that follow, a brief survey here provides a basis for comprehending the production of a competitive “contact zone” during and after contact.

The first chapter asks how the California missions themselves embodied the “contact zone,” or physical spaces imbued with sociocultural significance. In order to respond to this question of place, which informs the two following chapters, Chapter 1 will first introduce the theoretical underpinnings of meaningful space, referencing contemporary scholarship considering spatial rationalizations both within and beyond colonial contexts. Because space is socially constructed—although, of course, impacted by geographic reality—the power to define spatial significance consequently permits dominant actors to define centers of power and meaning. A struggle over place therefore comprises a

battle to direct the values and culture articulated in and articulating a space.¹³ European colonizers thus sought to reconfigure the Alta California landscape into a climate germane to Eurochristian values.

This discussion of place hinges not only on space but also a question of time. Walter Mignolo's book, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* (1995), investigates the influence of a Western "denial of coevalness," or the endemic belief that the Americas were static, empty, unconceptualized spaces pre-Contact, on Latin American society. Because the "denial of coevalness" remains a driving thread throughout colonial history and into the present day, the often-disjointed narrative of Spanish conquest actually presents a coherent Eurocentric lineage.¹⁴ Many concepts articulated in the nineteenth century, such as social evolution, existed in nascent form much earlier; indigenous spatial rationalizations, presumably sacrificed to civil progress, persisted and coexisted with European place.

Consequently, Europeans did not, as traditional scholarship suggests, innovate a universal or objective vision of space in the nineteenth century. Rather, in the sixteenth century, colonial dissociation of the ethnic center (or "locus of enunciation") and the geometric center (or "locus of observation") "created the illusion that a universal, objective, and nonethnic observer was possible."¹⁵ Instead of eradicating other ethnic centers, Spanish colonists marginalized them,

¹³ Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) 3.

¹⁴ Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*, 2nd Edition (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003) 257-258.

¹⁵ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 227, 233.

dismissing the now-peripheral cultures as hierarchically backward. Accordingly, Mignolo argues, “integration by conversion meant, precisely, moving people from the savage margins to the civilized center, and the idea of identifying the margins with the past began to emerge.”¹⁶ This variation of nineteenth-century ethnic rankings, or “comparative ethnology,” persisted into the eighteenth-century and beyond, permitting the Franciscans colonizing Alta California to envision the territory as an empty, marginal, or backwards space susceptible to “progressive” territorial representation, where the Spanish transmuted different spatial conceptualization into fundamentally different values. As Mignolo contends, Native Americans conversely comprehended the encounter not as a primary rationalization of a previously empty space, but rather a foreign incursion on and occupation of an extant place.¹⁷ This background sets the stage for a struggle that, although silenced or ignored by traditional historiography, allowed indigenous cosmographies to coexist with European ones.

In the first chapter, I contextualize this spatial theory in the multifaceted Spanish colonial situation, particularly examining the fissures within the ubiquitous dual objectives of Hispanicization and evangelization. This brief political history frames the missionaries’ distinct conception of place, which follows. Both the historical context and visions of the New World unique to the missionaries determined the special character of the California missions. Because Alta California missionization occurred during a period of administrative modernization known as the Bourbon Reforms, the divide between religious and

¹⁶ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 247.

¹⁷ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 254.

political objectives blurred, producing a particularly complex agenda and attitude toward indigenous Californians. These Native Americans, who of course inhabited their own idea of the California landscape, in turn considered the Spanish explorers within traditional cosmographies. The chapter traces the competition of these varied spatial constructions, a struggle that continued throughout the mission period as the Franciscans tentatively misappropriated indigenous spiritual spaces. This context provides an essential backdrop to the following chapters, which examine how sonic and material culture constituted and articulated place—and how indigenous peoples inverted missionary superimpositions.

The second chapter explores how material culture determined first impressions, justified colonization, and provided opportunities for indigenous agency within the mission space. Franciscans employed ranking systems derivative of the aforementioned comparative ethnology to evaluate Native Californian material culture, characterize Alta California as a marginal, thus morally empty, space, and therewith legitimate Spanish colonial activity. These hierarchies are especially evident in discussions of exchange. As Marcel Mauss's work *The Gift* (1967) demonstrates, not only did the Franciscans privilege proto-market economies over gifting economies, but this preference continues today.¹⁸ According to these prognostications, gifting societies, which emphasize the connection between society, individual, and object, are inferior to market economies, which dissociate commodity and individual. This separation, like the

¹⁸ James G. Carrier, "Exchange," in the *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. By Chris Tilley, et al. (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2006/2009) 373.

distinction sixteenth-century cartographers drew between geometric and ethnic center, allows the illusion of objective choice in a market economy, as opposed to the obligation that dictates giving and reciprocity in a gifting society.¹⁹ In order to “civilize” Native Californians, Franciscans therefore had to move them from the gifting “margins” to the market “center” by introducing Eurochristian materiality within the missions. This ranking legitimized the Spanish colonial transformation of the Californian landscape via introduction and substitution of Western templates, and appropriation of indigenous symbols and skills. However, as a manifestation and articulation of native spatial rationalizations, ignored or concealed though it was, indigenous material culture competed and coexisted with Spanish alternatives. Franciscan misappropriation further guaranteed this continuing presence in the California missions. Kent Lightfoot, the premier contemporary scholar of colonial Californian material culture, similarly illuminates indigenous agency through their maintained use of objects, both in the Alta California missions and in Northern Californian Russian settlements.²⁰

Similarly, as evidenced by Kristin Mann’s *The Power of Song: Music and Dance in the Mission Communities of Northern New Spain, 1590-1810* (2010) and Craig Russell’s *From Serra to Sancho: Music and Pageantry in the California Missions* (2009), the Franciscans assessed indigenous civility by examining native sonic cultures and employed sound as a civilizing medium throughout colonization. However, while these works approach music in the missions, both

¹⁹ Carrier, “Exchange,” 373-374.

²⁰ Kent Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants: the Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004)

authors minimize the possibilities of further sonic analysis. Further, although Mann explores indigenous agency, Russell's book comprises a musicological analysis of mission composers, investigating the influence of the choirmasters rather than the reciprocal power of native musicians. In contrast, my final chapter foregrounds Mary Louise Pratt's concept of transculturation to discuss the ways in which native actors, in turn, selectively adapted elements of Eurochristian sonic culture to reinforce indigenous agendas. The analysis follows three axes of competition. The first examines the overt sonic—and, transitively, spatial—confrontations in initial encounters. In these early moments, musical and sonic exchange exhibit primary Spanish efforts to impose Eurochristian sonorities on the California landscape—and responding assertions of indigenous dominion over the land. Although, as I will demonstrate, this competition persisted in the mission space, the ways Native Californians and Franciscans struggled for authority over California evolved. The second axis addresses the more covert interplay of authority and subversion that characterized the mission period “contact zone.” As the Franciscans coaxed Native Californians into language lessons, attempted to curb indigenous spirituality, and delimited the parameters of Spanish Catholic space through characteristic sounds, the neophytes perpetuated their culture through strategic silence, spatial inversion and outright rebellion. Through the complementary process of transculturation, which the third axis highlights, neophytes enacted other forms of agency, appropriating Spanish sonic mechanisms to assert their own agendas. Together, these three chapters demonstrate that the California missions were not syncretic spaces, but instead

“contact zones” defined by the ongoing battle over the meaning of a place evoked through distinct sounds and objects.

Introduction to Actors and Sources

In 1769, just two years after the Jesuits’ expulsion from the Americas, the Council of the Indies (the Spanish colonial administrative body) authorized the Franciscan order to establish missions in Alta California. Junípero Serra, the zealous Mallorcan-born president of the Californian missions, initiated colonization with a Mission and Presidio San Diego. A central road, El Camino Real, linked his twenty-one mission legacy, positioned near water sources, arable land, and—most importantly—adjacent to large indigenous populations.²¹ Because the missions rimmed New Spain’s northwestern fringes, they had a triple imperative: (1) to transform indigenous populations into Spanish Catholic citizens; (2) to support military operations in the area; and (3) to protect against Russian encroachment. These prerogatives endured until the secularization of Alta California in the 1830s. Consequently, the California missions, unlike other Franciscan establishments, were formed semi-permanently, with sturdy physical edifices designed to last.²² California Mission architecture thus encompassed the requisite church, agricultural land, dormitories and satellite villages, schools, smithies, and carpentry shops.

Junípero Serra guided regional colonization from its inception in 1769 until his death in 1784. After several years advocating Spanish extension into Alta

²¹ John Koegel, “Spanish and French Mission Music in Colonial North America,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 126:1 (2001): 36.

²² Antoinette J. Lee, “Spanish Missions,” *APT Bulletin* 22:3 (1990): 44.

California, the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 permitted the culmination of his dream: Jose de Gálvez, the Visitador General of New Spain, bequeathed the Baja California missions to the Franciscans and engaged their movement into Alta California. In 1769, Serra joined the fourth overland expedition to San Diego, the first of a triumvirate commissioned in 1769 (the order completed the others, Monterrey's Mission San Carlos and the San Buenaventura Mission on the Santa Barbara Channel, in the following thirteen years, along with four additional missions spanning the distance between Monterrey and San Diego.)²³ His diaries from this expedition, examined in Chapter 3, reflect the directorial vision of Alta California's mission president and capture the timbre and expectations of the missions' first fifteen years. His correspondence, which straddles the realms of temporal and evangelical power, reflects the close, if occasionally tenuous relationship between the Bourbon viceregency and the Franciscan order during this period. Although Serra feuded with the governors of California, the Alta California colonization comprised a joint religious and socio-economic venture prompted as much by territorial interests as missionary zeal.²⁴

Jose de Cañizares, a young pilot, Miguel Costanzó, a civil engineer, and Esteban José Martinez, also a pilot, were non-religious participants in the first expeditions to Alta California. In 1768, Russia intensified her southward advance

²³ Maynard Geiger, "Fray Junípero Serra: Organizer and Administrator of the Upper California Missions, 1769-1784," in *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Sep., 1963): 195-203.

²⁴ Kristin Dutcher Mann, *The Power of Song: Music and Dance in the Mission Communities of Northern New Spain, 1590-1810* (California: Stanford University Press and The Academy of American Franciscan History, 2010) 158-59.

and galvanized New Spain to “put a lid on all the west coast of California.”²⁵ Visitador General Galvez consequently commissioned the “First expedition” to Alta California. This mission, which constituted an overland company and a maritime company, departed Villacatá in 1769 in order to construct California’s colonial “ladder,” with the foot resting in San Diego and an apex in Monterrey. Costanzó accompanied the sea expedition, mapping the coast and describing its inhabitants, while Cañizares initially chronicled the land journey to San Diego before taking to sea.²⁶ Martínez acted as second officer and a records keeper on a journey north exploring the Alta California coast—and Russian activity there. These three actors represent non-Franciscan Spanish perspectives, and Chapters 2 and 3 rely extensively on their diaries. All of them recorded their own observations and corroborated the missionary accounts written by Fray Juan Crespi, Serra’s Mallorcan colleague and the early official expedition record-keeper.²⁷

Another actor who informs my thesis is Franciscan Narciso Durán. Born in 1776 in Cataluña, Spain, Padre Narciso Durán assumed jurisdiction of Mission San Jose in 1806. During his twenty-seven year sojourn there, Durán acted as pastor, choral master, and eventually, Mission President. As an ecclesiastical leader and royalist during the tumultuous years of the Mexican Revolution (1810-

²⁵ José de Cañizares, Virginia E. Thickens, and Margaret Mollins, “Putting a Lid on California: An Unpublished Diary of the Portolá Expedition,” *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Jun., 1952):110.

²⁶ Cañizares, Thickens, and Mollins, “Putting a Lid on California,” 110-115.

²⁷ Brown, *A Description of Distant Roads*, 51-53.

1820s), he conflicted with the new government.²⁸ The document discussed in Chapter 3, a choirbook published in 1813, constitutes Durán's legacy.²⁹ The most important compiler of mission music in Alta California, his innovative system for teaching native neophytes sacred European music reflects his position purveying Eurochristian sonorities. His flexibility with the tonal system, which diverges from Serra's rigid aesthetic morality, embodies his ambivalence toward his pupils. In the choirbook's preface, Durán disclaims to his Spanish audience his simplification and alteration of Gregorian chant by announcing that since he writes neither for experts "nor even for serious students, but instead for some unskilled Indians," his modifications comprise not a moral perversion but instead a necessary accommodation for unimportant Indians.³⁰ However, his willingness to compromise alternatively suggests transcultural negotiation with his indigenous choristers, a flexibility toward Native Californian needs that eventually transformed his choir into one of the most capable ensembles in California.³¹

In 1812, the Council of the Indies commanded Mission President José Señán to distribute a survey, known as *Preguntas y Respuestas* or the *Interrogatorio*, to the Alta California Franciscans in order to evaluate regional progress in the dual objective of evangelization and Hispanicization.³² Señán directed thirty-six probing questions to all established Alta California Missions,

²⁸ Francis Price and Narciso Durán, "Letters of Narciso Durán: From the Manuscript Collections in the California Historical Society Library," in *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Jun., 1958): 98-99.

²⁹ Craig Russell, *From Serra to Sancho: Music and Pageantry in the California Missions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 32-39.

³⁰ Russell, *From Serra to Sancho*, Appendix C-8-9.

³¹ Price and Durán, "Letters of Narciso Durán," 99.

³² Maynard Geiger, Introduction to *As the Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries, 1813-1815*, translated by Maynard Geiger and Clement W. Meighan (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library, 1976) 1.

and over the next two years the padres provided complete, frequently thoughtful reflections on their lives with indigenous Californians. Discussions of sound, place, and material culture permeate the accounts. Although Señán received his responses in 1815, he probably never forwarded them back to Spain; New Spanish rebellion in 1810 and the 1820s limited contact between Alta California and the Council of the Indies.³³ In 1812, when Señán issued the survey, the Spanish monarchy still smarted from Padre Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla's failed central New Spanish revolt (1810-1811)—initially supported by native neophytes and creoles in collusion with their church leader.³⁴

The tensions of rebellion manifest in some of the questions featured in the survey. In question 5, for example, Señán asks, “Do they have any attraction or love for the Europeans or Americans [that is, Creoles] or do they manifest hate or complain? And if so, what is the nature of these complaints?”³⁵ This question clearly references the grievances and actors that spawned the 1810 rebellion, pitting Creoles against peninsular Spaniards. Long-standing fissures between these two classes of *gente de razon* (literally, “rational people,” the habitual colonial term for whites) gaped under the Bourbon Reforms, which actively privileged peninsular Spanish over Creoles. However, Alta California's distance from the interior mostly removed the missions from the fracture experienced in the capitol. In sharp relief from the turmoil characterized the period elsewhere, the missionaries reported only that “Neither our neophytes nor the pagan Indians

³³ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 1-2.

³⁴ Hugh M. Hamill, Jr., “Early Psychological Warfare in the Hidalgo Revolt,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (May, 1961), pp. 206-235.

³⁵ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 29

distinguish or know Europeans from Americans. By them all are called *gente de razón*.”³⁶ While the question of revolution is certainly important, Alta Californian missionization exhibits more continuity with colonial past than fracture.

Although written indigenous accounts are few and far between, Pablo Tac and Fernando Librado provide unusually rich commentaries on indigenous past and experience in the missions. As this thesis aims to highlight indigenous agency in the Alta California missions, my analysis would not be complete without them. While the two indigenous actors discussed in this work, Fernando Librado and Pablo Tac, led very different lives, both experienced the intermediate and late mission periods and both left written accounts. Fernando Librado was a Chumash man and musician born into the San Buenaventura Mission community sometime between 1804 and 1820. His oral record of his life, told to anthropologist John P. Harrington between 1913 and 1915, reveals that he spent many years in the pre-secularization mission system.³⁷ The Chumash occupied the coastal region of Central California, particularly along the Santa Barbara Channel; the majority of the tribe migrated or was forcibly removed to the missions between 1786 and 1803.³⁸ This account reveals the persistence of indigenous culture, missionary abuses, indigenous resistances, and Native Californian feelings about the colonization.

³⁶ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 29.

³⁷ Travis Hudson, Introduction to *Breath of the Sun: Life in Early California as Told by a Chumash Indian, Fernando Librado, to John P. Harrington*, by Fernando Librado and recorded by John P. Harrington (Ventura, California: Malki Museum Press and Ventura County Historical Fund, 1979), x.

³⁸ Larson, Johnson, and Michaelson, “Missionization among the Coastal Chumash,” 263.

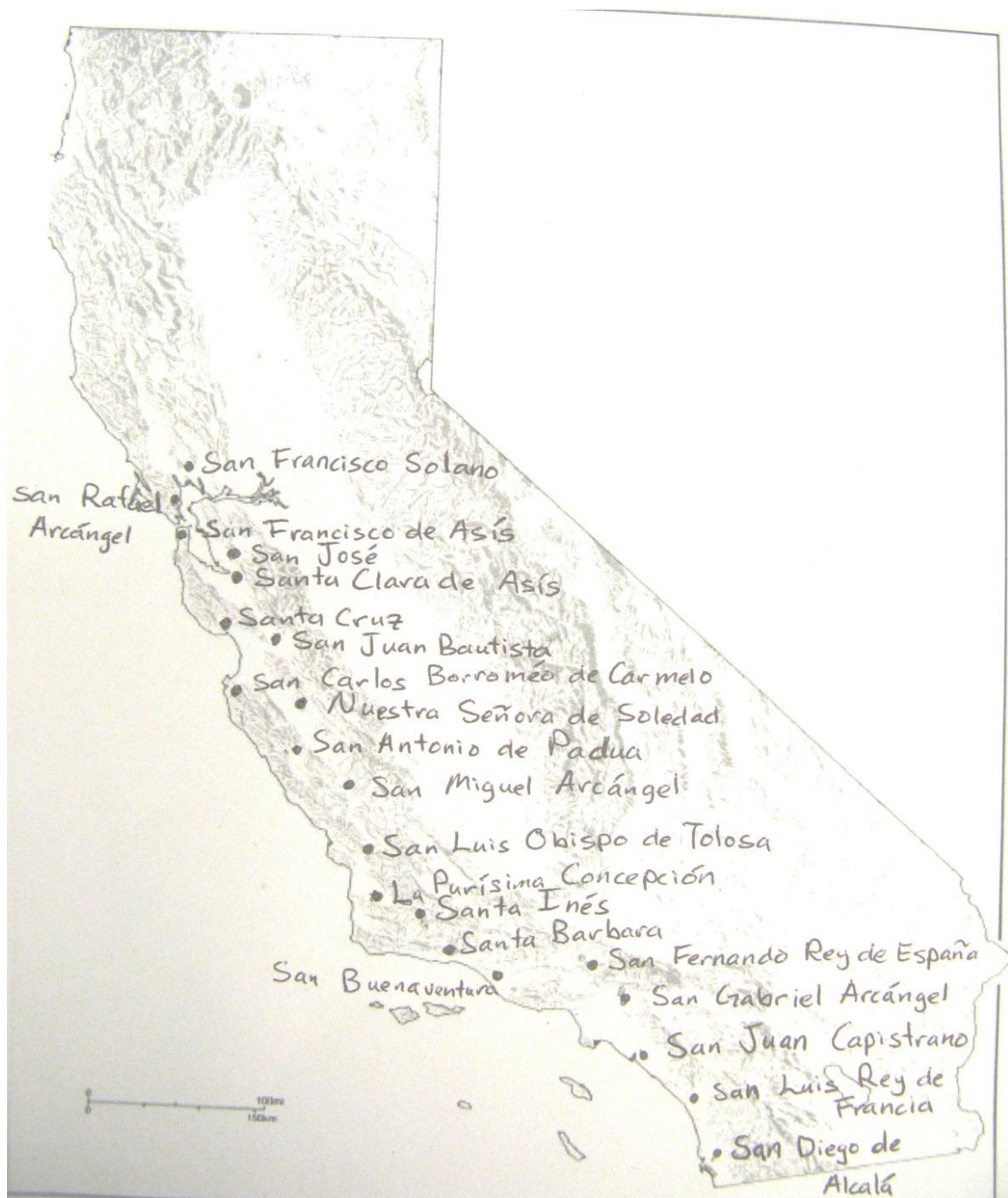
Pablo Tac, a Luiseño man whose people originated in the stretch of coast spanning from southern Los Angeles area to northern San Diego, was born at Mission San Luis Rey de Francia in 1822. A promising student and violinist, Tac eventually accompanied an embittered Fray Antonio Peyri to Rome in 1832, after the mission was secularized. Between 1834 and his early death in 1841, he studied Latin at Rome's Urban College and was eventually destined for a missionary education himself. During these years, Tac wrote a history of the Luiseño people—their traditions, their conversion, and their life under the missionaries—and began a dictionary of his native language. These works provide detailed descriptions of Luiseño connections to the land, sonic and material culture, and circumspect reflections on the colonization of California.³⁹

* * *

Recently I visited Mission Santa Barbara. Wandering the grounds and mission complex, exploring the museum and church, I was struck by the both the varied mix of visitors—locals attending Sunday mass, Latinos celebrating their history, a wedding party on the lawn out front—and the way that the mission portrayed its history. Explanatory material acknowledged the role of indigenous peoples in mission life, a nod to the diversification of contemporary scholarship, but suggested that native neophytes freely *chose* mission membership. According to the promotional video, the missions attracted neophytes by promising to improve their standards of life. Teaching agriculture, masonry, and smithing—the attributes of a sedentary life—thus apparently “saved” indigenous lives, even as

³⁹ Pablo Tac, Minna and Gordon Hewes, “Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey,” *The Americas*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Jul., 1952): 87-90.

the missionaries saved their souls. The tourists' presence corroborated the missions' iconographic role in California history; the entrance fee supported the preservation of a West-centric colonial narrative. The gift shop, which featured few books about the native Chumash and none at all by indigenous writers, sold strings of glass "miracle" beads bearing striking resemblance to those distributed at contact. These colonial legacies, which I discuss further in the conclusion, propel an ongoing "denial of coevalness." Clearly, the history of the missions, today emblematic of California statehood, continues to inform the present.



