

TOWARDS AN ANALYTIC OF SURVIVANCE IN CALIFORNIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Post-colonial studies have facilitated understandings about indigenous Californians' responses to colonial oppression by drawing attention to the maintenance of 'traditional practices.' The endurance of traditional practices outside of colonial institutions in landscapes of indigenous life and memory further moved California colonial archaeology towards a renewed focus on autonomy. Similar perspectives were developed by Native American scholars, notably Gerald Vizenor's (1994, 2008) notion of survivance, but have yet to be broadly realized. This paper outlines tensions with California archaeology's colonial roots and the relationship between persistence and autonomy to illustrate how tensions can be eased by embracing the concept of survivances, and the actual survivances of indigenous peoples. This paper is a modified version of the opening presentation given at the session "Leaving the master's tools: shifting towards an analytic of survivance in California archaeology," modified to include comments by the discussant, Desiree Martinez.

The examination of subaltern agency (i.e., the intentional and unintentional enactment, embodiment of traditions with modification), everyday resistance, cultural persistence, and ethnogenesis (the formation new ethnic identity) have become relatively common analytical concepts in the study of colonial Alta California. As Silliman (2010:31) has summarized, the widespread use of said theoretical concepts in historical archaeology has forever changed the perception of artifacts as parts of ossified trait lists that signaled the degradation of indigenous culture in simplistic acculturation frameworks. Rather, material culture can stand in as a more robust analog for daily practices that played a critical role in sustaining and negotiating aspects of indigenous communities within the historical contexts of European colonialism and Mexican and American governance. Still, the popularity of said concepts does not signify an emancipatory intellectual moment for post-Columbian archaeology or prehistoric archaeology, or their practice in contemporary California. Recovering, curating, and interpreting dimensions of the state's indigenous archaeological record through the lens of these concepts and other neo-processual approaches is valuable, but as various native scholars, including Miranda (2013) and Deloria (1988, 2003; Deloria and Lytle 1983) have noted, the disciplinary roots of Californian and North American prehistoric and historical archaeology are indebted to and remain embedded in colonial knowledge systems to which the post-structural examination of subaltern autonomy is not fully exempt (Biolsi and Zimmerman 1997; Watkins et al. 2000). Some of these colonial roots are summarized here, along with a potential alternative by examining the relevance of Gerald Vizenor's (1994, 2008) concept of survivance to archaeological studies.

COLONIAL ROOTS IN CALIFORNIA PREHISTORY AND HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Typified by works like the *Chinigichinich* ethnography by Fray Geronimo Boscana (1978) and later data collection by the California Superintendency of Indian Affairs, many of our earliest and most highly valued ethnographic works were generated as institutionally mandated records of indigenous Californian life. The motivational basis for producing these records often revolved around the goals of assessing the demographic integrity of native communities, establishing and estimating their state of assimilation into western society, and developing legislative controls for such groups (Cusick 1998). Ethnographic and archaeological information produced by academic researchers in the early twentieth century was similarly exploitive. Research was undertaken to preserve cultures assumed to be in a process of extinction. As

Lightfoot (2005) and others (e.g., Platt 2011; Martinez 2010) remind us, under Kroeber and his intellectual descendants, traditional ethnography was not possible because of the acculturative influence of western civilization. The anthropologist would salvage the remaining cultural memories from indigenous communities, but in doing so, established the anthropologist as the authority on what constituted authentic pre-European lifeways and beliefs. The effects of this early anthropological knowledge production in California and similar efforts nationally still influence, and in the extreme, dictate, contemporary notions and legislation of tribal authenticity and sovereignty (Leventhal et al. 1994; Martinez 2012).