21 California Missions, 1769-1834

Chapter 1

The 1769 encounter between the Spanish and indigenous Californians initiated a struggle between conceptualizations of place that spanned the mission period. Although the colonists and the natives existed side by side in the missions, the meanings that they assigned to that space—and the methods by which they assigned meaning—differed enormously. Caught within false congruencies, shaped by mutually incomprehensible backgrounds, both the Spanish and the Native Californians fought to preserve their ways of life. Of course, their stakes varied: as the Franciscans struggled to reproduce Eurochristian spatial rationalization on foreign soil, Native Californian place fell under siege. However, Franciscan incursions did not eradicate native cosmographies; Spanish superimpositions did not fill a meaningless void. Instead, even as the Spanish disrupted the original hallmarks of indigenous place, Native Californians realized traditional spatial rationalizations through new media; the very objects and sounds realizing Eurochristian cosmographies sustained indigenous ones. As Serge Gruzinski's discussion of vision and image suggests, the Spanish interruption of the pre-Contact landscape made place fluid—significance settled on “ritualistic inventions, a set of gestures, and sounds,” and material things that recalled and reinforced indigenous cosmographies.¹

The following chapter explores the varied perceptions of place presaging the Franciscan penetration of California, relying on secondary source material to illuminate the period and the actors. The first section introduces place theory,

¹ Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492-2019)*, trans. Heather MacLean (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001) 184.

particularly relying on Doreen Massey's work *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994). Next I examine the tension between political and religious visions of the New World; third I consider the particular ideologies shaping missionary expectations. The fourth section inspects how missionaries appropriated space and the confusion resulting from layering disparate significances upon the same site. Finally, the fifth section establishes Californian cosmographies in relation to broader Native American traditions.

The Theory of Place

According to Richard Kagan, "place" is a physical space imbued with meaning, "the locus where memory, history, and collective experience intertwine."² Rather than a static, unchanging "reality" of geographical features and objective observation, place is socially constructed, produced by the viewer. However, nor is it a purely determined factor: the space itself influences the societies that visualize it—the Chumash Land of the Dead partly inhabited the West because the Pacific Ocean made its shores unreachable by worldly means alone.³ Space therefore abounds in a simultaneous multiplicity of places; it is fluid and adaptable.⁴ Thus, when historical actors attempted to "institute horizons," to define and codify the parameters of a space, "to secure the identity of places," they sought to establish favorable significance to the spaces they inhabited. In terms of colonialism, native and Spanish groups struggled for the power to

² Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World*, 16-17.

³ Brian D. Haley and Larry R. Wilcoxon, "Point Conception and the Chumash Land of the Dead: Revisions from Harrington's Notes," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1999), 213.

⁴ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 3.

determine the meaning attributed to a place—and thus the physical and cosmographical boundaries of the interaction.⁵

Missions comprised the physical arenas of a battle for authority, the tangible space of the “contact zone” defined by the struggle to enact distinct spatial realities. In order to understand how Franciscans and Native Californians competed, and how their conceptions of place manifested and interacted within the very objects and sounds that defined them—the quality of competition and double-vision that characterized the California missions—we must first explore how the Spanish and California Indians conceived of place separately. This chapter will certainly not provide a comprehensive portrait of all Spanish or Native Californian actors. Rather, it will elucidate the general conceptual underpinnings and ambiguities of the Spanish colonial project, Franciscan variations, and certain indigenous Californian worldviews including those of the Luiseño, Miwok and Chumash peoples. The Franciscans incorporated concepts such as *Dominus Orbis* and the Patronato, which linked temporal and religious authority and imperative, and the Satanic/innocent dialectic, which bound a specific terrain to contradictory spiritual maxims.

Native Californians similarly related spiritual knowledge executed in powerful sites to material wealth, sonic leadership, and political authority; they too organized their cosmography into a hierarchy of planes. However, they used different methods to imbue a space with significance, and their spatial and cosmological hierarchies did not articulate a rigid dichotomy of good and evil,

⁵ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 5.

heaven and hell, Satan and G-d. Rather, negative and positive tendencies coexisted and formulated each other.⁶ These disparate conceptions of space and time became especially apparent in the grey areas between the Christian dialectic that seemed most congruous with native cosmographies, such as purgatory. While Catholics understood purgatory as a stop on the teleology culminating in redemption or damnation, a location on a linear road, native neophytes slotted it into the cyclic temporality/spatiality of ancestor worship. Instead, the dead lingered palpably in specific physical sites, interacting with the living and eventually experiencing rebirth.⁷ The next sections engage these distinctions between Eurochristian and indigenous Californian cosmographies.

Spanish Place: Religious and Political Skirmishes

The Spanish envisioned the “New World” in relation to a world organized around the focal point of the West and the Holy See, the physical seat of Catholicism. This basic duality between religion and state, intimately linked though the two were, produced a multidimensional concept of the Americas even without considering indigenous spaces. From the outset, the Spanish narrowly delineated the “New World” as a simultaneous extension of the Spanish royal territory and Christendom itself. The consequent interplay between religious and political authority created indeterminable shades of place in the minds of the Spanish colonists themselves. Immediately prior to the first advances into the “New World,” the Holy See popularized the concept of *Dominus Orbis*. This idea

⁶ William B. Taylor *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-century Mexico*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996, 50.

⁷ Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 50-60.

maintained that the pope was not only a religious authority, but also the universal emperor of the world—a figure with temporal power as well. This power extended to non-Christian spaces inhabited by unknown non-European populations. Although this concept was already fading in 1493, its centralization of papal power legitimized Pope Alexander VI's territorial donation in the Alexandrian Bulls. Between 1491 and 1493, Pope Alexander VI ratified a series of bulls dividing the New World between the “Catholic Princes” of Spain and Portugal. This legislation determined and justified the physical limits of colonialism, and made temporal expansion contingent upon evangelization. However, the subsequent Treaty of Tordesillas between Portugal and Spain modified Alexander's provisions, and consequently threw papal dominance into question. The New World was thus fundamentally a space defined by both religious and political criteria, in which neither unequivocally attained predominance.

In 1508, Pope Alexander VI's subsequent ratification of the “Patronato” amplified the conflation of political and religious vision of the new territories. By this right, the Spanish Monarchy could select the members of the higher clergy in the New World and control missionary migration. A series of later laws eventually ceded Spain the religious administration of the New World via the Council of the Indies. This legislation set Spain apart—alone of the Catholic kingdoms, the Spanish Monarchy shaped the manifestations and character of Christendom in the New World. The Monarchy's singular control made the

Americas a privileged and unique space, one administered politically and religiously by a temporal body.

Throughout the sixteenth century, missionaries, colonists, and the monarchy continued negotiating the relative power of religious and temporal authorities, framing the debate within questions of indigenous humanity. In 1511 Santo Domingo, Fray Antonio de Montesinos articulated this tension in a series of sermons rebuking the *encomenderos* for utilizing Indian slave labor. Pope Alexander had ratified the Iberian dominion of the Americas in exchange for the New World's evangelization, Montesinos argued. The legitimacy of the conquest was contingent on the humanity, and thus the convertibility, of the native population.⁸ However, these arguments also subverted royal and settler interests in the mercantilist exploitation of the "New World". By invoking the personhood of the Native Americans, Montesinos asserted an ecclesiastical claim over Native American bodies—and thus deprived his competitors, the *encomenderos*, labor essential to colonial expansion.

These tensions between economic and religious agendas persisted. Montesinos's sermons spurred Bartolomé de las Casas's passionate outcry against colonial maltreatment in 1514. Las Casas, a Dominican friar, argued that indigenous people, contrary to the desires of exploitive conquistadors, Native Americans were neither naturally servile nor obligated to labor for private individuals. His landmark work *De Unico Vocationis Modo Omnium Infidelium ad Veram Religionem* (1530) advocated peaceful evangelization and eventually

⁸ Luciano Pereña, *La idea de justicia en la conquista de América*, (Madrid: Mapfre 1992) 16.

led to his participation in the 1542 hearings surrounding the “New Laws of the Indies.” The “New Laws of the Indies” represented the culmination of sixteenth century religious-political skirmishes; they attempted not only to cement the legal rights of Indians, but also to codify the relationship between religious and temporal authorities. The subsequent Council of Trent (1545-1563) further established the legal expectations for the relationship between Church and State. However, while the resultant documents codified legal etiquette, evangelical and temporal players continued grappling throughout the colonial period, producing such revisions as the 1681 recompilation of the “New Laws of the Indies.”

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries encompassed a tumultuous period and a distinct religious-political dynamic within the Spanish Empire, particularly in New Spain, due to Regalism and the consequent Bourbon Reforms. This legislation, which defaced the inherited colonial status quo, was the exaggerated culmination of the earlier Patronato. The Bourbon Reforms, or eighteenth-century royal and bureaucratic aggrandizement that resulted from the Bourbon ascendancy to the Spanish throne, produced a drastic restructuring of the relationships between the monarchy and the Catholic Church. In 1761, Charles III of Spain announced that the Spanish sovereigns acted as direct intermediaries between God and their subjects, thereby claiming exclusive ecclesiastical control, or the “Patronato,” over all Spanish territories. This pronouncement bypassed the Pope and situated temporal authority above religious interference.

The Bourbon government consequently demonstrated its Regalist manifesto by expelling the Jesuits from Spanish domain in 1767. The Jesuits,

independently wealthy and protected by autonomous militias, represented a threat to royal adjudication of the evangelical and political projects in the colonies.⁹ Tensions with the order surfaced in 1720, when Paraguayan Jesuits obstructed the government's initiative to press the Guaraní—the region's native people—into “public service.”¹⁰ Although the monarchy placated the Jesuits, only thirty years later Spain agreed to desert the successful Guayrá missions to Portugal in the 1750 Treaty of Madrid. The Bourbon government commanded the Jesuits and Guaraní peoples to abandon the missions and their land without compensation.¹¹ The Jesuits, who believed that the treaty requirements violated the Guaraní's rights a “free persons, their rights to property, and even their very right to live,” supported and coordinated the indigenous backlash.¹² In 1754 the Guaraní attacked a Portuguese shipment and initiated a decade of slaughter and indigenous desolation.¹³ Although the Jesuits participated only indirectly in the conflict, the affair incited distrust and dislike of the order's influence over indigenous peoples, its independent resources, and notions of individual rights.¹⁴ After the tumultuous 1767 expulsion, the Bourbon administration bound mendicant orders ever closer to the political regime, prohibiting autonomous financing and private militias (as the Jesuits enjoyed in Baja California.)¹⁵

⁹ Steven Hackel, “The Staff of Leadership: Indian Authority in the Missions of Alta California” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 3:2 (1997) 357.

¹⁰ William E. Jaenike, *Black Robes in Paraguay: The Success of the Guaraní Missions Hastened the Abolition of the Jesuits*, (Minnesota: Kirk House Publishers, 2008) 168.

¹¹ Jaenike, *Black Robes in Paraguay*, 178-180.

¹² Jaenike, *Black Robes in Paraguay*, 181.

¹³ Jaenike, *Black Robes in Paraguay*, 190.

¹⁴ Jaenike, *Black Robes in Paraguay*, 193.

¹⁵ Francis J. Weber, “Jesuits in Baja California,” *The Americas*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Apr., 1967), 412.

The 1767 expulsion of the Jesuits left perilous political and religious holes along the northwestern New Spanish borders—areas controlled mainly through missionary outposts and military presidios. The viceregal administration selected the Franciscans to fill these vacuums, in part due to Junípero Serra’s avid appetite for the Californian frontier.¹⁶ The Franciscans thus found themselves in sensitive position: chosen as a substitute for the more independent Jesuits, they therefore constituted an extension of Bourbon authority—an authority which severely limited their millennial project to create a new utopian society.¹⁷ Regalism therefore flourished during the California Mission period, fundamentally altering the objectives of the enterprise. The region’s material possibilities superseded its religious and spiritual facets: the Bourbon government considered the evangelical component of colonization an obstacle to efficient resource extraction and administration.¹⁸ The Franciscans pursued intensive economic development and helped establish outposts along the coastline.¹⁹ Simultaneously, they struggled with the viceregal establishment for the right to establish a new society that conformed to Franciscan utopic visions.²⁰ A tenuous relationship, both directed by and conflicting with the civil government, consequently plagued the Alta California mission system.

¹⁶ Alan K. Brown, Introduction to *A Description of Distant Roads: Original Journals of the First Expedition into California, 1769-1770*, written by Juan Crespí (San Diego: San Diego State University Press, 2001) 9.

¹⁷ Hackel, “The Staff of Leadership,” 357.

¹⁸ Taylor 14.

¹⁹ Kristin Dutcher Mann, *The Power of Song: Music and Dance in the Mission Communities of Northern New Spain, 1590-1810* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010) 12-16 .

²⁰ Hackel, “The Staff of Leadership,” 357.

When Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808, deposed the Spanish king, and installed his brother in the throne, his incursion caused a crisis of authority. According to widely-read Jesuit theorist Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), the sovereign ruled by right of a religious and social contract with his subjects. If the rightful sovereign was deposed—that is, disconnected from both “urbs” (the physical kingdom) and “civitas” (his citizenry)—as occurred in the Napoleonic invasion, sovereignty reverted to the people.²¹ At this moment of imperial crisis, local cabildos claimed sovereignty, both in Spain and the empire, where at times the juntas were conflated with national independence movements. Accordingly, in 1810 Mexico claimed autonomous rule using these mechanisms. Internal struggles between Royalists and revolutionaries expanded to the frontier territories and prevented successful administration, stranding the Alta California Franciscans. When Mexico won independence in 1821, the new government began to dismantle the mission system. The Californian missionaries, who largely remained loyal to the Spanish monarchy, refused to swear the prescribed oaths to the Mexican constitution and were expelled in 1832.

Missionary Concept of Place: Culture, Lifestyle, and Salvation

As already indicated, missionary objectives and conceptions of the “New World” comprised a distinct variation on the “Spanish” agenda as a whole. The missionaries carried a number of visions that supported evangelical ideas of place. These fundamental concepts included Inquisition ideology and millenarianism. The assimilation of forcibly-converted Jews in 1492 and Muslims in 1501

²¹ Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World*, 9.

compelled the Monarchy to distinguish between heretical religious and acceptable cultural behaviors. This hazy divide created a culture of intense suspicion around the new converts; the Crown instructed former Muslims to abandon traditional dances and veiling practices and castigated one-time Jews for resting on Saturdays or avoiding pork.²² The Holy Office also associated heretical practice with physical location—the Inquisition focused particular attention on the Albaicín, or formerly Muslim Granadan neighborhood, and Portugal, the refuge of many false Jewish converts. This trend started long before the Inquisition: when Seville was taken from the Muslim Alhomed Dynasty in 1248, the Reconquest found expression in the appropriation of the main mosque, which was gradually converted into the enormous Cathedral of Seville. Even the iconic Giralda tower, once the mosque’s minaret, was capped with a Renaissance bell tower, evoking the subjugation of Islam within the Spanish kingdom.²³

Inquisition suspicion inflected the codifying colonial legislation, or the 1681 “New Laws of the Indies,” by conveying the Millinerian project, which pursued a purified, homogenized “city of G-d” characterized by Christian behaviors, objects, and spaces in the new territories.²⁴ This mentality in turn shaped the missionaries’ approach to Native Americans: the “Laws of the Indies” mandated that indigenous peoples be separated from the fonts of traditional life.²⁵ Even in the eighteenth century, the Inquisition’s strictures continued to impact

²² Mercedes García-Arenal, *La Diáspora de los Andalusies*. (Barcelona: Icaria Editorial 2003) 94.

²³ “Cathedral, Alcazar and Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain.” *UNESCO World Heritage Center, 1992-2012*, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/383>

²⁴ Guillermo Wilde. *Religión y poder en las misiones de guaraní*. (Buenos Aires: SB, 2009) 51.

²⁵ Consejo de Indias, “Ley V, Libro I, Título XIII” in *Leyes de Indias*, (Seville, Spain: Consejo de Indias, 1641)

missionary perspectives on difference and the intersection between culture and spirituality. For Junípero Serra, whose Mallorcan experience with false converts predisposed him particularly to suspicion, cultural, socio-political, and spiritual practices were indistinguishable. However, it is important to note that the “New Laws of the Indies” and Inquisition ideologies were inconsistently applied across the empire. In New Spain, missionaries on a whole exercised greater tolerance of non-Euro-Christian behaviors and cultural attributes than in the Viceroyalty of Lima, which executed an indeterminable number of campaigns attempting to extirpate heretical practice.

The special characteristics of the “New World” also molded missionary visions and expectations. The Franciscans particularly cherished the millenarian belief that the Antichrist—literally, the perfect inverse of the Savior—tyrannized the Americas, exploiting natural native humility, devotion, piety, and discipline. The Aztecs, with their tradition of blood sacrifice and consumption of human flesh, were thus forced to mock Christ’s sacrifice and transubstantiation. Obsessively seeking to defeat Christ, Satan selected a preternaturally pure elect, predisposed to devoutness and single-minded purpose. However, these qualities also presented an opportunity: given the proper teaching, Native Americans could access extraordinary saintliness.²⁶ In fact, the Franciscans believed that the Native Americans lacked “any hindrance that would keep them from reaching heaven, unlike the many obstacles we Spaniards have and keep us down.”²⁷ A territory

²⁶ Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006) 19-20.

²⁷ Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors*, 19-20.

under the sway of sin and yet naturally conditioned for material and physical sacrifice, the “New World” demanded both crusades and guidance.²⁸

The Americas thus captured missionary imagination as an “Indian Jerusalem.” On one hand, the space recalled the cradle of both Christ and Christianity; on the other, like medieval Jerusalem, this “shining temple” or Eden was besieged by Satan. The mission structure reflected this dual purpose: protected by thick, symbolically-crenelated battlements, they shielded the faithful from a decadent world, but their shining white walls and lavishly appointed with gorgeous images simultaneously evoked utopian glory.²⁹ For rich images and extravagant rituals allowed “man in his weakness...to materialize divinity and make it visible, ‘so that by seeing it with bodily eyes he might have faith in it during a [time of] conflict, when he feels all his anguish and his needs.’”³⁰ In other words, the image itself was only a placeholder, reminding the faithful of the awe of salvation.³¹ The mission space thus reflected the chance to fulfill the charge of salvation initiated over a thousand years before: together, protected from the venal life, the priests and their neophytes could attain moral perfection.³² The objects, images, sounds, gestures, and architecture conveyed the spiritual

²⁸ Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006) 19-20, Steven W. Hackel, *Alta California: People in Motion, Identities in Formation, 1769-1850*, (California: The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery and University of California Press, Berkeley, 2010).

²⁹ Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001) 25 and 55, Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors*, 19-20.

³⁰ Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 69.

³¹ Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 69.

³² Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 25.

imperative of these enclaves, tangibly articulating or incarnating the difference between the interior and exterior of the mission.

Native Californian Place at the Moment of Contact

Like the Spanish, Native Californians also employed sonic and material culture to define place. The majority of indigenous Californian cosmologies, as exemplified by the Luiseño example, revolve around (1) the distribution of power between three planes of being and (2) and quincunx cosmography, or the sacralization of the four cardinal directions with the community located in the center.³³ These worldviews assumed that power is sentient, possessed by anything with will (including inanimate objects), and that humanity acted as a locus in a social network of power manipulators. The physical centrality of the community, ensconced between the four corners of the world, reinforced this concept.³⁴ Within this framework, knowledge of power allowed any person to manipulate or shape the world.³⁵ Because power could inhabit any object, the world was threatening; shamans created protective spheres centered on village communities to protect the inhabitants. These entities were constituted both by the physical boundaries of the settlement and the community itself, a distribution that resonated with European constructions of a “city” organized around “urbs,” or the tangible structure, and “civitas,” or the human network.³⁶ The cosmographical

³³ Lynn Gamble, “Chumash Architecture: Sweat Lodges and Houses,” *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1995):71.

³⁴ Lowell J. Bean, “Power and its Applications in Native California,” in *California Indian Shamanism*, ed. Sylvia Vane and Lowell J Bean, (Menlo Park, California: Ballena Press, 1992); Edgerton 59-60.

³⁵ Bean, “Power and its Applications,” 26.

³⁶ Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World*, 9.

situation of the village reinforced the shaman's power: only cradled in the quincunx could the society "survive the whims of the capricious supernatural forces of deiform nature."³⁷ *Any strangers entering this physical and social village structure were thus suspect*—particularly other humans, such as the Spanish, who might manipulate unrestricted power.³⁸

This quincunx cosmography determined architectural and ritual organization. The cardinal directions dictated "the physical arrangement of ceremonial structures and paths taken by the dancers" during ritual celebrations of physical space, such as Earth or Sun ceremonies.³⁹ Particular cardinal directions held special significance, especially for the Chumash, a group partially imagined by the Spanish who inhabited the Santa Barbara Channel. According to Fernando Librado, the Chumash particularly celebrated the South, or the origination of the Chumash, and the West, the Land of the Dead.⁴⁰ Each Chumash group accessed Land of the Dead through a distinct sacred place, a spiritual and corporeal gateway; the most known gateway is Point Conception, but each village seems to have cherished their own location.⁴¹

The significance of the number four described above is a common feature of native spirituality across the Americas. Four, which describes the path of the sun as it bisects the earth, and the perpendicular to that line—the cardinal

³⁷ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 59-60.

³⁸ Bean, "Power and its Applications," 26.

³⁹ Gamble, "Chumash Architecture," 71.

⁴⁰ Gamble, "Chumash Architecture," 71, Haley, "Point Conception and the Chumash Land of the Dead," 217

⁴¹ Haley, "Point Conception and the Chumash Land of the Dead," 216-217.

directions—delineates the numinous and physical shape of the cosmos.⁴² In what is today California, the American Southwest, and central Mexico, native cosmographies encompassed a fifth central point of creation, where the coupling of male and female beings created the universe.⁴³ By the time the Franciscans entered California, they had already interacted with the quincunx cosmography in the interior territories of New Spain and extensively incorporated its features into their evangelical repertoire. Corpus Christi processions delineated the outlines of the quincunx cosmos, visiting four residential districts before returning to the center of the cosmos: the church. The center of the church itself was indicted by the face of Christ embedded in what amounted to the “world tree,” the heart of the pre-Contact universe.⁴⁴

Only a few centuries earlier the Spanish had arranged the world in the medieval T/O map, a tripartite vision of the world patterned on the Trinity. However, the dissociation of the ethnic center from the geometric center discussed in the Introduction permitted missionaries to adapt indigenous spatial arrangements without abandoning the fundamental three-ness of the Christian cosmography.⁴⁵ The discovery of a “new” fourth continent also transformed Spanish cartographic representation, reorganizing European geometric spatial conceptualizations into a quatripartite reality.⁴⁶ Consequently, Spaniards could identify with indigenous quincunx cosmographies, although they resituated the

⁴² Jordan Paper, *Native North American Religious Traditions: Dancing for Life*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2007) 8.

⁴³ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 59-60, Paper, *Native North American Religious Traditions*, 8

⁴⁴ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 64-65, 67.

⁴⁵ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 247, 251.

⁴⁶ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 247.

center in Rome, the heart of the Christian world.⁴⁷ These superficial congruencies allowed the Franciscans to mistake indigenous cosmographies for facsimiles of Eurochristian models—just as indigenous peoples saw ecclesiastical appropriations of the quincunx as an extension of the traditional quincunx. In this case of “double mistaken identity,” James Lockhart explains, “...each side takes it that a given form or concept is essentially one already known to it, operating in much the same manner as in its own tradition, and hardly take cognizance of the other side’s interpretation.”⁴⁸

Other shared elements of native religion are those of reciprocity and sacrifice; social relationships, both with supernatural forces and human beings, prospered on exchange. Native Americans initiated relationships or begged supernatural intercession by offering their physical selves, scourging their bodies for blood, flesh, and hair.⁴⁹ Communication networks facilitated by the exchange of goods and information spanned “Baja California, southern Alta California, northwest Mexico, and possibly the American Southwest.”⁵⁰ Indigenous groups fled from the initial 1549 Spanish naval expedition; when asked why, they intimated that they had heard that “similar armed men were killing Indians inland.”⁵¹ However, each village remained largely autonomous and inwardly focused. Without outside interference, claimed Mission San Francisco in the 1812

⁴⁷ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 243.

⁴⁸ James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central New Spain, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992) 445.

⁴⁹ Paper, *Native North American Religious Traditions*, 9-10.

⁵⁰ Kent G. Lightfoot and William S. Simmons, “Culture Contact in Prehistoric California: Social Contexts of Native and European Encounters,” *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1998), 147.

⁵¹ Lightfoot, “Culture Contact in Prehistoric California,” 147.

Interrogatorio, “they and their forefathers were content with knowing how and where to look for sustenance, to defend themselves with the bow and arrow from their enemies, to hunt and to fish with the net. They do not know whence they came nor if there are other people in the world than those living in the villages of the vicinity.”⁵² In other words, most Native Californians concerned themselves with subsistence within the protected village sphere.

Although important places were situated with some concern for location, they assumed their true meaning after prolonged human use. The Chumash, for example, placed their shrines to the dead along the coast because the westerly location facilitated access to the Land of the Dead. However, the *specific* placement mattered little—according to the *Interrogatorio*, “the sites where shrines were erected ‘in time came to be regarded as sacred places.’”⁵³ That is, function, and social construction, conferred meaning; the space itself lacked intrinsic sacredness.⁵⁴ This conception of space may have facilitated the perseverance of native religions throughout the colonial period: because indigenous Californians constructed shrines where and as needed, people divorced from their home territories could transplant their holy sites.⁵⁵

Native Californians demarcated holy places by the physical materials they placed there. Among the Chumash, a site gained spiritual dimensions, a “Iwaytki” or “mystery,” because a feathered pole indicated that families should deposit offerings and the deceased’s belongings. This collection bequeathed a

⁵² Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 95.

⁵³ Haley, “Point Conception and the Chumash Land of the Dead,” 229.

⁵⁴ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 4, 265.

⁵⁵ Haley, “Point Conception and the Chumash Land of the Dead,” 229.

supernatural facet to an unexceptional space, which gradually assumed the meaning assigned to it by accruing objects. That history, however, particularly in relation to ancestral inheritance, did eventually bind indigenous Californians to specific sites. According to a report from Mission San Luis Obispo in 1812, “Notwithstanding that the Indians in their pagan state hold lands by families they have no need for agreements to plant for they live on the products bestowed by nature; yet it is a weighty matter that produces not few wars if anyone has the effrontery to go and gather fruits without previously paying and notifying the legitimate owner.”⁵⁶ In other words, although Native Californians lived from the fruits of the land, outside encroachment not only violated present ownership but also tangibly impeached familial rights.

Similarly, music and dance created, articulated, and reinforced a sense of place. While depositing all of the dead’s worldly belongings at the shrine, for example, Fernando Librado reported that the family members “sang a song or two,” corroborating the meaning of the action. The Coast Miwok’s Kuksu or “Ghost” Dance, which in 1579 incorporated Sir Francis Drake’s expedition along the California coastline, provides an excellent example of the intersection between and mutual constitution of material culture, sonic culture, physical parameters, and temporal location. The expedition landed at midsummer, the seasonal time of the Kuksu Dance, and Kent G. Lightfoot argues that Drake’s opportune arrival from the West—the direction associated with the Land of the Dead—permitted the Miwok to conflate him with “the returned dead” or spirits.

⁵⁶ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 110.

Because the ritual, a mourning ceremony, traditionally involved the impersonation of the newly deceased by dancers dressed in special costumes, the “truth” of this association remained irrelevant. Rather, the Miwok transformed Drake’s expedition, and indeed the entire shoreline, into supernatural entities by entering the company’s camp in a danced procession along the beach, heralded by drummers, singers, and orators, and by slinging strands of beads and a corona around Drake. “In the eyes of the Coast Miwok, the strangers may not have been perceived as gods, supernatural beings, or returned ghosts per se; rather, they were individuals who had arrived to participate in the sacred dances and to portray mythical figures in the specific context of the Kuksu and Ghost Dance performances.”⁵⁷ The regalia and procession into the camp simulate the ordinary configuration of the Kuksu Dance, which was traditionally signaled by the ritual entrance of leaders, dancers, and musicians into a ceremonial enclosure.⁵⁸ In this case, the parameters of sanctity were situationally realized; the specific site became spiritually charged as it fulfilled the sonic, material, and social criteria of the ceremony.

Appropriation and Ambiguity in the Mission Space

Upon contact with native peoples, the Spanish attempted to convey territorial possession through symbolic gesture, public mass, and staged or real combat. In other words, missionaries and colonists alike initiated colonization by transforming the boundaries of place. Expeditions were commanded to read the

⁵⁷ Lightfoot, “Culture Contact in Prehistoric California,” 152.

⁵⁸ Lightfoot, “Culture Contact in Prehistoric California,” 152.

“Requirimiento,” a document invoking the right of the Spanish to settle and colonize the region and warning indigenous peoples that resistance meant death.⁵⁹ To the listening natives, who couldn’t understand Spanish, the message dissolved into incomprehensible but significant sound: it intoned a new spatial order. Soldiers and explorers made “symbolic acts of possession,” pantomiming attacks on trees, rocks, and soil to indicate their dominance over the space and challenge indigenous people to dispute their claims. This violence inflicted on the earth conveyed Spanish preeminence—they claimed authority over the land itself, and by proxy, the production of meaningful space within it. Priests similarly constructed an altar or tent—a small Euro-Christian domain—and performed Mass for both voyagers and Native Americans, “inviting the native peoples to bow their heads, to participate in prayer, and to kiss the crucifix of Christ.”⁶⁰ Within this performative space, the priest became host, the altar his territory; native participation signaled nothing less than their submission to this new status quo.

Missionaries attempted to execute their millenarian visions among native populations by reducing, or relocating, indigenous groups to missions. Across the Americas these utopian experiments exploited the power of sacred sites, a longstanding Christian tradition dating back to the expansion of Christian Rome. The early mendicants in the New World, who patterned themselves on the apostles, cherished seventh-century Pope Gregory I’s admonishment that “the

⁵⁹ Lightfoot, “Culture Contact in Prehistoric California,” 148. For more information about the Muslim origins of the Requirimiento, see Chapter 1 of Patricia Seed’s *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, (1492-1640)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁶⁰ Lightfoot, “Culture Contact in Prehistoric California,” 148.

temples in that nation ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let holy water be made and sprinkled on the said temples...For if these temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true G-d...For there is no doubt that it is impossible to efface everything at once from their obdurate minds; because he who endeavors to ascend to the highest place, rises by degrees or steps, and not by leaps.”⁶¹ Thus, the Spanish missionaries positioned their missions and chapels at the location of traditional holy spaces, whitewashing interiors or painting lavish murals of salvation and holy war, sprinkling holy water, and erecting altars to Christian religiosity.⁶² Ideally, the missionaries appropriated the influence of the pre-Contact place, defacing the old meaning and substituting a new one. In New Spain, the missionaries even recycled the caretakers of the shrines and basic devotional practice, such as sweeping the space (a fundamental ritual of pre-Contact religion), to create new spatial significance.⁶³ Different mendicant groups accomplished this proximity in specific ways. The Jesuits frequently established the church on sacred ground and penetrated extant villages to teach, while the Franciscans “reduced” indigenous peoples to mission compounds that incorporated or recalled native spatial features.

Even when the missionaries could not establish a mission on a previous holy ground, mission architecture frequently incorporated or adapted elements of indigenous sacred structures. In the New Spanish interior, all major mendicant

⁶¹ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 4.

⁶² Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 47.

⁶³ Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 37-38.

orders adopted the convento template, which was arrayed around a central patio that probably mimicked the quadrangular ritual spaces utilized by the pre-Contact Mexica.⁶⁴ Even the arrangement the patio's entrances facilitated the patterns of indigenous ceremonial procession, which traced the quincunx and were quickly incorporated into major Catholic celebrations such as Holy Week or Corpus Christi.⁶⁵ Christ embedded in crucifix took symbolic eminence as the center of the microcosmic courtyard quincunx where a pyramid might once have stood—the missionaries grafted Christianity to a native cosmography.⁶⁶ These architectural choices also occurred in California. At Mission Santa Barbara, for example, the missionaries arranged the mission compound around a patio crowned by a central fountain. (See fig. 1) This practice of incorporating features of a “conquered” culture may have resonated with Native Americans, who frequently followed “termination rituals” while building on the physical foundations of other societies’ edifices and appropriating religious images and figures for their own uses.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 58.

⁶⁵ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 58.

⁶⁶ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 57-58.

⁶⁷ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 47-49.



Fig. 1, Central Courtyard in the Shape of the quincunx, Mission Santa Barbara. Image by author.

The native peoples of modern-day New Mexico also conceived of a quincunx cosmography, evoked through a subterranean chamber called a *kiva*. This structure, entered through a ladder and dimly lit by a single hole, recalled the primordial cave from which the universe was born.⁶⁸ Franciscan missionaries in New Mexico erected mission cloister gardens around the sunken *kiva* site, intentionally drawing a correlation between the powerful presence of the *kiva* and the “Christian space of the surrounding cloister looming above it.”⁶⁹ To the Franciscans, the enclosed cloister garden represented a new Eden from which, via the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ’s salvation. By placing the *kiva* within the garden, the missionaries sought to guide the Native Americans out of the cave’s primal darkness (as they saw it) and into the naiveté of the first civilized humans. The

⁶⁸ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 83, 278.

⁶⁹ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 279.

vertical ascendance, which clearly echoes Christian spatial hierarchies of heaven and hell, also resonated with Pueblo Indian beliefs that the cave, while the source of creation, was just the starting point from which human civilization emerged. “The cloister above represented yet a higher level of moral achievement leading to their ultimate redemption through acceptance of Jesus’s birth.”⁷⁰ According, according to this metaphor, the neophytes climbed toward salvation.

However, this practical repurposing created dangerous ambiguity about the new meaning of the space. Did the images act as a fresh façade, merely concealing the persistence of precontact religiosity? Could Native Americans understand the motivations and goals of the introducing Christ at the center of the quincunx, or did they maintain their own spirituality while worshiping Christ, the Virgin, the Saints? The didactic possibilities of a spatial association between the *kiva* and the cloister were undeniable, but how native neophytes interpreted the correlation was equivocal at best. Native American religions, which almost universally unified signifier and signified—that is, the *kiva* was the primordial cave, just as original cave was the *kiva*—easily understood Christ’s presence in the center of the quincunx as one of a multiplicity of the cosmography’s manifestations.⁷¹ Further, these appropriations went two ways. Indigenous peoples not only incorporated Eurochristian symbols into traditional cosmographies, but also reconceptualized the Spanish themselves in terms of native space. Fernando Librado, the Chumash man interviewed by Harrington, remarked,

⁷⁰ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 279.

⁷¹ Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 65-69.

My grandfather used to say that the White people are a reincarnation of the Indian souls that have gone west. ‘They, the White people,’ he would say, ‘have a different color and have been reincarnated in a lighter color, and they speak a different language. Although the color and the language of Whites and Indians are different, the noble principles of the soul are the same.’⁷²

Librado’s grandfather integrated the “White people” into Chumash geographies of death and rebirth, reaffirming an expanded variation of traditional spatial arrangements and placing Indians at the beginning of the chain of life. Simultaneously, he transculturates Spanish moral conceptions and rhetoric of the soul. In the process, he reconfigures colonial power relations, leveling the playing field using the Franciscans’ own spiritual discourse. According to Christian theology, if both the Franciscans and the Native Californians had souls, they were equals. This assertion of agency, while not a defiance, re-centers the Indian at the heart of Alta California.

Serge Gruzinski’s analysis of central Mexican Nahua’s concept of the *ixitpla* also illustrates this question of conflation. Among the Nahua, an *ixitpla* (the name Franciscans borrowed to describe an icon) comprised the various semblances of divinity, which could exist side-by-side simultaneously. According to Gruzinski, an “*ixitpla* could be the statue of a g-d (we would say, with the conquistadors, an idol), a divinity that appeared in a vision, a priest ‘representing’ a deity by covering himself in adornments, or even a victim who turns into a g-d destined to be sacrificed.”⁷³ In this way, the priest impersonating the g-d and the victim-g-d he sacrificed could both constitute different aspects of the same

⁷² Fernando Librado, *Breath of the Sun: Life in Early California as Told by a Chumash Indian*, Fernando Librado, to John P. Harrington, Ed. by Travis Hudson. (Banning, Calif.: Malki Museum Press, 1979) 73.

⁷³ Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 50.

divinity.⁷⁴ The Franciscans' signifying metaphor of evolution expressed through the *kiva* and enclosed cloister garden, a "semblance-image" *evoking but not embodying* redemption was thus lost on Native Americans. Missionaries worried that Indians were misunderstanding Christian ideology twice over: once about the place's identity, and secondly about its metaphorical or referential nature.⁷⁵ The confusion about the identity of a space might expand beyond basic misunderstanding, encouraging indigenous peoples to preserve their own traditions, apparently with the approval of the missionaries. In time, the Franciscans feared, religious revival would sow discontent and "destabilize colonial order."⁷⁶ Indeed, as we will see in the next two chapters, Native Americans *did* exploit the missionaries' perceived complicity, using Christian sound, materials, gesture, and ritual to perpetuate and articulate their own agendas.

Conclusions

Both Native Californians and Spanish colonists imbued space with spiritual meaning through sonic and material investments. However, their distinct cosmographies—their distinct ways of understanding and signifying space—grated against each other at contact; each group attempted to perpetuate their vision of place within the "contact zone." Although the Franciscans attempted to graft a Eurochristian place on the Native Californian domain, they failed to supplant indigenous worldviews. Instead, these cosmographies competed on

⁷⁴ Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 50.

⁷⁵ Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 66.

⁷⁶ Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 66.

mission grounds. This chapter elucidated the European and indigenous cosmographies; the following chapters demonstrate how these historical actors defended pre-conceived places with objects and sounds. Evidently, the Franciscans could neither achieve true dominion nor complete hybridization with their material and sonic efforts—native actors filed all superficial congruencies and all introduced materials into traditional spatial structures.

Generally speaking, Spanish cosmographies were dualistic, dividing the cosmos into heaven and hell, good and bad, Christ and Antichrist. Native Californians, on the contrary, permitted a multiplicity of manifestations or characteristics to coexist within a single entity. Rather than seeing a man-made structure as a representation of the universe, Native Americans believed the universe existed there in microcosm.

However, Spanish colonial place was not monolithic; it also varied along political-religious lines—although these spheres were inextricably linked in Spanish society, the way historical agents envisioned the new worlds, its opportunities and dangers, diverged. The continual renegotiation of authority between Church and State, complicated by the special circumstances of the Patronato, played out in a war for indigenous bodies. Were Native Americans a labor resource or an evangelical crop? Was the land a foundation for utopia, or a rich paradise brimming with economic opportunity? This conflict, which manifested in the long series of legislation codifying colonial practice, characterized the “New World,” the place imposed on the American continents,

and due to the Bourbon Reforms determined the execution of Californian religious spaces.

The missionaries saw the “New World” as both travesty and opportunity. Long the domain of the devil, the New World featured a satanic elect unparalleled in discipline, humility, and devotion. Misguided and led astray by the Antichrist, who sought to humiliate Christ, this elect formed the germ of possibility: if converted, these matchless spiritual elite could devote themselves in turn to G-d and salvation. The New World thus required both crusades and paternal kindness, violence and guidance.