The tradition of prehistoric archaeology in different areas of California began with the inadvertent recovery of various artifacts dislodged by Gold Rush terraforming (Moratto 1984:292–293), and private looting that both damaged sacred sites and contributed to the production of sensationalized myths that stripped descendant indigenous peoples from their heritage in public historical discourse (Martinez and Teeter 2008). The practice of California archaeology would come to be sponsored by government agencies, museums, and academic institutions. The discipline of archaeology's transition into a scientific vocation during the 1920s through the 1950s is well-documented (see Trigger 2006) and not rehashed in full here, but it is worth noting that the research relationship between prehistoric archaeologists and indigenous peoples was largely defined by a lack of consultation and collaboration. Certainly, things have changed with the passage of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) regarding the establishment of solicitation as a consultation minimum in select cases (Douglass et al. 2005; Martinez 2012). However, even with the 2015 modifications to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the process of consultation remains poorly outlined. In terms of contemporary knowledge production, studies of the Californian prehistory are popularly dedicated to ecological frameworks. These are a hallmark of our region and undeniably valuable, but still tend to ambivalently value oral history as partiality subjective beyond its use in ethnographic analogy (Haley and Wilcoxon 1997).

Alternatively, the nascent period of colonial archaeology in California in the 1920s and 1930s began with state and federal work relief excavations on many of the most important prehistoric and colonial period villages as part of larger projects that physically restored the state's dilapidated missions, presidios, and ranchos (Chace 1965; Frierman and Greenwood 1992). The latter often mirrored studies by North American historiographers and Franciscan historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who sought to memorialize and glamourize the achievements of colonial empires and colonial period leaders (Keen 1985). Physical restorations at sites like Mission San Juan Capistrano laid the groundwork for historical institutions to serve their current roles as Californian heritage destinations (Kryder-Reid 2016; Magalousis and Martin 1981). The bucolic romanticism of the California mission experience was challenged by California-based demographic reconstructionists.

Population reconstructions for colonial and precontact California were made by Sherburne Cook (1946, 1976), who associated the colonial period collapse of native populations with the direct and indirect spread of Old World diseases, unintentional ecological alterations to precontact subsistence systems, and interpersonal violence. Although the methods and projections of Cook's approach have been critiqued, archaeological studies have generally retained the diachronic patterns of population decline (e.g., Milliken 1995). In the emerging field of academic historical archaeology, the direct examination of neophyte communities was undertaken to examine the process of acculturation (Farnsworth 1992; Hoover 1992), exemplified by the Deetz' (1964) excavations at Mission La Purisima. Although the material conditions of the neophyte's quotidian experience were finally brought into relief, the dichotomous and unidirectional focus on the incorporation of European materials largely reaffirmed the notion of indigenous Californian culture in decline.

The archaeology of Spanish colonization would change gradually after the post-modern turn. Some features of this perspective included the instrumentalist conception of ethnicity (e.g., Barth 1969), the critique with French structuralism (e.g., Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984), the incorporation of practice theory, and a renewed attention to the modes and limitation of societal dominance as developed by the Frankfurt school (Leone et al. 1987; Paytner and McGuire 1991). The Quincentennial anniversary also fostered a reassessment of colonial contact studies by archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and

national heritage programs, prompting an analytical movement beyond Eurocentrism and dichotomies of evil colonizers and subservient or resistive native people towards a study of the diffuse ways in which the colonial subaltern inclusive of colonist communities, interacted, sustained, destroyed, or created new societal enclaves or institutional policies (Deagan 2003; for California, Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Thomas 1989). Lastly, indigenous archaeology's slow but progressive inclusion in California archaeology has proved to be a productive analytical framework for understanding the perspectives of native communities who survived settler colonialism, but also serves as a tool to avoid the extractive legacy of archaeology by decentering the archaeologist's authority through active collaboration and capacity building with descendant communities (Atalay 2012; Lightfoot 2008). From Fort Ross to Catalina (e.g., Gonzalez 2011; Teeter and Martinez 2013), indigenous archaeology projects have met much of George Nicholas' (2010) outline for the approach by embracing collaboration beyond federal and state baselines, creating alternative models of cultural heritage stewardship, and evaluating and critiquing the application of archaeological theory and its derived models.

In California, the post-modern reevaluation found its specific articulation under the Berkeley school of historical archaeology, which has advocated for an archaeology of cultural pluralism that articulates the phenomena of colonialism as a long-term interaction between indigenous Californian and European cultural structures (Schneider et al. 2012). Agency and its limitations have taken center stage by highlighting the tension between colonized communities creatively reproducing and altering the colonial world while existing within its social, political, gendered, and economic structures. This has been accomplished by archaeologically or historiographically examining how indigenous Californians and multi-ethnic colonists defied the organizational logic of the colonial institution as resistance, and the acts of other indigenous groups who quietly continued older hunter-gatherer traditions in and outside of colonial settlements as processes of cultural persistence and situation accommodation (e.g., Bernard 2008; Hull 2009; Panich 2013; Silliman 2005). Others have focused on the formation of new cultural identifications through the processes of ethnogenesis inclusive of situational rejections or recombinations of racial hierarchies, labor regimes, and gendered norms (Voss 2015).

The concept of autonomy has also emerged as a specific archaeological analytic related to agency in post-structural frameworks. Casual definitions of agency and autonomy usually converge upon the notion of an individual's or social group's ability to exercise unencumbered free choice. This condition is rarely present, as individuals and social groups are always confined to power relationships and other environmental parameters at different societal scales (Ortner 2001; Pauketat 2001). Borrowing from post-modern theories of agency and practice, archaeological models embrace autonomy as agency's form enacted at the communal level and expressed through the political economy, or in modes of explicit political self-governance alongside other extra-cultural systems (Jordan 2013). In this subdisciplinary context, autonomy has served as a useful analytic for characterizing the limitations of socioeconomic dominance by the colonial state, exemplified *par excellence* by the archaeological exploration of African and Native American maroon/runaway societies (Sayers 2014; Weik 2012). In California, Panich and Schneider (2015) have brought renewed attention to the concept by pointing out how prior approaches to mission archaeology marginalized Native Californian autonomy by emphasizing the carceral nature of the colonial institution. Further, they have stressed an examination of indigenous autonomy at a communal scale in and outside of the mission landscape by documenting the maintenance of evolving indigenous traditions (e.g., forms of mobility, trade, and recurrent occupation). In other words, we should examine indigenous communities' capacity to assume authority positions and leverage socioeconomic power within colonial institutions as social processes that reconstitute settlements as indigenous places and examine how indigenous homelands adjacent to the mission chain were sustained.

The emphasis on indigenous autonomy in culture-change models as expressed by social reproduction and collective modes of subaltern agency as autonomy has enhanced archaeological studies of Native Californian communities by challenging the perception that colonial social control was indisputable; however, it is worthwhile to ask if the analytic by itself constitutes a complete break from the discipline of anthropology's colonial roots. Clearly, examining autonomy in archaeology possesses a

certain nomothetic value and allure by its malleable use as a cultural analytic across different cultural and historical settings as demonstrated by autonomy and agency's politically sterile roles in rational actor modelling (Charnov 1976) and Actor-Network Theory approaches (Callon 1986; Latour 1993). Further, it is worthwhile to ask if it is possible to reach an understanding of subaltern autonomy without reducing it to a dimension of cultural identity formation processes when indigenous communities have clearly demonstrated the capacity to assert political or economic authority in colonial markets and judicial systems without focusing on the authenticity of their cultural identity. The answer to the first question, for any anthropological analytic, is no, but only so if we are unable to frame autonomy within decolonial paradigms. The answer to the second is still unclear.

HIGHLIGHTING AUTONOMY IN NARRATIVES OF SURVIVANCE AND ARCHAEOLOGY AS MEDIUM OF SURVIVANCE

In this session we argue for a study of Native Californian autonomy that explicitly embraces indigenous knowledge systems to access and challenge a broader spectrum of diachronic power relations, and in this sense, we follow indigenous archaeology's goals of establishing native epistemologies as an extension of anthropological theory. More specifically, we attempt here, as others have done (e.g., Lightfoot and Gonzalez 2018; Nelson 2018; Silliman 2014; Wilcox 2018), to integrate archaeology with the concept of survivance, and situate autonomy within its goals. This is done so not to position survivance as the main analytic of indigenous autonomy, but to draw attention to how the concept might provoke or destabilize the common linkage of an expression of autonomy with a form of culture change.