Native Californians also ordered the cosmos in layers of planes. However, unlike heaven and hell, these planes escaped dichotomous Manichean morality. Rather, supernatural power inhabited the world in unpredictable ways, making every being both potentially helpful and potentially dangerous. Thus, only the village, a space protected by a knowledgeable shaman (the elite civitas) and the center of the quincunx universe (the urbs or ideal location), comprised a safe ground. In fact, it was the people who imbued a space with meaning—as long as the site fulfilled specific requirements, such as proximity to the Land of the Dead or a walled enclosure, it could manifest anywhere that Native Californians conducted their ceremonies.

Spanish missionaries appropriated the power of holy sites, attempting to draw congruencies between indigenous spirituality and Christianity. However, while these associations facilitated native receptivity to Catholicism, they also

created important ambiguities about the meaning of spiritual place. Missionaries saw their conflations of indigenous holy structures such as the *kiva* and Christian representations as a metaphor for native progress and salvation; Native Americans, on the other hand, viewed Christian enhancements as mere extensions of their actual cosmos. These cases of “double mistaken identity,” as exemplified in the spatial conflations discussed above, allowed colonial experiences to be reintegrated into traditional cosmographies on both sides. Consequently, the missionaries feared that these misapprehensions would preserve indigenous religion and one day upset the colonial status quo. As the following chapters will demonstrate, these fears often proved true.

Chapter 2

In early encounters, the Spanish and the Native Californian actors circled each other, assessing and judging the new group against the backdrop of expectation described in Chapter 1. The most visible manifestation of ethos and values—and, consequently, of place—material culture played an essential role in shaping first impressions. As indicated in the previous chapter, place is constituted by the objects that fill its parameters, by the material and immaterial transactions that wend its pathways, by the arrangement and nature of settlements, by the clothes that produce and alter spatial interactions. This relationship between material culture and place becomes particularly significant in a colonial situation, when the European imperial gaze perceived indigenous materiality in ways that permitted conquest. Spanish actors, with their well-developed sense of superiority, particularly evaluated indigenous objects for evidence of proto-civility.

Native material culture thus became justification and excuse. On one hand, the Franciscans portrayed indigenous objects as organic outgrowths of the land itself—and thus inhuman features of a conquerable and “empty space.” On the other hand, “crude” native offerings were understood as the mere component parts of a civilization, demanding Franciscan guidance to assemble a new, purified European society. In light of these views, the Franciscans attempted to alter the significance of the space by substituting and introducing new materials and by appropriating the developed native skills for Spanish agendas. Informed by several centuries of colonial practice and expectation, the Franciscans evaluated

Native Californians by their material culture, including their dress, housing structures, exchange practices, and craftsmanship. Considered through a paternalistic filter, these observations express admiration for the capabilities of native peoples, even as the early expeditions plotted how to exploit indigenous capacities in the dual project of colonialism.

However, because indigenous Californians also contextualized the interactions within traditional structures and experience, Spanish efforts often went awry. Native Californians employed introduced materials in unexpected ways and attached different significance to encounters. Transactions with the Spanish constituted extensions of the extant trade and communication networks that connected the territory. The offer of what the Spanish considered trinkets confirmed the Europeans' acquiescence to the configuration of social and spatial law for the Californians. Further, although most indigenous Californians belonged to semi-sedentary societies, their movement across the land was not the arbitrary or instinctual migration of animals, as the Spanish both explicitly and implicitly suggested. While native Californians migrated seasonally, they continually returned to traditional encampments, social and physical hubs that supported resource collection.¹ Thus, although primarily hunter-gatherers, indigenous Californians associated themselves with specific, not random, places. In fact, according to Pablo Tac, indigenous connections to the land were such that his people, called the Luiseño by the Spanish, named themselves and their domain

¹Rancho Simi Trail Blazers "The Chumash and How they Lived," Rancho Simi Foundation, <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/articles/THE%20CHUMASH%20AND%20HOW%20THEY%20LIVED.html>, A.L. Kroeber, Handbook of the Indians of California (Berkeley, California: California Book Company, Ltd., 1953) 551-557.

after a type of aboriginal stone. As Tac explains, “because in this country there was a kind of stones that were called quechlam in the plural, and in the singular quechla, and we inhabitants of Quechla call ourselves Quechnajuichom in the plural, Quechnajuis in the singular, meaning inhabitants of Quechla.”² Consequently, although the location of the village varied seasonally, indigenous relationships with the land remained constant.

This chapter will examine Spanish ranking systems evaluating indigenous capacity in exchange, dress, craftsmanship and weaponry, and settlement structures. These systems, which compared native material cultures to a rural European standard, facilitated and justified Spanish conquest and subsequent alterations to the parameters of regional place. Indigenous parties in turn contextualized the encounters into their own material background, and the interactions actually reinforced traditional native Californian visions of place. Spanish attempts to foster congruencies, along with these native perceptions of the encounters, thus perpetuated aspects of Californian cosmographies within the missions’ material productions. Missionaries were certainly aware of this byproduct of association. Some padres encouraged or fought it; more ignored it.

Hierarchies of Exchange

From several centuries of colonial experience, the Franciscans anticipated Native Californian traditions of reciprocity and gifting, a cultural feature shared across the Americas. In fact, the first expeditions to Alta California seem to have

² Pablo Tac, Minna Hewes, and Gordon Hewes, “Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey,” *The Americas*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Jul., 1952): 98.

carried incredible quantities of glass beads and rosaries, because most encounters with Native Californians began or ended when the Franciscans “gave them [the Californians] strings of beads.”³ Indigenous actors initiated or reciprocated the gesture by proffering food, a refrain of “semillas” (seeds) and “atoles” (acorn porridges): “They gifted us many helpings of cacomites [local edible bulb plants], and amoles [root plant native to CA and Mexico]...⁸ Gentiles of the other Rancheria gifted us seeds...”⁴ Both groups, then, understood exchange as a manner of commencing nonviolent negotiations, a commonality, if not innate, that was fostered by the Spanish throughout the many centuries of colonialism. It was only a logical move on the part of the missionaries, for exchange, or the “movement of things,” simultaneously facilitated the introduction of Hispanic articles and Christian ideas; a rosary evoked the “gift” of Catholic spirituality, making the units of exchange both tangible and intangible.⁵

However, to the Franciscans, the form of exchange both delineated the colonial parameters of the interaction and defined the actors. By the 1760s, the process of commodification, formed in large part by mercantilistic extraction of New World resources, produced a competitive ranking of economic structures that echoed Eurocentric visions of superiority. The Europeans created an economic hierarchy which privileged commodity-based systems, which are

³ AGI Guadalajara 514:97 (Francisco Palou, “Journey...I, Francisco Palou, made for the month of November in the Area Surrounding the Port of San Francisco along the Pacific Coast of Northern California, with the goal of establishing missions along them,” 1774) (“regalemos hilo de abalorios...”)

⁴ AGI Guadalajara 515:44, folio 729-730 (Juan Crespi, “Diary of the Voyage to Monterey Mandated by Father Junípero Serra,” 1774) (“Nos regalaron muchas porciones de cacomites, y amoles...⁸ Gentiles de otra Rancheria con semillas que nos regalaron...”)

⁵ James G. Carrier, “Exchange,” in the *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by Chris Tilley et al., (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2006/2009) 373.

distinguished from gifting societies by a lower emphasis on organized or ritualized giving, a heightened sense of the separation between objects and individuals, and individual rather than socially obligated giving. In gift societies, conversely, compulsory giving comprised the simultaneous expression of the community's religious, political, moral, and economic underpinnings.⁶ According to these classifications, which as Edward Said argues in his seminal work *Orientalism* express more about the needs and background of the colonist than the colonized, Native Californian societies thus constituted less developed or childlike economies, stagnating without the push of European commodification and industrialization.

During the eighteenth century, the Bourbon Reforms institutionalized this viewpoint by codifying the Repartimiento de Mercancias. A long-standing colonial tradition, the Repartimiento compelled indigenous communities to purchase surplus commodities, ostensibly in order to integrate them into a “civilized” market economy. The goods included materials already produced locally and superfluous luxury items. Frequently, merchants sold the same commodity repeatedly on paper and never delivered it. This system contributed to the destruction of indigenous subsistence, the desolation of native resources, and the expansion of debt peonage labor. Although the Bourbon Reforms supposedly regulated this system, governmental legalization and codification of the practice

⁶ Carrier, “Exchange,” 374.

reinforced both rampant subjugation of native peoples and the sense of the market economy's superiority, as the examined missionary accounts attest.⁷

These categorizations quietly manifest in the words and terminology that the Spanish used to characterize their early encounters, minute but essential distinctions between each Native American group. These differentiations appear in the subtle digression from the habitual "regalar" ("to gift") to "comprar" ("to buy"), a shift that suggests certain tribes participated in a rudimentary trade as the Europeans understood it. The missionary diaries frequently read like a litany: "I caressed them and gifted them glass beads and they were *content*;"⁸ "8 Gentiles of the other Rancheria gifted us seeds...we gifted them beads and they returned very *content* to their village [emphasis added];"⁹ a cycle of gifts culminating in Native American contentment and Franciscan tolerance. Interestingly, the Franciscans never indicate that they have gained anything in the transactions, although the gifts certainly contributed to their supplies in the wilderness; emotional reactions are reserved for the apparently childish Californians, who the explorers "caressed" in interactions so infantile that they could not elicit a reciprocal pleasure in the Spanish.

This framework also gave the Franciscans a forum to express yearning for an idyllic past, and consequently, to complain about their soldier contemporaries.

⁷ Ann M. Wightman. "Repartimiento de Mercancias," *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, ed by Jay Kinsbruner and Erick D. Langer, Vol 5 2nd ed. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008, 521.

⁸ AGI Guadalajara 514:97 ("Day 29--- los acaricie y regalé mas sartas de avalorios, de que quedaron mui contentos...")

⁹ AGI Guadalajara 515:44, folio 729-730 ("8 Gentiles de otra Rancheria con semillas que nos regalaron...nosotros la dimos Abalorios y se volvieron mui contentos a su Ranchería.")

Simplistic models of gifting economies depicted the participants as cogs in an organic whole, moved simultaneously by religious, economic, and political forces—a unity that echoed romantic visions of a medieval, pre-capitalist Europe that unquestioningly danced to the tune of a single authority.¹⁰ In the uncertainty of Bourbon New Spain, precipitated by the fracture of traditional relationships of power, the image of the “totality” of indigenous culture permitted the Franciscans to bemoan the rising eminence of their temporal counterparts.

Because these descriptions dominate the accounts, any divergence from the tropes of gifting is striking. These variations go in one of two directions. In the first trajectory, the diary of Miguel Costanzo resurrects the tropes of early conquest, portraying the indigenous group as revering the explorers as divinities.

The diary reports,

In the afternoon came seven captains or Caciques, with an entourage of Indians with bows and arrows, but with the strings of the bows slack in a sign of peace. They brought an abundant gift of seeds, acorns...and pine nuts, that *they lay before us*, the Captains informing us who had sent them. They *offered* with honor (ceremoniously?) to the Commander and his officers different necklaces of small white and black stones, whose consistency and material seemed much like coral, and only differing from it in color...[emphasis added]¹¹

¹⁰ Fred Myers, “‘Primitivism’, Anthropology, and the Category of ‘Primitive Art,’” in the *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by Chris Tilley, et al. (London: SAGE Publications, 2006/2009) 275-276.

¹¹ AGI Guadalajara 417:223 (Miguel Costanzo, “Diary of the Land Expedition from the Port of San Diego, to the North of California, in Search of Monterey, 1769-1770” 11 August, 1769) (“Vinieron en la tarde siete Capitanes o Caziques con numeroso acompañamiento de Yndios de Arcos y flechas; pero sueltas las cuerdas de los Arcos en señal de paz: train un regalo abundante de Semillas Bellotas, Teuezer y Piñones, que estendieron delante de nosotros los Capitanes informándose de quien venia mandándonos, ofrecieron con distinción al Comandante y a asus oficiales diferentes collares de una Piedrecitas blancas, y negras, cuya solidez y materia se a semeja mucho al coral, y solo difiere de el en el color...”)

The language evokes a ritual of tribute that echoes the adulations the Spanish presumed natives made to deities. Rather than handing the food directly to the company, the group ceremoniously *laid* it at the Spanish's feet, and rather than *gifting*—which suggests a transaction between humans—the captains make an *offering* of bead necklaces. Not only does the interaction flow in one direction, with the Spanish receiving without reciprocating the tribute, but the account recalls the myths of conquest harking back to Cortes's overthrow of the Mexica. Tropes of native submission—the relationship of worshiper to deity—mingle here with Spanish colonialism's earliest strategies and justifications.

Conversely, in other interchanges the Spanish elevate Native American groups to a crude, proto-European state. These accounts portray indigenous agents as on the cusp of “civilization.” In one instance, Don Martinez notes, “The Indians finally came to talk, and struck up their *business*, [proffering] pelts in exchange for the conch shells my people brought from Monterey. They had various otter hides, and many sardines... These Indians are very docile, and they gave [us] their pelts before they were paid” [emphasis added].¹² According to Esteban-Martinez, this is a commercial exchange, motivated not by ritual obligation but by economic interest. Further, rather than exclusively bartering for goods, the indigenous actors accepted the shell currency, or strings of shells described, prevalent across California, which the Spanish brought from Monterey. The Spanish use of shell beads connotes two things: first, that they construed this

¹² AGI Guadalajara 516:58 (“Digo por que los Yndios vinieron por fin a el habla, y entablaron su comercio de Pieles a cambio de conchas que la Gente mia, traxia desde MonteRey, recogieron varios cueros de Nutrias, y muchas sardinas... son estos Yndios mui dóciles, pues daban sus Pieles antes que se las pagasen...”)

native Californian currency as an indication of a rudimentary “civilized” economy; and second, that they consequently engaged these particular groups of Californians on their own terms, integrating themselves into extant commercial networks by “*paying*” them in Californian money. On another occasion, Crespi acknowledges, “they have much affinity for commerce, and that was what they most admired,” rendering them hopeful subject for evangelization.¹³

Of course, the Spanish still failed to see these exchanges as equal transactions—according to the diary, the native participants were “docile” and naïve, entrusting their goods to the Spanish before they were paid. To Crespi, this innocence indubitably begged for Franciscan paternal protection. Without adult understanding or guile, the Franciscans believed, these Indians, just on the cusp of civilization, would fall to exploitation and abuse. This account is particularly rich because it reveals the dual rhetoric of native docility and promise: the Franciscans arrived at the delicate seminal moment to propel them forward from nascent “civilization” into development, but, like children, the actors described in the passage were also vulnerable to corruption. Both of these rhetorics reinforced the Alta Californian evangelical project—humanity was an essential precondition of salvation, but the Native Californians’ “childlike” state justified paternal “protection.”

The Franciscans’ early encounter diagnoses, particularly surrounding gifting economies, disguise the significance and motivations Native Californians

¹³ AGI Guadalajara 515:44, folio 729-730 (“Se conoció que tienen mucha afición al comercio, y que lo que mas estimaban...”)

attached to the exchanges. The often-mentioned glass beads, which the expeditions clearly carried and produced in bulk, were mere trinkets to the Franciscans. That is, the beads constituted manifestations of a commodity culture in which true giving was supposedly inspired by individual impulse, but the gifts are essentially undifferentiated commodities.¹⁴ This contradiction characterizes commodified economies—but it also ignores the agency of the receiver. A member of a commodified society might reject an obviously mass-produced gift, but the colonists relied on—indeed, consciously took advantage of—the novelty of glass and the allure of “civilized” technology. Likely, they failed to comprehend the true value of the apparently inconsequential gift in indigenous society.

There are a number of facets dictating the way Native Californians received Spanish gifts of beads: (1) an object imbued with the unique background of the giver; (2) Spanish acquiescence to a particular social relationship indigenous actors hoped to accomplish; and (3) an article congruous to extant currency—that is, shell bead money—which signified Spanish participation and integration into indigenous trade networks. In gifting societies, because the act of giving is a culmination of social, religious, political, and economic motivations, the object itself is not an independent entity. Instead, it becomes imbued with the circumstances of the gifting, the background of the giver, and the relationship between the giver and the receiver: “in these societies neither people nor objects are independent entities. Rather, both are conceived in terms of the social relationships that brought them about, and in terms of the people, things, and

¹⁴ Carrier, “Exchange,” 380.

relationships they help to create.”¹⁵ Thus, the glass beads might be cherished not because of their own material novelty, as the Spanish anticipated, but because they embodied or materialized the circumstances, participants, and desires for the interchange. Or their novelty might not stem from their material, but from the uniqueness of the giver.

Consequently, because the exchange of objects incarnated an affiliation, a desired relationship or obligation could be created by offering and receiving the appropriate materials. The future leaders, or “big men,” of the Trobriand Islands, for example, engage in competitive giving, each competitor attempting to “out-give” the other by drawing on the resources a social network, created by redistributing gifts received. The victor thus not only defeats his competitor, but also creates a foundation—a social network based on reciprocity—that will support his leadership. In other words, the contest not only comprises the movement of materials, but also forges bonds of obligation and reciprocity.¹⁶ Similarly, Native Californians offered gifts to create or define their relationship with the Spanish newcomers. Spanish reciprocation, manifest in the offering of beads, confirmed the nature of the relationship and tied the explorers to the indigenous group. Thus, the beads comprised more than their materiality: they became the ties that bound the Spanish to the Californians.

The beads’ resemblance to native shell currency further facilitated this indigenous perspective. As previously mentioned, Native Californians long

¹⁵ Carrier, “Exchange,” 377.

¹⁶ Carrier, “Exchange,” 379-380.

employed strands of beads made from small sea shells as currency. This practice was particularly prevalent along the northern coast, where the Chumash shaped elaborate, micro-drilled beads from purple olive shells, but it also extended into central and Southern California, where tribes used strings of un-manipulated shells.¹⁷ Indigenous people utilized shell currency across North America, including the wampum produced by the Algonquin peoples of New England.¹⁸ The Spanish use of an analogous material indicated their submission to traditional modes of transaction and, thus, the indigenous law of the land. Therefore, not only Spanish economic classifications but also indigenous observations and agencies colored the first encounters. Each group sized up the other, fitting it into the traditional structures that shaped their world.

Dress and Morality

Reactions to dress and physical appearance further inflect descriptions of initial interactions. These details reflect the padres' particular preoccupation with indigenous morality and sensuality, which the padres believed comportment and the covering of the body belied. The Franciscans particularly extended this scrutiny to indigenous women, who, as all females did, housed the temptation and sin of Eve.¹⁹ The prevalence of this concern manifests in the culturally-laden term "honestidad," roughly, "honesty" or "modesty," but long connected with the

¹⁷ Jeanne E. Arnold and Ann Munns, "Independent or Attached Specialization: The Organization of Shell Bead Production in California," *Journal of Field Archaeology*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Winter, 1994): 473, Mary Beth D Trubitt, "The Production and Exchange of Marine Shell Prestige Goods," *Journal of Archaeological Research*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (September 2003) 254.

¹⁸ Mary W. Herman, "Wampum as Money in Northeastern North America," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter, 1956): 21.

¹⁹ Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999) 5, 30.

concept of the “honra,” or a woman’s religious contract—virginity and sexual chastity. The missionaries had long harbored a concern for what they viewed as indigenous “sexual voracity,” and as in European society, women bore responsibility for male appetites. In fact, Pedro de Cordoba, a sixteenth-century Dominican friar in the Caribbean island La Hispaniola, codified the missionaries’ stance on nudity in his “Christian Doctrine for the Instruction and Information of the Indians through History.” In this work, Cordoba mandates,

Hark to the will of G-d that you walk dressed and with your flesh covered. For from the moment the first man and woman that G-d created sinned in the earthly paradise, G-d gave them clothing with which to cover and dress themselves, because he didn’t want either men or women to go about naked.²⁰

By 1769, the Franciscans anticipated and bemoaned nudity, and consequently sexual liberty; Fray Francisco Palou dismissively remarked “The men walk totally naked *like all the other Gentiles*, and some of them have a cape of hide, or of grass guarding their backs from the cold to their waists, leaving the rest of the body revealed, including the most important part that they should cover” [emphasis added].²¹ In this case, the addition of the cape reads as a mockery of Spanish morality, evidencing both the capacity to make clothes and a lack of will to do it.