As originally conceptualized by the Anishinaabe scholar and poet Gerald Vizenor (1994, 2008), survivance is the active sense of indigenous presence over absence, deracination and remembrance over oblivion enacted through the continuation of native stories. Survivance is also an active form of literary resistance through the expression and retelling of indigenous narratives through any medium to maintain connections to ancestral places, indigenous historical consciousness and identity against pop-culture tropes of extinction, tragedy and victimry; however, the concept implicitly outlines a pathway for incorporating autonomy. For Vizenor, stories and indigenous knowledge should not be told with reckless abandon or in ubiquity, instead they should center on narratives of transmotion, or stories that instill a sense of indigenous autonomy against static western simulations of native people in museums, monuments, commerce, art, cinema, literature, and history. Stories of survivance break cultural stereotypes, and in the telling are constitutive by provoking a re-imagination of native people in the present by examining the struggles of their ancestors, becoming sovereignty *sui generis*.

One of Vizenor's (2008:4) critical examples of survivance is found in the story of the Anishinaabe elder Charles Aubib's court testimony made against the federal government's right to regulate his tribe's continued practice of wild rice harvesting on the Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge. As a counter claim to government control over the harvest, the then 86-year-old Aubib testified that he was present as a young man when federal agents originally promised the elder, John Squirrel, that the Anishinaabe would always retain control of the rice harvest, thereby evoking the presence of John Squirrel as an authoritative claim to sovereign tribal resources in his native language, as it was practiced precontact. Aubib's act of evoking Squirrel's presence and claim of access was repudiated by the state's attorney and judge as hearsay and non-evidence in common or federal law. As detailed by Vizenor. "Aubid turned brusquely in the witness chair, bothered by what the judge had said about John Squirrel. Aubid then pointed at the legal books on the bench, and then in English, he shouted that those books contained the stories of dead white men. "Why should I believe what a white man says, when you don't believe John Squirrel?"

The federal judge was deferential, amused by the analogy of native stories as court testimony, against prior judicial decisions, precedent, and hearsay. "You've got me there," he said, and then considered the testimony of other Anishinaabe witnesses. For Vizenor, Aubib established linguistic evidence of the fourth person, i.e., indigenous memories as witnesses in the court and sources of authority, and thus a reified visual reminiscence of an indigenous ancestor. At a broader level, Aubib performed an act that would help maintain the

cultural traditions of the Anishinaabe by facilitating the continuance of the rice harvest, and thus facilitated a connection to their ancestral homelands. However, to do so, an indigenous narrative of the ancestors had to be called upon as an authoritative force that secures the sovereignty of the Anishinaabe community.

What does this mean for an archaeology of autonomy? At least in our usage, it should be clear that, given California's history of colonialism and extractive archaeological practices, survivance narratives can serve as a direction for archaeological studies by offering a way to deconstruct cultural myths while decentering cultural change as the penultimate cultural outcome for indigenous people when other forms of political, economic or cultural autonomy are at stake. Much of the archaeology on indigenous autonomy during the colonial period does serve as a partial narrative of indigenous survivance by establishing an indigenous presence in the historical record that actively alters colonial institutions, but we should also question how the concept can be transformed to meet the demands and perspectives of California's indigenous peoples in the present. As the various discussants of this session will outline, the ancestors survived, and their descendants still grapple with the legacies of colonialism; however, more attention should be given to narratives of how indigenous Californian peoples lived beyond survival and have culturally prospered since. This session's discussants suggestions for survivance, reconstituted as "thrivance", is fitting in this regard.

In this sense, we should seek to further tailor studies of autonomy to the needs of the descendant communities we collaborate with to find the narratives of their ancestors' autonomy that resonates with them. If we do not, I fear that the study of subaltern agency and survivance will be simply imported social analytics without political teeth. In addition, we should credit the indigenous scholarship that drew attention to this inequity long before archaeologists sought to find the agency of Native Californians in the dirt or colonial archives and seek a greater unification with ethnic studies in California archaeology, for the colonial past and prehistory. The following papers in the session work along this avenue and further seek to position autonomy as a narrative of survivance through indigenous archaeology.

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