When native people deviated from expected nudity, consequently, their coverings suggested a closer alignment or predisposition for Christian sexual

²⁰ Pedro de Córdoba, OP, *Doctrina Christiana, para la Instrucción y Información de los Yndios por Manera de Historia*, ed. Montalvo (Trujillo: University of Santo Domingo, 1945) 109.

²¹ AGI Guadalajara 514:97 (“Dia 25... Los hombres andan totalmente desnudos como todos los demás Gentiles, y tal qual del ellos trahia su capotillo de cuero, o de Zacate guardando las espaldas del frio hasta la cintura, dejando descubierto lo demás del Cuerpo, y lo principal que devian tapar.”)

strictures. Spanish observers lavished these apparent prodigies with detailed description, notating the material and placement of the garments. Jose de Cañizares observed, “Here the Indian women show more modesty than others we have seen by dressing their [private] parts modestly with a type of hoop of reeds that served them as petticoats, and with various animal pelts they formed shawls with which they covered their breasts...”²² Although the chronicle regards these efforts as crude—the women show “*more* modesty,” which is not exactly the same thing as *sufficient* modesty—it is enough to distinguish the group from “others we have seen.” The account then emphasizes the significance of female modesty by calling the reed hoop “petticoats,” creating congruence with the clothes of European women and thus suggesting shared values. Sometimes the Franciscans underscored this connection by adding physical descriptors. Happening upon a “growing villages of Gentiles”, Crespí noted “they are very attractive, *blonde, bearded*, and as *White as Spaniards*, all with long hair tied with twisted bands of leather, and feathers, *the women very modestly covered.*” [emphasis added].²³ In this case, modesty coincides with physical beauty, and above all with a resemblance to Spaniards. Modest dress and physical appearance elevated these Californians to a near-European state, indicating their readiness for evangelization and Hispanicization.

²² AGI Guadalajara 417:329 (José de Cañizares, “Diary of the Journey executed between the stop at Villacata to this Port of San Diego,” 1769) (“...aquí usan las Yndias alguna mas honestidad que la que dejamos otras por vestir estas sus partes honestamente con una especie de sartilla de Carrizo que les servían de Naguas y con pellejos de varios animales formaban las Mantas con que se cubren los pechos...”)

²³ AGI Guadalajara 515:44 (“Encontramos aquí...crecidas rancherías de Gentiles mui bellos, rubios, Barbados, y blancos como los Españoles; todos con pelo largo amarrado con mecatillo que tuerzan de pieles, y pluma as mujeres con mucha honestidad tapadas.”)

However, even with these connections the difference between the Spanish observer and the Native American subject never truly vanished. The tension between foreign and familiar manifests in these same discussions of dress and appearance; clothing alters the individual. Juan Crespí, the Franciscan confidant Junípero Serra entrusted with 1770 coastal explorations, lingers on the transformative effect of female adornment, expounding,

The women have the lower lip pierced, and hanging from it a flat disk of what significance and material we could not tell, although the sailors said that the disk was a painted stick...they are white, and blonde as any Spanish woman, but the disk they have in their lip makes them less attractive and reminds us of a beard.²⁴

Although these women are “white, and blonde as any Spanish woman,” the piercing distorts the familiar European guise. Expectations are figuratively inverted, a horrifying reversal evoked by the transposition of gender—European characteristics are rendered alien when a woman transgresses the features of her gender and becomes bearded. Like the aforementioned cape that covered the back but not the genitalia, to the European this transposition constituted a mockery of social and religious norms. It also recalls the millenarian image of the New World as the Antichrist’s domain, where the devil bastardized and reconfigured Biblical truth. This inversion indicates a place that shares the basic characteristics of

²⁴ AGI Guadalajara 515:44 (“Las Mugerres tienes taladrado el labio inferior, y en el pendiente una rodeta plana que no pudimos saber que cosa era, ni de que materia, aunque los marineros dijeron que la rodeta era de tabla pintada: su vestido es una túnica de sus texidos de lana, cáñamo o de pieles que las cubre todo el cuerpo: sobre la túnica traen una esclavina con fleco alrededor; tienen pelo largo, y hecho trenza a la espalda, son blancas, y rubias como qualquiera Española, pero las afea mucho la rodeta que tienen en el labio y les cuelga nuestra la barba.”)

Eurochristian society (white bodies and blonde hair, in this case), but perverts “true” or appropriate meanings.

The Franciscans also used native dress to assess the material content of the new territories. Esteban-Martinez lingered on the copper decorating one group of Californians, remarking, “There is copper in their lands, from which they exhibit various beaded strings...and on their extremities they have beaten sheets of copper that I recognized as having been nuggets taken from the earth, and afterward crushed. I infer from this that they must have some mines of this metal.”²⁵ The Californian missions comprised an economic enterprise; as discussed in Chapter 1, the Franciscan convoys carried the arm of the Bourbon monarchy, which emphasized resource extraction and the disinheritance of the Church.²⁶ Further, as a representative of the state, Costanzo’s duty encompassed a survey of conquest’s material possibilities, opportunities that could warrant the distance’s strain on administrative efficacy. In this small excerpt, rare metal ornamentation permitted Costanzo to speculate on something otherwise not immediately visible—what lay under the earth. In a monarchy whose imperial status pivoted on the extraction of rare metals, namely the silver of Potosí, mineral opportunities signaled a revival of prestige.²⁷ Native Californian clothing also exhibited other appealing resources, such as otter pelts, that could withstand the journey to Europe, Mexico City, and Lima, and thus contribute to Spanish

²⁵ AGI Guadalajara 516:58 (“...hay en sus tierras cobre, pues se les vieron varias sartas como de abalorios que heran de colmillos de animales y en sus extremos tenían unas ojas de cobre batido que se conocía habensido granos sacados de la tierra, y después majado, infiriendo de esto haber algunos minas de este metal...”)

²⁶ Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 20-23.

²⁷ Arnold Bauer, *Goods, Power, History: Latin America’s Material Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 43.

commerce. To the Spanish, indigenous dress therefore exhibited moral character, perversion, and material possibilities. Further, clothing exemplified elements of native craftsmanship and ingenuity, a quality of civilization elaborated in the following section.

Craftsmanship: The Politics of Innovation

The explorers frequently rhapsodized over the quality of indigenous crafts, describing in admiring detail beautiful pottery, weaving, and above all boat craft—all accomplished, as the diaries often note, without “civilized” tools. Costanzo remarks,

All of their works are exquisite and well-finished, but the part most worthy of admiration is that to work the wood and the stone they don't have any instruments besides flints, as they are ignorant of the use of metal and steel, or knowing very little of the additional usefulness of these materials because we saw among them some pieces of knives and sword blades, which they didn't use for anything besides cutting meat or opening the fish that they take from the sea.²⁸

This account captures the paternalism of the early expeditions, which were delighted by the people that they found, but viewed indigenous people from the vantage point of a superior civilization. Even the elements of European material culture, such as the shards observed in the excerpt above, are used ignorantly or “incorrectly.” The chronicler dismisses this “misappropriations” as evidence of native innocence. That is, he assumed that there was a single “right way” to use these instruments and that indigenous ignorance prevented them from discovering the appropriate usage. Costanzo and his contemporaries failed to recognize that

²⁸ AGI Guadalajara 417:223 (“...pero lo mas digno de admiración es que para labrar la Madera y la Piedra no tienen Otros instrumentos, que de Pedernales, ignorando el usso de fierro y del azero, o conociendo mui poco las sumas utilidad de estas materias por que no dexamos de ver entre ellos algunos pedazos de Cuchillos y Ojas de Espada, que no empleaban a otra cosa que acortar carne o abrir el Pescado que sacaban del Mar...”)

Californian actors incorporated the instruments into a thriving and distinct material culture—why *should* native craftsmen substitute metal blades, considering the success they achieved with flints? However, Spanish observers, anticipating their own superiority, could not divorce themselves from their cultural expectations.

The work of Native Californians accordingly appeared natural or organic rather than technological; particularly of note were a broad variety of “riches made of a single piece of wood,” especially canoes carved from a single pine trunk.²⁹ These pieces seem to come into being whole, birthed by the clever but untechnological natives, who, like natural phenomena, remained static and incapable of self-initiated innovation. The absence of description of individual canoes or tapestries underscores this vision—rather than being authored by a single artist, these crafts, while skillful, expressed a collectivity, a communal impulse to fish or to cook.³⁰ Without history, cunning but without artistry, indigenous peoples were thus ripe for instruction; they had the skills but lacked the means or understanding to be truly innovative. Not only did native craftsmanship invite guidance, but its “organicism” allowed the Spanish to dismiss the work as a part of the land. This perspective envisioned a land as empty of human presence, and thus conquerable.³¹

²⁹ AGI Guadalajara 417:223 (“...ricas de Madera hechas de una pieza...”)

AGI Guadalajara 515:44 (“Lo singular que se ha observado en estos Yndios particularmente desde la canal de Santa Barbara es la grande habilidad con que contruien sus canoas, y otras muchas obras sin tener instrumentos...”)

³⁰ Myers, “Primitivism,” 268.

³¹ Myers, “Primitivism,” 268.

However, Spanish admiration for Native Californian boat-craft almost transcended the accustomed paternalism. Coastal Californians were

fluid, diligent, and ingenious with their dexterity and ability which comes out in the construction of their canoes, made of good planks of pine that are well-seamed and caulked and of a beautiful shape. They manage them with equal skill, and go out to the deep sea to fish in it, three or four men being capable of loading up to eight or ten. They use long oars with two paddles and row with indescribable lightness and speed.³²

Unlike the Southern and Central Californians indigenous peoples—indeed, most native peoples within the Spanish American territories—the Spanish had previously encountered, coastal Californian cultures could literally meet the Spanish in their sea vessels. These boats, capable of reaching even the farthest deep sea islands, could carry up to twenty people. In fact, native Californians initiated several encounters by boat when the Spanish were becalmed off their shores.³³ Not only did Californian boat-making shape Spanish impressions of the indigenous population, but it also disturbed the earliest tropes and methodologies of conquest. Although Cortes's expedition may not have anticipated the terrifying impact a fleet of ships made on a society without shipwrights, by 1769 the Franciscans were well-aware of the power of spectacle. However, prepared by their own traditions of boat craft, the Californians approached the Spanish ships with curiosity. Crespí, at one point, describes how “Two Gentiles came aboard,

³² AGI Guadalajara 417:223 (“suelos aplicados e ingenios o su destreta y habilidad sobre sale en la construcción de sus Canoas hechas de buena tabla de Pino bien ligadas y calafateadas y de una forma feciosa. Manejan estas con igual maña, y salen mar afuera a pescar en ellas, tres o quatro hombres siendo capaces de cargar hasta ocho o diez. Usan Remos largos de dos Palas y Bogar con indecible ligereza y velosidad, rodas sus obras son primorosas y bien acabadas...”)

³³ AGI Guadalajara 417:223 (“salen mar afuera a pescar en ellas, tres o quatro hombres siendo capaces de cargar hasta ocho o diez.”), AGI Guadalajara 516:58 (Esteban-Martinez, “Diary of the Frigate Santiago Alias the Nueva Galicia,” 20-21 July, 1774) (“Como nos quedamos en calma tubieron los Yndios logrados u deseo de tratar con nosotros...”)

and they tarried a while over our Ship and its things.”³⁴ Far from being awe-struck, these two natives unabashedly scrutinized the ship, its contents, and its crew. Crespi’s voluminous entry indicates his reciprocal fascination.

Spanish respect for these technological successes indicates the previously-discussed Eurocentric ranking system by which the explorers evaluated indigenous civility. While coastal Californian communities, with their elegant boats, established communities, and “decent” clothes, clearly surpassed earlier missionary encounters, the respect indicated in the above account suggests more an enthusiasm for *nascent* native civility than any sense of true equality.

Ranked Settlements

The Spanish extended their ranking and classification systems to indigenous architecture and village structures—the physical structures of the civilizations suggested in clothes, exchange, and craftsmanship. Most California Native American settlements constituted clusters of semi-permanent branch edifices thatched with local materials such as reeds and palm fronds.³⁵ However, some of these structures were more permanent than others; while the Chumash built enormous, whale bone-reinforced domes that accommodated their reliance on coastal resources, and the Gabrieleno-Tongva people of the Los Angeles area constructed similar domed huts from palm fronds and woven willow, seasonal

³⁴ AGI Guadalajara 515:44 (“Subieron a bordo dos Gentiles, y les quadro mucho vuestro Barco, y las cosas de el.”)

³⁵“Chumash History,” *Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians*, 2009
<http://www.santaynezchumash.org/history.html>, Kroeber, *Handbook*, 554-557.

excursions demanded smaller temporary shanties and cave dwellings.³⁶ Among most villages, the only permanent structures were the sweat lodge, a center for masculine and ceremonial activity, and a dancing enclosure in the village center.³⁷ Chumash and Luiseño contained a sweat lodge comprised of a semi-subterranean structure covered with a mud-caked variation of the standard home construction. Crespi described sweat lodges as “underground ones [buildings] also vaulted with dirt roofs on them, so that only the vault is to be seen, rising out of the ground like an oven; these houses have chimney-holes on top, a sort of doorway through which they go in and out by means of ladders...”³⁸ Small holes allowed both entry and the escape of smoke.³⁹ Most importantly, the village emanated from the community—the centrality and permanence of sweat lodges and dancing enclosures suggests that these structures reaffirmed and reinforced the connections between people and thus strengthened the community.⁴⁰

Prevalent throughout the missionary accounts is a preference for the more permanent settlements found along the coast, which bore stronger resemblance to rural European communities than the seasonal migratory societies. Nowhere does this predisposition evidence itself more clearly than in Miguel Costanzo’s diary. Although Costanzo remains remarkably distant from his indigenous subjects, his

³⁶Simi Trail Blazers

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com/articles/THE%20CHUMASH%20AND%20HOW%20THEY%20LIVED.html>, Kroeber, *Handbook*, 557, 628, “Tongva Village Site: An Introduction to the Tongva,” *Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens*, 2012 <http://www.rsabg.org/learn/453-tongva-village-site?start=1>

³⁷“Indians of California: An Overview,” *Learn California.Org*, 2000-2009

<http://www.learncalifornia.org/doc.asp?id=1897>, Kroeber, *Handbook*, 655-656, 669.

³⁸ Gamble, “Chumash Architecture,” 57.

³⁹ Gamble, “Chumash ARchitecture,” 57.

⁴⁰ Gamble, “Chumash Architecture,” 74, Kroeber, *Handbook*, 556-557, 655.

sudden digression from terse annotation to thrilled effulgence upon encountering a permanent coastal society belies his Euro-centric inclinations. Until this encounter, Costanzo confined himself to brief observations about the people themselves, noting merely, “A Rancheria short of Gentiles whose people were with us the greater part of the day, very happy and peaceful...” and “The Indians of a Rancheria that inhabited the same gully came to visit us, came without arms and an affability and meekness without equal...”⁴¹

In contrast, on Monday, August 14, 1769, Costanzo gushed,

We arrived at the marina, which offered us a view of an *established* village, the most numerous and cohesive of all of those we have seen until now, situated over a tongue or point of the land on the same beach as if it was commanding; it appeared to dominate the water. We counted up to thirty large and capacious houses of a spherical form, well-constructed and thatched with reeds... We realized that they couldn't be fewer than four hundred souls.⁴²

Although he himself draws the contrast between this village and those previously encountered—this settlement is “the most numerous and cohesive of all—the distinction between Costanzo’s previous silence and this effusion most highlights the premium he place on “*established*” villages. Like earlier discussions of clothes and craftsmanship, Costanzo ranks the settlement within the hierarchy of

⁴¹ AGI Guadalajara 417:223 (“Sabado 22 de Julio... junto real hacia una Rancheria corta de Gentiles cuya Gente estuvo con nosotros lo mas de el dia, mui alegre y a pacible... Lunes 24 de Julio... Nos pusimos en marcha y tomando el Rumbo Teornoro este por dentro de otra Cañada que termina en la de Santa Maria Magdalena... vinieron a visitarnos los Yndios de una Rancheria que havitaban la Propia Cañada, vinieron sin Armas con una afabilidad y mansedumbre sin igual...”)

⁴² AGI Guadalajara 417:223 (“Llegamos a la Marina, y se nos ofreció a la vista un Pueblo formal el mas numeroso y coordinado de quanta hasta entonces hubiezemos visto, situado sobre una lengua o punta de tierra en la misma Playa que estaba señoreando y parecía dominar las Aguas: contamos hasta treinta Cassas grandes y capaces de forma exferica, bien construidas y techadas de Zacate... no bajaría de quatrocientas almas.”)

civilizations. Further, his language correlates the expedition's purpose, conquering and claiming California, with the work the community already does: "dominating" and "commanding" land and sea. This village seems more akin to the European conquerors than the other native peoples; rather than being an organic manifestation of the space, the community rules the land and gives it meaning, creating a place that the Spanish could recognize and superficially comprehend.

Whether they examined indigenous dress, modes of exchange, or craftsmanship, Spanish participants in early encounters weighed Native Californian customs within a hierarchy that privileged Eurochristian custom. This ranking originated from European conceptualizations of the "New World" as a previously empty space, a blank canvas inviting the Spanish brush. However, despite the constant paternalistic undercurrent scoring the analyzed accounts, some actors displayed more sensitivity to native achievements than others. Crespí, for example, clearly valued indigenous boat technologies in their own right, not just because they were comparable to European versions. Indigenous responses ranged from gifting, trade, and threats to friendliness, according to their comprehension and expectations from the interaction. The paternalism, diverse Spanish perspectives, and active indigenous agency manifest at contact flourished in the missions.

Indigenous Material Culture in the Missions

In the missions, the Franciscans attempted to transform indigenous Californians into “civilized” Catholic citizens by substituting or introducing elements of Eurochristian material culture, altering aspects of native lifestyles, and appropriating images and concepts within a Christian context. However, many elements of Californian material culture persisted under Spanish dominion, in part because indigenous people made conscious decisions about how to receive Spanish interference and doctrine.

As discussed earlier, indigenous dress—particularly indigenous nudity—deeply concerned the missionaries. In the *Interrogatorio*, Mission San Luis Obispo’s report decried native nudity as a failure of decency and humility, exclaiming,

The dress which the Indians wear in their pagan state would have some similarity to that of our father, Adam, having fallen from the state of innocence with the sole difference that by means of leaves he manifested decency of the body, or to speak more accurately, the crime of his transgression. But these Indians profess so little decency that they live without even a leaf covering...⁴³

In other words, clothing represented human atonement for original sin and the first couple’s transgression against divine innocence. From this perspective, by flaunting their nakedness indigenous people reveled in that original sin. Without this basic humility, Californians thus defied all missionary civilizing efforts; Mission San Carlos lamented, “If all valued wearing apparel much more would be

⁴³ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 147-153.

given to them and in a short time we would have them going about as civilized.”⁴⁴ Dress evidently constituted a fundamental part of both Christian doctrine and civilized living, projects which went hand in hand. Fernando Librado recounted consequent missionary exertions to eradicate nudity. Each year missionaries doled out a ration of cloth; native people who had embraced the missions, such as the nuns, were rewarded with “better cloth, for they belonged to the priests.”⁴⁵

Indigenous people received these exhortations in a variety of ways. In Ventura, whether from a dearth of resources or a lack of interest, indigenous men failed to wear pants until 1847—well after the missions were secularized.⁴⁶ Some neophytes refused to abandon their fox-skin capes, clinging to their original material culture rather than submitting to Spanish objects.⁴⁷ In other instances, native Californians cobbled together a rich mix of garments, combining indigenous and Spanish traditions in ceremonial contexts. Librado describes a matrimonial “Jealously Dance” in which a female dancer named Guadalupe wore “a cape of feathers which extended from her neck down as far as the level of her elbows. It went all around her body. This cape was made by tying any old kind of feathers with rags. She wore it over ordinary Spanish clothes.”⁴⁸ Spanish clothes were evidently normalized enough to be described as “ordinary,” but here Guadalupe transculturated them, altering the clothes’ significance by covering them with a feather cape and incorporating them in traditional ritual. Finally,

⁴⁴ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 147-153.

⁴⁵ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 5.

⁴⁶ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 5.

⁴⁷ Fernando Librado, *Breath of the Sun: Life in Early California as Told by a Chumash Indian*, Fernando Librado, to John P. Harrington, Ed. by Travis Hudson. (Banning, Calif.: Malki Museum Press, 1979), 4.

⁴⁸ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 29.

some indigenous people eagerly accepted Franciscan material offerings—at least according to the missionaries themselves. Mission San Jose boasted, “no remedies are necessary to curtail nudity because it not only does not exist but these Indians are quite interested in going about clothed.”⁴⁹

The missionaries also sought to alter indigenous settlement patterns, replacing traditional lifestyles and community structures with European agrarian templates. All of the missions promoted sedentary community structures sustained by agriculture, overseeing the construction of neophyte villages and seeding and harvesting the fields, although perspectives on indigenous ways of life varied.⁵⁰ According to Mission San Buenaventura, for example, Native Californians “are born among the mountains and in the ravines like savages, feeding on wild seeds, and are without either agriculture or arts, or the occupations necessary in civil life...”⁵¹ As if in response, Mission San Luis Rey claims, “However, the neophytes do not now live in this manner since the vigilance and zeal of the fathers will not permit it and we missionaries spare no means for promoting their civilization.”⁵² Evidently, to these Franciscans, permanence and agricultural arts comprised the foundation of civilization itself; Californian lifestyles prior to Spanish occupation amounted to savagery.

Other padres, conversely, opined that although the missions taught agriculture, indigenous practice was neither wrong nor savage: rather, native

⁴⁹ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 147-153.

⁵⁰ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 23-27.

⁵¹ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 23-27.

⁵² Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 23-27.

peoples developed skills necessary to survive their environment. Mission Santa Clara argued,

They know nothing about agriculture nor do they need to practice it for they are satisfied to live on wild seeds, from the hunt, and by fishing. In these things the forests, fields, the ocean, rivers and marshes abound. The Indians know no other art than the making of bows and arrows and this they do to perfection and then employ them with dexterity and acumen.⁵³

In other words, the Father recognized that the bounty of the land provided native Californians little incentive to develop agriculture; however, indigenous people performed required capacities with “perfection,” “dexterity and acumen.”

Similarly, even as the Franciscans fervently fought to transform the neophytes, they sometimes showed astonishing sympathy toward the Native Californians.

The respondents at Mission San Francisco note, “To do away with nudity it would become necessary for the Indian to have less love for the beach and the open country and more love for work. They are still very tender plants at this mission for they are very recent arrivals and they love their original habitat and dislike clothing.”⁵⁴ Although this entry clearly dismisses native lifestyles, it also acknowledges Native Californian pain in the missionary-enforced breach from the beach and open country that they loved. Despite the ambivalent terminology—apparently, the indigenous peoples hated work and lived, like animals, in a “habitat”—the report ultimately humanizes the Indians, evoking the potentially universal heartache of leaving home.

⁵³ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 23-27.

⁵⁴ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 153.

Cabot and Sancho of Mission San Antonio, of all the *Interrogatorio*'s respondents, demonstrated the most cultural sensitivity and appreciation of native traditions. Throughout their reports, these two missionaries affirm Native Californians' superior knowledge of their land. Questioned about indigenous medicine and horticultural knowledge, Mission San Antonio explained,

They have no doctors who are university graduates but they have their healers who are more esteemed and more feared than our university trained doctors are held by us. These healers apply herbs, bark, leaves and roots as remedies. For the land abounds in these natural remedies and to classify the plants, give their names and describe their properties, the presence of a botanist would be required. It is certain that many illnesses are cured by these people and they have their remedies for everything, many quite effective. For this reason not a few prefer their herbs and roots to our unguents and salves.⁵⁵

This passage inverts the usual basic assumption of European material and intellectual superiority; the healers' knowledge of plants alone—and by heart—would defeat all but an experienced botanist. Further, the superior efficacy of native cures justifies their preference for traditional techniques over Spanish “unguents and salves.” Accordingly, Mission San Antonio advocated the continued coexistence of indigenous tradition: “The customs they have received from their ancestors are those mentioned before and others which they retain are in no way opposed to the state nor to religion.”⁵⁶ Thus, to Sancho and Cabot, Native Californian competence, while distinct from Eurochristian practice, complemented Spanish society.

⁵⁵ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 76.

⁵⁶ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 94.

In fact, across the board, the new settlements sustained certain elements of indigenous life. The missionaries retained temescals, or sweat lodges, the only permanent structures in most indigenous villages and thus, to the Franciscans, the nascent seeds of “civilization.” Mission San Buenaventura, for example, encompassed two sweat lodges, both “in the immediate vicinity of the old village of Mitsqanaqa’n.”⁵⁷ Thus, not only did the missionaries incorporate these traditional native structures in the missions’ geography, but they also preserved the accumulated meaning of the original pre-contact sites. The missions thus assumed a similar spiritual import, a didactic association that strengthened the appeal and comprehensibility of Christian doctrine. Similarly, Mission Santa Barbara decorated the ceiling of its church with the quincunx and Chumash religious imagery (*fig. 2 and fig. 3*). Four rosettes, themselves designed with a center and eight petals (a complication of the quincunx), are arrayed in a rectangle at the four cardinal points, surrounding a chandelier representing the world center. The chandelier is fixed in a clearly indigenous motif whose wings seem to allude to the Great Eagle, the being who in Chumash belief sustains the heavens and was a member of the council of supernatural powers who created humanity.⁵⁸ In case the conflation of indigenous and Christian celestial tropes remained unclear, the missionaries positioned an image of the Great Eagle over the font itself. The Franciscans clearly communicated that the Church stood at the symbolic center of the cosmos, with a ladder climbing from the physical space inhabited by the font to the heavens sustained by the Great Eagle.

⁵⁷ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 11.

⁵⁸ Peter N. Peregrine and Melvin Ember, ed., *North America*, Vol 6 of *Encyclopedia of Prehistory*, (London: Springer London, Limited 2001) 303.



Fig. 2, Quincunx and Great Eagle inside the Church at Mission Santa Barbara. Image by Author

If the padres strategically continued certain native material practices, others survived in the missions because the Franciscans disregarded or dismissed them. Native economies, which the Spanish viewed as juvenile at best, persisted in this way. As previously discussed, across California the padres observed that

Indian money in the past as at present has been beads” and tribes followed some form of gifting economy in which “contracts have been sacred to them at all times; non fulfillment makes for loss of caste so that afterwards none care to deal with anyone who does not keep his word. They give, lend and borrow not as strangers but as brethren.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 101-102, 107-108.



Fig. 3, Great Eagle above the Font,

Mission Santa Barbara. Image by author.

However, missionary understanding of indigenous commerce differed, although their attitudes were generally derisive. At best, native economies were simplistic; sometimes the padres acknowledged a certain canniness that certainly describes native motives for contact with the Spanish—“If at times they readily lend some beads or other articles,” Mission San Luis Rey complained, “it is because the beneficiary is a relative or because from a motive of self interest of desiring to be

someone's friend..."⁶⁰ Usually, however, the fathers believed native Californians had not yet achieved a development capacity for intricate commerce. Mission Santa Barbara articulated this view best: "These neophytes have not yet reached the stage where they can handle business matters or make contracts."⁶¹ Although certainly derisive and paternalistic, this missionary conceit actually permitted indigenous currency and exchange systems to survive.

No matter the Franciscans' intentions, indigenous Californians were not passive colonial subjects—they received Spanish material intercessions in a number of ways. Reactions ranged from rejection and distrust to acceptance. Fernando Librado, for example, dismissed image-peddlers who promised 200 days of forgiveness per purchase. Not only did Librado scoff at these opportunists, but he also proclaimed, "I did not believe for one hour that the Pope talked to G-d. I also said I did not believe in images," in one fell swoop rejecting two essential features of Catholic hierarchy and material relationship with the divine.⁶² Distrust demonstrates a different shade of rebellion. Librado, when discussing the death of an old friend, juxtaposes the dying man's teaching with his death bed secrecy. In a speech to his family, the man warned, "It will be the lazy one...that will try to see if they can find somebody from whom they can take their property; a few days later, when the priest came to administer the final rites with Librado as translator, the padre

asked the old man if he knew where any treasures had been buried. In response the old man answered: 'There is nothing I may tell you as to this

⁶⁰ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 107-108.

⁶¹ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 107-108.

⁶² Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 50.

which will be of any profit to you.’ The dying man then told me in Chumash that if he were to tell this priest, nothing would ever go to me. So the old man refused to say anything about it.⁶³

This story reveals three defiances. First, of course, the old man refused to divulge the location of his possessions. Secondly, by omitting these final words from his translation, Librado kept the old man’s secret. Finally, by juxtaposing the padre’s deathbed harassment with the old man’s speech, Librado suggests in the telling that it was the father, contrary to missionary rhetoric, who were truly indolent.

However, not all neophytes defied mission material culture. According to Librado, neophytes eagerly followed the padres’ rules of sharing church shoes so that they could hear the whole mass. Pablo Tac, describing Mission San Luis Rey’s practice of selling wine rather than distributing it to the neophytes, commends the missionary’s foresight, saying “he who knows the customs of the neophytes well does not wish to give any wine to any of them, but sells it...not for money, but for clothing for the neophytes, linen for the church, hats, muskets, plates, coffee, tea, sugar and other things.”⁶⁴ According to this account, Father Fernandino of Mission San Luis Rey sold the wine not only from a profound knowledge of native vulnerability to alcohol—a vice often bemoaned by the Franciscans—but also to *provide* for his neophytes.

Conclusions

Because objects create and express spatial meaning, early Spanish expeditions actively observed and evaluated indigenous material culture. The

⁶³ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 38-39.

⁶⁴ Tac and Hewes, “Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey,” 100.

Franciscans sought both to assess native Californian materiality—and consequently, to rank native civilizations—and to alter the significance of the space by substituting European objects and repurposing indigenous skills for the Eurochristian cause. However, rather than employing introduced materials as stepping stones to “civilization,” Californians recontextualized new objects into their original material culture; initial encounters actually reinforced indigenous socio-economic structures and underscored traditional relationships to the land itself. Even after the Franciscans established the missions, substitutions and fostered congruencies thus maintained features of indigenous “place” within mission materiality itself. Native neophytes exercised their agency by selectively incorporating Spanish objects into traditional understandings of materiality.

Exchange offered a basic common ground: to both the Spanish and indigenous actors, exchange represented a medium of nonviolent interaction. However, the Spanish also appraised the *form* the transactions took: the European parties regarded indigenous gifting societies as inferior systems of exchange compared to Western commodified economies. Spanish paternalism is evident throughout the accounts; even when native economies diverged from the basic gifting model, ranging from tropes of g-d worship to proto-commodified transactions, indigenous commercial frameworks invited and justified Spanish colonialism. These diaries also critique contemporary Bourbon reconfigurations of authority, drawing an explicit and sometimes longing contrast between indigenous “simplicity” and the complexities and corruptions of European commerce. Unlike guileful Bourbon politicians, who limited and feared

Franciscan autonomy, indigenous peoples trustingly offered their possessions to the expeditions.

However, all of these perspectives ignore Native Californian conceptions of these transactions. To Californians, the simple Spanish “gifts,” particularly beads carried additional significance to their material worth. Firstly, they were imbued with the substance of an unusual giver; secondly, they bound the Spanish to particular obligations and relationships embodied by the exchange; and thirdly, they connoted Spanish acquiescence and participation in indigenous modes and structures of exchange. In other words, the exchanges reinforced native claims to the land and ways of life.

The Spanish similarly evaluated indigenous clothing for congruencies with Catholic morality. Although the Franciscans expected nudity—and, consequently, sensuality—they sought evidence of nascent control of sexual appetites. This scrutiny was particularly directed at women, regarded as vessels of temptation and immorality. When native peoples demonstrated requisite “modesty,” their clothing suggested a closer alignment with Christian morals. This state, the Franciscans, facilitated the transformation of Californian from a pagan to a Christian space. Nudity, of course, invited Franciscan guidance. Further, the tension between the familiar and the foreign, concentrated around indigenous subjects who fell somewhere between these two categories, evoked the millenarian mission, the conquest of the devil’s domain. Finally, as members of the Bourbon regime, the Franciscans also used indigenous clothing to assess the

region's material possibilities, resources that could amplify the monarchy's power.

Assessments of indigenous craftsmanship exhibit a dual rhetoric of indigenous skillfulness and “organicism” that justified conquest. On one hand, native craftsmen demonstrated incredible cunning by creating beautiful and functional objects without “civilized” tools. However, the very lack of civilized tools lent the production process a certain organic quality—objects were not made, but birthed, more the products of a natural process than human ingenuity. The first facet demanded the “gift” of Hispanicization and Franciscans, the second suggested that the lands were empty of true human presence and thus conquerable. Sometimes, however, native craftsmanship nearly transcended the dialectic of Spanish superiority and indigenous inferiority. Coastal Californian boatcraft, for example, allowed native actors to meet the Spanish on the water; both parties demonstrated more curiosity than awe or condescension.

Evaluations of settlements and architecture particularly reflect the Hispanicization agenda. The Spanish compared indigenous village structure to rural European settlements, privileging sedentary and agrarian societies over migratory hunter-gatherers. This preference manifests in the expeditions' enthusiasm upon discovering the coastal indigenous communities, whose established settlements and mariner lifestyle tied them more firmly to one place. The Spaniards' sense of kinship to these communities is apparent in their effusion and the language they use—the coastal communities are less *of* the land than *dominating* the land, a vision of place and the natural world characteristic of

Western thought. In fact, most native Californian cultures were semi-sedentary, moving seasonally in pursuit of food or to escape the desert heat. However, although these cultures completed some migration, their relationship with the land was not the arbitrary dispersal of animals that the Spanish imagined; rather, seasonal sites remained regular. Most of all, the village existed where the community existed; permanent structures were not homes but ritual spaces such as the dancing enclosure or sweat lodge that reaffirmed the community.⁶⁵

After the missions were established, the Franciscans introduced objects designed to transform the Californian landscape into a Eurochristian space. Missionaries substituted, appropriated, and altered aspects of indigenous material culture in order to convert the new neophytes, and the place they inhabited, from their “savage” state into unadulterated Spanish Christians. However, indigenous peoples were not passive subjects of Spanish colonialism; rather, Californians negotiated with the new place superimposed by way of images, edifices, and clothing, selecting elements that resonated with and perpetuated their traditions. Occasionally native actors rejected objects that threatened their own agendas; other times, neophytes embraced Christian doctrine and its material manifestations. Evidently, both indigenous and Spanish agencies remained active within the California missions.

Material culture is not the only domain in which colonial power struggles manifest. These patterns of substitution, appropriation, and above all, competing agencies attempting to define the limits and meaning of space, extend to all forms

⁶⁵ Gamble, “Chumash Architecture,” 74.

and expressions of place. Competing agencies within the contact zone can be excavated from any culturally expressive object, sound, or process. The next chapter will explore sonic altercations as another method of articulating the boundaries of the Californian landscape.

Chapter 3

In 1912, Fernando Librado, a Chumash Indian, described two shocking bits of gossip to anthropologist John P. Harrington. According to an acquaintance, Librado confided, a certain priest

took all the best-looking Indian girls...and they put them in the nunnery [monjerio]; the priest had an appointed hour to go there. When he got to the nunnery, all were in bed in the big dormitory. The priest would pass by the bed of the superior [maestra] and tap her on the shoulder, and she would commence singing. All of the girls would join in, which in the dormitory had the effect of drowning out any other sounds. While the singing was going on, the priest would have time to select the girl he wanted, carry out his desires, and come back to where the superior was. Then the singing would stop. In this way the priest had sex with all of them, from the superior all the way down the line. It may be that it was some sort of game which had been concocted by the superior and the priest. The priest's will was law. Indians would lie right down if the priest said so.⁶⁶

When these secluded women wanted to have sex with indigenous men, they would sing out, “Nayi sku’um kiyush’alti lo’kak’loi.’ Then the nuns would take their bed sheets, and toss one end over the wall for the men to climb up.”⁶⁷

These glimpses are likely exaggerated; they reflect an extreme vein of Alta California mission history which emphasizes missionary abuse and native subjugation. However, they also encapsulate sonic culture's role as a vehicle for struggling agendas. The priest employed sound and sexual conquest to realize and reinforce his dominance; meanwhile, the nuns used the same mechanism to undermine colonial authority and express traditional sexuality.

Like the spatial and material dimensions discussed in the previous chapters, the aural interplay exhibited in the passages above expressed the warring

⁶⁶ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 53.

⁶⁷ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 54.

agencies that defined colonial “contact zone.” The Franciscans employed sonic culture, which encompasses music, silence, clamor, and language, to rank indigenous peoples, assert dominance, and to convert Alta California. However, sounds and silence also provided avenues for indigenous agency through resistance, inversion and transculturation. Because Native Californians, like most Native North Americans, employed sonic culture to transmit history, cosmologies, and social authority, sonority comprised a particularly powerful instrument of agency. The following chapter will explore the “contact zone” along three axes of confrontation. The first examines the overt competition expressed in moments of initial contact. The second axis investigates assertions of power and subversion during the mission period, and the third highlights the complementary process of transculturation.

Sonic Traditions: An Overview

According to a long tradition of sonic “civilization,” the Franciscans relied upon European sounds to create Spanish enclaves in “heathen” territory. In order to transform indigenous peoples into Spanish Catholic subjects, the missionaries sought to supplant native sounds with Spanish secular and sacred music, the tolling bells, and the timbre of the Castilian language.⁶⁸ Mission edifices, including the bell tower and central church, made tangible the newly-imposed sonic and spatial traditions. The substitution of Catholic and European sonorities ideally transformed the recently-baptized Native Californians into fully

⁶⁸ Koegel, “Spanish and French Mission Music in Colonial North America,” 37.

Hispanicized Christians.⁶⁹ In many cases, the missionaries achieved this goal. However, Spanish and Native Californian sonorities frequently interacted in unexpected ways. As the native neophytes—particularly the handpicked choristers—learned Spanish music, Castilian, and Spanish culture, they also began to exert reciprocal influence over the mission community. By audibly interrupting or complicating subordinated spaces, which were in turn delineated by the church bells, native actors inverted colonial power dynamics and asserted their own traditional identities. Ultimately, both Franciscan and Native American agents experienced “transculturation”—that is, they appropriated attributes of the other culture in order to pursue their own agenda.⁷⁰ Correspondingly, missionary and indigenous interactions with music—with sound in general—embody broader cultural judgments, negotiations, accommodations, abuses, and resistances.

As discussed in greater detail in Chapters 1 and 2, the Franciscans pursued a dual program of Hispanicization and evangelization, defining civilization within a Christian Eurocentric framework; humanity developed according to a set teleology, in which Catholic agrarian communities represented the highest state of social evolution.⁷¹ The missionaries exploring California thus initially catalogued Native American groups by their proximity to the European standard. Sedentary indigenous communities, according to this hierarchy, demonstrated a greater

⁶⁹ George Waggstaff, “Franciscan Mission Music in California, c. 1770-1830: Chant, Liturgical and Polyphonic Traditions,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 126:1 (2001): 56.

⁷⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, “The Art of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* 91. (New York: MLA, 1991) 33.

⁷¹ Maria F. Wade, *Missions, Missionaries, and Native Americans: Long-Term Processes and Daily Practices*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2008) xv, 3.

capacity to be saved and civilized.⁷² However, missionary rejection of the indigenous “Other” coexisted with a contradictory but equally important utopian narrative. This narrative cast the Native Americans as childlike innocents, destined to be molded into a pure Millennial Kingdom.⁷³ Junípero Serra, seeing native Californians for the first time, exclaimed, ““Then I saw what I could hardly begin to believe when I read about it or was told about it, namely that they [the Native Americans] go about entirely naked like Adam in Paradise before the fall.””⁷⁴ Serra’s idealized depiction of native nudity portrays as children in the Garden of Eden, free both of sin and of knowledge. These conflicting perspectives, both products of an Inquisition-defined ideal Christianity, coexisted in missionary accounts and informed early encounters and mission interactions alike.

Within this Franciscan worldview, sound represented an organizing principle. Beyond an institutional precedent for sonic conversion, Junípero Serra, the mission president, endorsed the philosophy of Duns Scotus, a medieval Franciscan theologian who encountered moral goodness in musical harmony. According to Scotus, morality, which emanates from proper hierarchal human relations, is embodied by the well-ordered proportion and balance of music. “Well-ordered [read: strictly ranked] communities did no less than reflect the very

⁷² Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo. *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997) 7.

⁷³ John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World: A Study of the Writings of Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525-1604)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956); Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors*.

⁷⁴ Steven W. Hackel, *Alta California: People in Motion, Identities in Formation, 1769-1850* (California: The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery and University of California Press, Berkeley, 2010) 40.

nature of G-d [ie, evoked the hierarchical constitution of the Trinity]”—and sound, specifically in the form of music, acted as a metaphor for that organizational harmony.⁷⁵ The Franciscans usually interpreted indigenous acceptance of musical offerings as acquiescence to Catholicism and missionary incursions. Sound, however, inhabited a more complex space than merely a benign introduction to Christianity. In the best cases, it was also a mode of relatively equitable exchange.

Native Californian cosmologies in turn manifested in their musical and ritualistic culture. As explained in Chapter 1, Native Californians believed that the world around them brimmed with power. The community’s safety relied on the elite’s knowledgeable manipulation of that power.⁷⁶ Within this framework, knowledge allowed any person to shape the world around them.⁷⁷ Because power could inhabit any object, the world was threatening; shamans created protective spheres centered on village communities to protect the inhabitants. *Any strangers entering this village structure were thus suspect*—particularly other humans, such as the Spanish, who might manipulate unrestricted power.⁷⁸

These cosmologies manifested throughout indigenous cultural practice. Dance, which was always driven by song, articulated and reinforced Native Californian cosmologies and sociopolitical structures. Ceremonies led by the

⁷⁵Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, “The Alta California Franciscans before 1769,” in *Alta California: People in Motion, Identities in Formation, 1769-1850*, ed. by Steven W. Hackel (California: The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery and University of California Press, Berkeley, 2010) 28.

⁷⁶ Bean, “Power and its Applications in Native California,” 26.

⁷⁷ Bean, “Power and its Applications,” 26.

⁷⁸ Bean, “Power and its Applications,” 26.

religious and temporal elite intensified humanity's contact with supernatural powers. These rituals, which Native Californians conducted to maintain the equilibrium of the universe or to access greater power, nearly always incorporated communal song.⁷⁹ Music also carried social significance. When questioned about native musics in the 1812-1815 *Interrogatorio*, the friars of Mission San Juan Bautista enumerated the diverse functions sonority played in local indigenous society: "They have songs for gambling, different songs for men than for women, songs for burials, songs for the moment of healing, songs for mocking one's enemies, songs for going off to war, for hunting, for men dancing, for women dancing, for entertaining young boys, and others for telling stories and fables."⁸⁰ Thus, sound reinforced hierarchies, communicated history, healed illness, celebrated and mourned the dead, and structured conflict within most Native Californian cultures.

As strangers entering the protected village sphere, the Franciscans thus assumed the role of powerful rival shamans. Accordingly, indigenous peoples tried the Franciscans by traditional standards—according to the efficacy of competing Spanish knowledge.⁸¹ The missionaries remained peripherally aware that native actors tried Christian power against a shamanic standard—and that priestly power did not always compare favorably. The first Spanish vessels, for example, were laden with dying Christians. *Padre* Luis Jayme, padre at Mission San Diego de Alcalá until 1774, admitted, "No wonder the Indians here were bad

⁷⁹ Bean, "Power and its Applications," 29-30.

⁸⁰ Russell, *From Serra to Sancho*, Appendix C-10.

⁸¹ Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press: 1997) 80.

when the mission was first founded... they did not know why they [the Spaniards] had come, unless they intended to take their lands away from them...instead, they said that it was bad to become a Christian and then they would die immediately.”⁸² The regional bands, observing the padres’ ineffective prayers, evaluated their power and found it insufficient and even culpable for rampant disease. Although Jayme confidently concluded that his neophytes (newly converted Indians) had embraced Catholicism, his own story suggests otherwise. This triumphant letter was destined to remain unfinished, cut short by his assassination. According to the accompanying note, Jayme fell to his knees and begged his assassins to remain true to G-d. His former students, disgruntled by Spanish incursions on their spiritual and physical territory and the inefficacy of Franciscan shamans, responded, “There is no longer love for G-d,” thus rejecting both Jayme’s influence and his supernatural patron—and thus, his constructions of space.⁸³

Axis One: Competition and Inversion at Contact

Initial interactions between the Franciscans and Californians frame the most overt forms of sonic competition and inversion. Although these interchanges frequently occur within the context of apparent welcome, vigorous power play complicates these exchanges, interrupting missionary expectations and inverting the designs of Eurochristian place. The account of Spanish civil engineer Miguel Costanzo illustrates this dynamic. Costanzo, who participated in an abortive 1770

⁸² Luis Jayme, O.F.M., *Letter of Luis Jayme, O.F.M., San Diego, October 17, 1772*. Trans and ed by Maynard Geiger, O.F.M. (Los Angeles: Dawson’s Book Shop, 1970), 40-42.

⁸³ Jayme, *Letter of Luis Jayme*, 66.

land voyage to Monterrey, described the celebrations of the peoples who inhabited the Californian coastal islands. These Californians received the cavalcade with gifts and dances—and then returned with a retinue of musicians in the evening to continue the festivities, despite the Spaniards’ strenuous objections. Costanzo admired the afternoon dances, which were accompanied by reed percussion in order to maintain the tempo. “The sound [of the reeds] marked the meter of their songs, and the cadence of the dance was so in time and so synchronized that *there was no dissonance*” [emphasis added].⁸⁴ To the European observer this consonance represented order and thus a fundamental civility, a critical precondition for evangelization. Costanzo’s annoyance about his interrupted sleep mitigates his earlier praise: when the Californians returned in the evening, they were heralded by “minstrels playing whistles whose sound *grated* on the ears.”⁸⁵ In this moment of miscommunication and cultural misunderstanding, the sound is no longer harmonious but abrasive. Sound, in this case music, thus becomes a medium for expressing both congruity and difference.

⁸⁴AGI Guadalajara 417:325 (Miguel Costanzo, “Diary of the Excursion by Land,” 4 May 1775) (Domingo 2 de Agosto (la Ysla)...No se contentaron los Gentiles con regalarnos de sus comidas, quisieron también festejarnos conociéndose la porjia y contiendo mutua de sobre salin cada Pueblo en los regalos y fiestas para merecer nuestra aprobación, y aplauso. vinieron en la tarde los principales, y Caziques de cada Pueblo, unos después de otros, adornados de Plumages con unos Carrizos rajados en las manos a cuyo movimiento y ruido marcaban el compais de sus Canciones, y la Cadencia del Vaile tan a tiempo, y tan uniformes que no causaban disonancia. Duraban los Vailes toda la tarde y nos costó harto trabajo el desprendernos de ellos; por fin los despedimos encargándoles mucho por señas que no vinieron de noche a incomodarnos, pero en vano: volvieron cerrada la noche con gran comitiva de ruanes o Juglares tocando unos Pitos cuyo sonido Rasgaba los Oidos. Era de temer que nos alborotasen la Caballada por lo que salió a recibirlos el Comandante con sus oficiales y algunos Soldados: dieron les algunos Abalorios intimándoles que si bolbian a interrumpirnos el sueño, no serian nuestros Amigos, y los recibiriamos mal: bastante diligencia para que se retiraran, y nos dexaron en país lo restante de la noche.)

⁸⁵ AGI Guadalajara 417:325.

During his first journey into Alta California, a musical encounter amused Serra as well. One day, an indigenous man approached bearing rattle and stick. He refused to eat all proffered food, insisting that as the “dancer of that country,” he must dance and sing over meals before consuming them. To the awe and amusement of the watching company, he began dancing around a growing pile of provisions, changing his song each time a spectator added a contribution. Finally, after circling all of the provisions, he was satisfied, “declared now all fear had left him,” and offered to accompany the enterprise—provided “we [the missionaries] allow him to dance all the way. We agreed to his suggestions with the greatest pleasure.”⁸⁶ Serra characterizes the man’s music as mere “whooping and cavorting,” a patronizing description that underscores his general paternalistic tone of indulgence and amusement.⁸⁷

However, while Serra’s account clearly exposes his colonial perspective, this case and Island dancers’ intrusion into the Spanish camp constitute a distinct form of musical resistance. In both instances, native Californians entered spaces physically demarcated by the campsite. Uninvited yet heralded by disruptive music and dance, these actors inverted the spatial limitations imposed by the Spanish. Despite repeated invocations not to disturb the company’s rest, the islanders returned on their own terms; despite repeated offers of food, the dancer in Serra’s story refused the Spanish gifts in order to ceremonially claim all of the cavalcade’s provisions. Music and dance act as a vehicle to undermine the

⁸⁶ Junípero Serra, *Writings of Junípero Serra, Vol I*. Ed and trans by Antonine Tibesar, O.F.M. (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955) 91.

⁸⁷ Serra, *Writings*, 91.

missionaries' structured space, reestablishing the native position as hosts and primary occupants of the territory. By upending the conditions of the encounter, these indigenous agents reclaimed an influential posture in the subsequent interaction. The interchange thus reads as a competition for authority over the land and the capacity to define the limits of the relationship. The dancer in Serra's account further intervened in the colonial dynamic by inviting himself along on the expedition, rather than being pressed into service. The interaction thus reads more as a relationship between equals—a man offering his valuable help to guests in his land.

Missionaries also extended music to the Californians. Alabados, or simple songs praising G-d, were regular offerings. Fray Francisco Palou gathered several natives, blessed them, and sang over them; according to his account, the Californians were “very quiet and attentive to the ceremony that I did for them, as if they were instructed in it.” Vicente Santa Maria similarly recounts an idyllic afternoon passed with a group of native Californians. “When they were through singing,” Santa Maria says, “they handed me the rattles and by signs asked me also to sing. I took the rattles and, to please them, began to sing them the ‘Alabado’ (although they would not understand it), to which they were most attentive and indicated that it pleased them.”⁸⁸ These musics, bestowed one after the other, meet on equal terms—distinct but mutually comprehensible and acceptable tenders. However, these exchanges frequently became combative. Fray Pedro Font, traveling through the Californian countryside in 1776, described

⁸⁸ James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

meeting a group of indigenous people, who invited them to their village. The group followed the Spanish party with singing and dancing, which Font “interrupted by chanting the alabado, as we did every day...but as soon as I finished they continued their singing and shouting with greater vigor and in a higher key, as if they wished to respond to our chant.”⁸⁹ By interrupting his hosts, Font sought to establish his culture’s supremacy: the civilized sounds of G-d superseded the clatter of a barbaric welcome. The Californians “responded” by attempting to drown him out, reclaiming their authority over the region through volume and pitch.

Sound acted not only as a weapon, but also as a potential mediator. The padres also endeavored to use the Mass to subdue disgruntled groups. Serra’s 1769 company, threatened by an armed group of Californians, encircled them and compelled them to hear a Mass.⁹⁰ This attempt, predicated on the assumption that the natives could be overawed like children, was unfounded and unsuccessful—the Californians, once released, returned with forty men. “What they said, according to our interpreters, was that we should not go farther but go back and that they wanted to fight.”⁹¹

Native Californian neophytes practiced not only musical confrontations but verbal inversions as well. Librado laughingly remembers a gardener named Laudencio, who sent his non-Spanish-speaking assistant to request twine from the San Buenaventura priest. Laudencio taught his helper the ritualized refrain that

⁸⁹ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 213

⁹⁰ Serra, *Writings*, 75.

⁹¹ Serra, *Writings*, 75.

the priests anticipated from the converts: “Ave Maria Purísima,” (“Hail Mary”) to which missionaries traditionally responded “Bien venido” (“Welcome”). However, Laudencio mocked this ritual—the language, the imposition of the refrain, and the intruding sounds of Eurochristian place—by instructing his assistant to continue, “‘Padre, dame pita para amarrar tu chile’ (“Father, give me string so I can tie it to your prick.”)⁹² By adding this retort, Laudencio overturned the power relationship implicit in the ordinary cadence of greeting. Further, he exploited his aide’s ignorance of the Castilian language to subordinate Franciscan dominance, essentially suggesting that Spanish sound carries not sacred but rather lewd possibilities. Laudencio’s deconstruction and reconfiguration of dominant sounds upends but simultaneously acknowledges Spanish spatial significance. This inversion, which exhibits the struggle between indigenous and Spanish claims upon the Californian landscape, exemplifies the tangible “contact zone”.

Axis Two: Expressions of Power and Missionary Suspicion

Once established, the missions drastically altered the Californian temporal and physical landscape. Missionaries formulated their ascendancy by restructuring time and space with the clang of mission bells, the superimposition of the Spanish language, and choral learning, as will be discussed later in this section. Secondary indigenous resistance correspondingly comprised more subtle inversions, pivoting on silence and emasculated colonial authority. A state-issued survey called the *Interrogatorio* distributed in 1812 and completed in 1815

⁹² Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 18.

indicates the tenuous coexistence that succeeded initial contact struggles. The missionaries' responses to the survey convey still-extant indigenous aural practices, native resistance techniques, and a missionary fight to assert European dominance over Californian spatial configuration. The mission "contact zones," then, is eventually constituted by the both parties' spatial significations, forever locked in combat and negotiation. In one telling passage, the padres of Mission San Luis Rey fully observe and delineate the rites surrounding the sacrifice of the Azut, or a large hawk. The account reflects the tension between the padres' belief in a successful colonial order and the suspicion that native spiritualities endured.

In preparation for these rituals, indigenous men competed to capture Azut chicks, an action which conferred honor on the hunter, and then raised them. When the chicks fledged, the tribe gathered to sacrifice the birds, feasting into the night. The missionaries report,

They dance and sing a very sad chant. While this is going on the old men and women blow in every direction at the same time making a thousand strange faces and grimaces. Then the birds are killed in a slow manner. As soon as they are dead they extinguish the fire and all break out into wailing, shouting and howling like crazy people, take off the smut and strike about like maniacs so that their actions cause horror and confusion. After this raving lasts for a long time, they light the fire again. Then they skin the birds and throw the flesh into the fire. Meanwhile they sing again but more gently. The birds' feathers are preserved with great care and veneration until the next day when they make a sort of skirt of them. This skirt is worn by a boy during the remaining days of the feast. In this apparel he dances in the midst of a great circle of Indians who likewise go about to and fro keeping time with the boy who dances in the center. This dance is continued at intervals. In like manner other boys selected for that purpose exchange places

with the first boy. After the feast the captain of the village keeps the skirt with an amount of veneration or a species of idolatry.⁹³

Qualitative sound plays a contradictory role that echoes the missionaries' discomfort: the ceremony is both "raving" and "gentle". The narrator's depiction simultaneously hangs on negative descriptors and moments in which organized song is imbued with human feeling rather than savage gesture. On one hand, the elderly "grimace," all of the participants "wail," "shout" and "howl like crazy people"; on the other, the chant is "sad". The missionaries even characterize the veneration of the bird-feather skirt as idolatry, but eventually conclude, "We have made very careful inquiries as to the purpose of these ceremonies but we have never been able to obtain any information other than that they did this because their ancestors practiced it."⁹⁴

The persistence of indigenous music and dance hinges in part on the question of silence and omission. As the same San Luis Rey missionaries later complain, the native peoples "are so reticent, deceitful and reserved, that although I have been among them since the mission was founded, what I can make known with greater certainty [than our success] is my ignorance of their superstitious affairs. For they never reveal more than that which they cannot deny."⁹⁵ In fact, silence constituted a critical element of native spirituality, a traditional mechanism that protected against the manipulation and misuse of power.⁹⁶ The

⁹³ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 57.

⁹⁴ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 57.

⁹⁵ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 72.

⁹⁶ Lisbeth Haas, "'Raise Your Sword and I Will Eat You': Luiseño Scholar Pablo Tac, ca. 1841," in *Alta California: People in Motion, Identities in Formation, 1769-1850*, ed. Steven Hackel, et al., (California: The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery and University of California Press, Berkeley, 2010) 92-93.

missionaries were clearly ignorant of many native spiritual practices, and the native Californians probably maintained that shroud of silence around their most important traditions.⁹⁷ These silences suggest a world of latent tension and accommodation, which occasionally erupted into direct confrontations. Officials throughout the missions periodically sought to prohibit music and dance or limit its physical space; this repression provoked active indigenous resistance, including “at least one uprising at Mission San Gabriel.”⁹⁸ In order to maintain an uneasy peace, most missionaries chose to ascribe dances to cultural inheritance and recreation, rather than spiritual practice or eruptions of indigenous cosmographies.⁹⁹ When French sea captain Auguste Duhaut-Cilly visited the mission in 1829, he remarked, ““Although they may all be Christians, they retain many of their former beliefs, which the padres, as a matter of policy, pretend not to notice.””¹⁰⁰

Missionary perspectives on the progress of their native neophytes varied. Many padres wrote disdainfully about the neophytes’ efforts; these dismissals frequently used sound to evoke the chaos to which the indigenous peoples were prone. Describing native healing methods, one padre noted, “These [healers and wizards] have deceived the greater number of their people. They cure by chanting and gestures and shouts they attempt to effect their superstitious cures.”¹⁰¹ According to this passage, uncivilized deceptions are achieved by bewildering

⁹⁷ Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press: 1997) 51.

⁹⁸ Haas, ““Raise Your Sword and I Will Eat You,”” 109.

⁹⁹ Haas, ““Raise Your Sword and I Will Eat You,”” 109.

¹⁰⁰ Beebe and Senkewicz, “The Alta California Franciscans before 1769,” 27.

¹⁰¹ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 78.

and beguiling sounds, meant to distract from the falsity of superstition. Sonority, as an attribute of place, is transformed into an inferior subterfuge in native hands. In other words, according to these priests the “crude” neophytes pervert the very forms of culture which should demonstrate their humanity.

The missionaries assessed the neophytes’ very civility by their verbal manners. According Mission San Juan Bautista’s response to a question inquiring after native language, although the regional groups “appear to speak distinct languages this is only accidentally true; that is, some of the words are different only because of the manner of pronunciation, in some cases rough, in others agreeable, sweet or strong.”¹⁰² The words assigned to the sounds of their language (“rough,” “agreeable,” “sweet,” and “strong,”) are, in fact, both human qualities and sonic descriptors. Presumably, the “agreeable” pronunciation—by extension, the speakers—would be more amenable to Spanish “decorous” sound, Hispanicization, and evangelization than would be the “rough” or “strong,” the attributes which diverge from “proper” European sound, and, transitively, spatial structures. The association of these characteristics and accent thus connotes the priest’s larger perception of distinct Native Californian groups.

Other missionaries, particularly Mission San Antonio’s recognized composer Juan Bautista Sancho and his companion Pedro Cabot, acknowledged the value of indigenous sonic traditions and encouraged their preservation. These missionaries eschewed patronizing metaphor in favor of acknowledging the possibilities of native methods, crediting them with an incredible aptitude for

¹⁰² Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 20.

music that *originated in their own sonic culture*. The missionaries say, “The neophytes have a lot of musical talent, and they play violins, cello, flutes, horn, drum, and other instruments that the Mission has given them. From their native heritage they preserve a flute...[which] forms eight different note-locations perfectly.” Clearly indigenous sounds persisted in the missions: to the missionaries, this sonic background only enriched mission choirs, for it endowed the neophytes with “clear voice and good ear that they all have, both men and women alike” and enabled successful performance.¹⁰³ In Mission San Antonio, where music had long formed a crucial element of relatively equal interaction, the missionaries linger neither on the evangelical possibilities of song nor its “otherizing” potential. Rather, music had already fomented a close community in which the members sincerely attempted to understand each other.

In spite of their varying sympathies toward Native Californians, however, most of the priests also estimated high evangelical success and expressed their achievement in aural terms. Generally, the missions mapped their accomplishments in before-and-after, pagan and Christian dichotomies. Before the Spanish, contends Mission San Buenaventura, the native Californians “lived in perpetual idleness, roving about, *dancing* and *gambling*,” constantly at war, but “at the *echo of the Gospel trumpet* and at the *sound of the Gospel of peace* they broke their bows, made pieces of their weapons and G-d of peace is known and praised among the Gentiles.”¹⁰⁴ Here, both “civility” and “savagery” are configured in terms of sound and music. Native Californian gambling and

¹⁰³ Russell, *From Serra to Sancho*, Appendix C-29-30.

¹⁰⁴ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 62.

dancing , extended as examples of traditional native “idleness,” were always accompanied by song. Thus, indigenous musical structures are conflated with an anarchic, dissipated lifestyle. In contrast, evangelical triumph was heralded by the “echo of the Gospel trumpet” and the achieved through “sound” of Christian equanimity, which inspired the natives to abandon their sinful bellicosity. Sound thus encompasses both decadent indigenous leisure pre-Contact and the transformative aspect of the Contact. According to this passage, the Franciscans’ missionary fervor, articulated through the Gospel trumpet, has surmounted Californian paganism.

Musical learning advanced both the evangelical and Hispanicizing colonial objectives. These goals frequently progressed hand-in-hand: as neophytes learned prayers and hymns, their Castilian improved and the balance of mission space shifted toward the colonizers. However, many Native Americans fought language acquisition. The frustrated missionaries ascribed this resistance to indigenous “crudity and their great repugnance to give up their own tongue.”¹⁰⁵ The facility with which Native Californians learned Spanish for music (according to the padres, only those “destined to be musicians and singers” were “susceptible to further development”) suggests that this refusal was an active choice, not basic “crudity.”¹⁰⁶ Sacred music eased communication and certainly increased religious knowledge as well; “some boys...apply themselves to reading so that they may better learn the Christian doctrine and be better singers in choir.”¹⁰⁷ Indigenous

¹⁰⁵ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 41.

¹⁰⁶ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 37.

¹⁰⁷ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 37.

neophytes clearly valued being musicians, and simultaneously increased their exposure to Spanish Catholic culture. In turn, “melody was used as a mnemonic device and in liturgical services, and song was part of the daily routine of the neophytes.”¹⁰⁸ Songs also reinforced catechistic themes.¹⁰⁹ Thus, seeing the choristers’ notable progress, the missionaries applied musical teaching to all native neophytes, hoping to inspire devotion and learning.

In order to perpetuate this process, Narciso Duran, who led the choir at Mission San Jose, recommended integrating choristers into daily mission life. To maintain musical life, Duran argued, and thus the evangelical and culture process, “one has only to start training little boys as pages and that they grow up beside the older ones: and once they get married, put them into domestic positions such as weavers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, etc., to have them close at hand whenever the opportunity arises to sing or play.”¹¹⁰ In other words, the choristers received a privileged position within the mission community. Guaranteed work was supplemented with special clothing: at Mission Santa Clara de Asis, musicians received special blue uniforms with colorful caps to forge a unified group and distinguish them from their peers.¹¹¹

These social distinctions unconsciously mimicked a traditional indigenous social class. Within many Native Californian cultures, secret societies regulated supernatural knowledge. Participants, as manipulators of power, were influential within their communities. Membership was indicated by a regimented selection

¹⁰⁸ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 162.

¹⁰⁹ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 163.

¹¹⁰ Russell, *From Serra to Sancho*, Appendix C-15.

¹¹¹ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 222.

process, distinctive costume, special languages, particular rituals—and as knowledgeable men, they received economic and social privilege. For example, the Chumash, a coastal group concentrated around Santa Barbara and San Buenaventura, were protected by the *'antap* cult. The cult spoke an esoteric language, comprehensible only to members, that was used in religious music and to name individuals.¹¹² According to Fernando Librado, the *'antap* cult remained influential within the mission community. The Franciscan even employed members, who could tell time by their shadows, to structure the mission days. Admiringly, Librado explained, “After the Spaniards came, the numerals in Ventura Chumash were used for telling the hours of the day. Diego Fernandez, an Indian, would stand about mid-day and watch his shadow: if it fell due north, he knew it was twelve o’clock...Not all the Indians knew the north, but those of the siliyik [cult officials] did.”¹¹³

These traditional hallmarks of cult membership—special clothes, language, music, position—resonate in the mission musical communities. Choristers learned Latin and Spanish for sacred music; they wore blue uniforms and bright hats; they rehearsed every day and led the congregation in prayer; they received privileged work within the missions and were paid to perform beyond them in “weddings, civil celebrations, and masses for the dead.”¹¹⁴ Musicians thus became leaders in mission communities, with special access not only to

¹¹² Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 8.

¹¹³ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 10.

¹¹⁴ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 222.

indigenous power sources but also the Christian G-d.¹¹⁵ Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, an affluent Californio [Spanish settler in Alta California], later commented, ““It was thought such an honor to sing in church that the Indian Families were all very anxious to be represented.””¹¹⁶

Later competition also manifested in direct violence or reversals of Franciscan impositions. In these instances, each group utilized music to control, reject, or reconcile with the other. For example, the Chumash community, led by indigenous choir master Jayme of Mission Santa Barbara, revolted in 1824. After several weeks hiding in the woods, Jayme led the rebelling Chumash back to the Mission.¹¹⁷ The peace was signaled by a wilderness Mass, in which the missionaries and the choir members joined in unified song.¹¹⁸ Music thus provided an avenue for rebellion and reunification.

Native Californians also directed particular ire towards the mission bells, which regimented the day and drastically altered indigenous times structures. Conquered communities were referred to as “bajo campana,” or under the bell. As Kristin Mann notes, “bells defined territory for individuals living within the range of their sound.”¹¹⁹ They also indicated ethnic difference: Native Californians were directed by a distinct bell tone than “*gente de razon*.”¹²⁰ Indians consequently resented the bells as symbols of indigenous subjugation, and not only were they desecrated during attacks, but their function was deliberately inverted. The sound

¹¹⁵ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 193.

¹¹⁶ Sandos, *Converting California* 143

¹¹⁷ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 168.

¹¹⁸ Sandos, *Converting California*, 149-150.

¹¹⁹ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 195.

¹²⁰ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 198-199.

of the bells “could be used as information for those wishing to attack the missions at a time when they could capture or kill congregated groups.”¹²¹ The bells therefore functioned as manifestations of the “contact zone” space, both constructing and overturning colonial spatial reorientation.

Many indigenous Californians also inverted or complicated colonial power relations by altering the mission space or adapting traditional culture to fill temporal gaps not controlled by the bells. If Spanish Catholic lifestyle and spirituality dominated the day, then dances and musical practice that reproduced indigenous place filled the night. Many choir members were active participants in nighttime spiritual activities, shedding their uniforms and donning elaborate costumes to lead the dances.¹²² Indigenous musicians also overturned the spiritual and physical boundaries that the Franciscans imposed. Furious at prohibition of dance, choristers might lead a cacophonous dance on the roof of the church—during Mass.¹²³ Other times, ignoring musical restrictions in church, choristers broke away from the Mass and produced secular songs, to the consternation of the priests.¹²⁴ By interrupting or challenging Spanish spatial arrangement, indigenous actors sought to reclaim jurisdiction over their land.

Librado even describes a Chumash wedding ceremony, which performed an “enthusiastic sexual burlesque” in the Ventura Market Plaza adjacent to the church.¹²⁵ Still other Californians simply ignored the demands of the bells.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 199.

¹²² Mann, *The Power of Song*, 193, 168.

¹²³ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 220.

¹²⁴ Sandos, *Converting California*, 149-150.

¹²⁵ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 28-29.

¹²⁶ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 193.

Even Pablo Tac, who endorsed the mission system and followed it to Rome, reversed the “civilizing” understanding of the California missions by portraying Native Californians as tolerant hosts and the Spanish as ignorant children. Tac asserted, “It was a great mercy that the Indians did not kill the Spanish when they arrived, and very admirable, because they have never wanted another people to live with them, and until those days they were always fighting.”¹²⁷ According to this narrative, Native Californians actively chose to incorporate Spanish cosmographies, and thus retained control over the parameters of Californian place.

Axis Three: Transculturation

Both Californians and Franciscans also actively appropriated elements of the other’s culture in order to advance their individual interests, a process called “transculturation.”¹²⁸ In the mission “contact zone,” neither the Californians nor the Franciscans could control the transmission of material from the other culture. However, they could control the extent of absorption, “select” appealing mechanisms, and express their agency and sense of place through these new mediums.¹²⁹ For example, the Franciscans emphasized Marian music and veneration because it paralleled extant Californian tradition. Several indigenous groups possessed congruous female deities; the Gabrieleños [a tribe near San Diego], for instance, revered a virginal figure, Chukit, “who was impregnated by the son of G-d via lightning.” The Franciscans conflated this and similar deities in

¹²⁷ Pablo Tac, *Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey: a Record of California Mission Life*. Translation and forward by Minna and Gordon Winaut Hewes. (San Luis Rey, California: Old Mission, 1952) 12-13

¹²⁸ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6

¹²⁹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6

devotional practice in order to alter indigenous sexual spheres and inculcate Marian virtues of ultimate chastity in the neophytes. The resemblance between Mary and this virgin deity formed the basis of the Marian cult in San Diego.¹³⁰

Pablo Tac, who left the Luiseño people for a Roman seminary education, similarly used language and European literature to perpetuate his native identity. Although he acknowledged indigenous defeat and missionary dominance, he also reaffirmed the importance of the Luiseños within this new society. Tac admonishes, “For us the son of G-d came down from the skies and also died for us.”¹³¹ He thus locates the Luiseños “within the larger Christian teleology” and cosmography—situating the Californian “frontiers” in the center of the Catholic universe. Simultaneously, Tac translates the word “G-d” as “Chinichnis,” an indigenous being who bequeathed the Luiseño special dance ritual, thereby claiming access to a G-d that reflects not European but Luiseño traditions. Pablo Tac’s dictionary compilation also represents a form of resistance and cultural preservation. When selecting a Luiseño equivalent to the Spanish verb “to dress” (“vestirse”), for instance, he proposes “cheiis,” a word that traditionally evoked dressing with a special garment, or “cheiat” for a religious dance. By associating the word “cheiis” with daily Christian life, Tac allowed his people to regularly reference dancing ritual, reinforcing the memory of pre-Contact traditions.¹³² A European seminary education therefore becomes a vehicle for Luiseño identity,

¹³⁰ Mann, *The Power of Song*, 165

¹³¹ Haas, ““Raise Your Sword and I Will Eat You,”” 103

¹³² Haas, ““Raise Your Sword and I Will Eat You,”” 102.

even within a Spanish Catholic framework; further, this incursion occurs at the physical axis of Catholic spirituality—Rome.¹³³

Corpus Christi, which not only included a special mass but also theater and procession, also offered an opportunity for the priests to incorporate attractive elements of indigenous religiosity, including dance. This use of dance as part of religious pageantry, inextricably bound to religious music, directly mirrors native conceptions of the relationship and meaning of dance, music, and prayer. In California, the Corpus Christi ceremony not only incorporated indigenous dancers, but further reinforced the connection between native and Catholic spirituality by including a sense of fourness. The Alta California Corpus Christi ceremony included a march to four chapels in four directions, a practice which drew converts because it echoed widespread native celebration of the quincunx. “The Franciscans, therefore, elaborated upon the quincunx and took advantage of its implications to achieve their mission purposes.”¹³⁴

Other major occasions, such as the Pascual Holy Week and Christmas, provided similar avenues to native participation and influence. At Mission Santa Barbara, for example, nativity plays were performed not in Spanish but in Chumash; indigenous actors such as Librado’s acquaintance “Antero had charge of the music,” and all of the actors were “pure Indians.”¹³⁵ Missionaries also often allowed the two traditions to coexist. Indigenous choirs performed at building christenings, and when the new church at Mission San Buenaventura was blessed,

¹³³ Haas, ““Raise Your Sword and I Will Eat You,”” 103

¹³⁴ Russell, *From Serra to Sancho*, 178

¹³⁵ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 49

“the old Indians chose the Blackbird and Swordfish dances to celebrate...”¹³⁶ The same singers and dancers also performed the Swordfish Dance at Pascua. Once the church’s celebrations finished, the participants retired to their own communities to “sing and dance some more.”¹³⁷ In this arena, neither tradition triumphed; instead, Catholic and Californian ceremonies existed side by side, transformed but ultimately foils for each other.

Conclusions

Rather than yielding a simple domination-subjugation narrative, Alta California mission sonorities impart a complex portrait of the interactions and altercations between Spanish Franciscan missionaries and native Californians. Like the examinations of place and material culture in the prior chapters, this image departs from traditional constructions of “the denial of coevalness”—that is, the belief that the advent of Native American “evolution” coincided with the arrival of European civilization. The repudiation of “the denial of coevalness” via the introduction of indigenous agencies into the conversation, a process which Walter Mignolo terms “the denial of the denial of coevalness,” is my fundamental object here.¹³⁸ Evidently, Native Californians were not passive colonial subjects: they practiced sonic inversions, “transcultured” European aural structures, and asserted their own varied agencies. Nor were the Franciscans monolithic, or even successful, conquistadors, for all that they imposed the Euro Christian temporalities and sonorities on the Californian landscape and peoples.

¹³⁶ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 25-26

¹³⁷ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 26

¹³⁸ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, ix

Instead, initial sonic competition continued throughout the mission period—the missions, as both tangible and social spaces, were characterized neither by a hybrid resting place nor a stable status quo, but rather a continual battle for authority. Missionaries denounced native belligerence, indolence, and stupidity in the 1813-1815 *Interrogatorio* and after, and choirmaster Jayme led the Chumash rebellion in 1824: this distrust and rejection clearly undermine the idea of any culminating formation of a unified, syncretic space. Rather, throughout the period, Franciscans struggled to enforce their agendas of evangelization and Hispanicization, while Californians fought to preserve traditional custom or appropriated Spanish structures to assert their influence in a constantly changing world. According to this framework, individual Franciscans and Native Californians seized any means at their disposal to retain their agencies—including structures from the other group, such as Pablo Tac’s dictionary. This process of “transculturation” acknowledges the impossibility of preventing cultural transmission, struggle, and change, but also clarifies that colonial actors could filter the transferred material and selectively utilize it to preserve and advance specific agendas and spaces. Although the interchange transformed all of the actors, the Franciscans and Californians did not, as White argues, necessarily become any more alike. Rather, while their tools, goals, and circumstances changed, the struggle for control remained constant. Sonic culture acted as one instrument of power relations; material culture was another.

Conclusions

In 1769, Franciscan missionaries penetrated Alta California. As a frontier territory remote from central New Spain, Alta California's mission history upholds Spanish colonial tradition despite contemporaneous political upheaval. Accordingly, Franciscans sought to accomplish the dual colonial project mandated by the 1492 Alexandrian Bulls: the evangelization and Hispanicization of the native occupants. This double objective was particularly prevalent in Alta California, where the Franciscan order comprised more an arm of the Bourbon state than a representative of the Vatican. Between 1769 and 1832, the Franciscans reduced Native Californians into the permanent mission communities, hoping to transform these indigenous peoples into true Spanish citizens through relocation, intensive acculturation, and thorough catechization.

I entered this project striving to repudiate "the denial of coevalness" by introducing indigenous agencies into the conversation, a process which Walter Mignolo terms "the denial of the denial of coevalness." However, rejecting "the denial of coevalness" produces a spectrum of possible alternatives. Did the grapplings of these disparate groups eventually culminate in a hybrid Spanish-indigenous mission society that synthesized aspects of both cultures, as Richard White's "middle ground" model argues? Or did these tensions endure throughout the mission period, constantly informing individual Franciscan-Californian interactions and ultimately creating a space not resolving, but rather *defined* by competition?

My project demonstrates that struggles for authority persisted throughout the mission period, characterizing the Alta California missions as “contact zones.” Richard White, and California mission scholars such as James Sandos and Steven Hackel, align the missions with a set teleology of struggle, adaptation, and hybridization, envisioning a set endpoint of a hybrid society.¹³⁹ Instead, negotiation, accommodation, and competition persisted. Mary Louise Pratt’s “contact zone,” with its emphasis on extemporaneous interaction, captures this dynamic of flux. In the course of this thesis, I elaborated her concept by exploring the physical space associated with colonial power relations. Within this tangible “contact zone,” multiple agencies vied to define the parameters of space.

Both the Spanish and the Native Californians entered primary encounters with pre-conceived rationalizations of the world around them. Cosmographies predicated on ethnic centers, or the sources of enunciation, imbued the tangible world with meaning. However, while both indigenous and Spanish actors attached significance to the physical world, the European colonists also bore a well-developed sense of the superiority of their own understanding. This Eurocentrism stemmed from sixteenth-century dissociation of the geometric, or observed, center, and the ethnic, or meaningful center. The dissociation created an illusion of a universally transposable, objective spatial organization, one based on Christian values. Consequently, any space—such as California—lacking this organization was an empty slate, one that could be overwritten according to millenarian doctrine and European agrarian lifestyles. Introduced objects and

¹³⁹ Richard White, *The Middle Ground*

sounds, the hallmarks of Eurochristian culture, reconfigured space and meaning in Spain's image.

Of course, California was not empty. Inhabited by varied indigenous people, Alta California already encompassed many different conceptualizations of place. Most Native Californians organized space around the quincunx, a cosmography that nestled a core community at the heart of the four cardinal directions. A knowledgeable elite protected this center point against intruders and rival shamans who could overturn the balance of power. Accordingly, when the Franciscans arrived, indigenous peoples perceived their intrusion as a threat to their security. From a native perspective, Europeans did not erase indigenous place so much as co-opt and occupy it. Native Californian and European spatial rationalizations consequently coexisted within the California missions as various actors competed for dominance over the land—the very definition of a “contact zone.”

Spanish and indigenous actors articulated their authority over the Californian landscape through varied means. European observers justified their colonial agendas by ranking indigenous material and sonic culture, integrating native societies into a hierarchy that privileged Eurochristian cultures. The accounts examined in Chapter 2 demonstrate that the Spanish measured indigenous “civility” by their proximity to Western lifestyles; they sought proto-market commerce, sedentary settlements, technological prowess, modest dress, sonic consonance, and instrumental acumen—congruencies that facilitated conversion. However, a concurrent counter-rhetoric dismissed indigenous efforts

as crude and childlike even when native peoples approximated European culture. Together, these dialogues justified Franciscan projects to evangelize and Hispanicize Alta California.

Despite the Franciscans' best efforts, though, indigenous peoples maintained pre-contact sonorities and materialities in the missions. Although the Franciscans destroyed or limited certain aspects of indigenous culture, compelling native neophytes to conform to a Catholic agrarian life, Native Californians grafted traditional structures onto new objects and sounds. Sometimes the Spanish facilitated this displacement themselves by conflating indigenous symbols, incorporating the quincunx into the church or native dance into Corpus Christi. Other times native peoples actively selected, or transculturated, elements of Spanish culture to pursue their own agendas. Indigenous choristers, for example, gained prestige both within and without of the missions by employing choir uniforms to indicate cult membership. Thus, native groups sustained the spirit, if not the letter, of traditional place within the missions. Evidently, indigenous agency was more than capable of contending with Spanish impositions. While the divide between Native Californian and Spanish place became increasingly blurred, indigenous agendas did not synchronize with Franciscan objectives. As the 1824 Chumash Rebellion clearly indicates, native neophyte retained their own desires, their own interests, their own cultural visions; when the Spanish threatened their conceptualization of space and, accordingly, their authority over the land, the Chumash revolted.

Despite the narrow parameters of this project—missions stranded along the eighteenth and nineteenth Spanish imperial frontier—its findings inform not only an isolated time and space, but also the colonial legacies within and beyond California’s borders. Today, the Alta California missions stand emblematic of the state’s glorious past. In the fourth grade, I, like generations of students before and after me, learned about thick adobe walls and gorgeous white bell towers. I built a model mission and populated it with plastic figurines, ornamenting them with brown robes and straw sombreros. And, even at my progressive public school, the California “Indians” somehow dropped out of the story. I never connected indigenous Californians to Native American casino signs decorating the freeways, or even to the Franciscan “civilization” of the California frontier.

In its search for a symbol, the U.S. state of California co-opted more than the missions alone. Like the Spanish before them, California policy makers remove indigenous voices from primary school curricula, suggesting that, in fact, Native Americans never truly spoke at all. How can we reconcile these mute, agency-less masses with the canny, contemporary native casino owners peppering California today? This disparity between supposed “past” and “present” inauthenticates modern Native American leaders who strive to support and revitalize their tribes by engaging with the mechanisms of the present. That is, whether by owning a casino, one of few tribal revenue options, or dressing in suits, Native Californians continue to express agency by transculturating elements of the dominant culture. By silencing the past, the state of California discredits present-day indigenous actors. By creating a glorious mission history, it

legitimizes contemporary encroachments on Native American rights. Further, these colonial traditions manifest far beyond California's borders. States across the country fight similar battles for territorial dominion. Nor is this struggle for agency, authority, and preservation confined to the United States. My project's findings could easily be applied to Australia's relationship with its aboriginal peoples, to the Philippines, to Africa—anywhere where an imperial past continues to leave its indelible mark on the present and the future.

Scholarship contributes to colonial legacies. By perpetuating a vision of the past that deprives Native Americans of agency or minimizes the depth and longevity of their struggle, academia disenfranchises the present. Indigenous absences from public and private history, and their conspicuous silence in the traditional record, demand that we seek their voices elsewhere. This thesis proposes only three possible avenues for engaging and redefining colonial power relations within the "contact zone." Diverse future applications include discussions of visual interchange, agricultural confrontation, and mourning rituals. I hope that readers comprehend this work not as an isolated moment or space, but rather a challenge to a still-extant imperial chain.

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