



FACING FEAR

The History of an Emotion
in Global Perspective

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CHAPTER 4

Fear in Colonial California and within the Borderlands

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What's Not to Fear ... ?

At first glance, one might think fear had been pervasive. If fear emerges from the possibility of violent, unexpected death, or yet death from plague and new forms of illness, then it would seem that after 1769, when the Spanish colonization of California began, fear must surely have prevailed. In less than seventy years, the densely inhabited zone of linguistically diverse indigenous societies stretching along California's coast had been devastated, and waves of illness and warfare remade tribal societies in the interior. The Spanish occupation of even a single tribal territory brought vast herds of livestock, and foreign seeds and weeds, that eroded the environment and devastated the political order. New diseases proliferated. Whole areas became depopulated as the Spanish imposed the policy of *reducción*, reducing native converts to residents and workers at the missions they joined, allowed to leave only with a pass distributed by the missionary or a military officer. The changes produced by the Spanish colonial presence created what Randall Milliken has called a "time of little choice."¹ Tribal societies divided over what to do: some people joined the Spanish missions, others refused to do so for one or more generations. Most of California's indigenous population lived beyond the colonial coast and could better resist encroachment on their lands.

Affiliation to the missions could mean becoming a translator. The indigenous elite were among the first to learn Spanish once they lived in the missions, and thus able to exert some control over how words such as *fear*, and the concepts found in Catholic doctrine, entered indigenous languages.² Native translators and others who moved most easily between languages and cultures helped to define the vivid systems of indigenous thought and ritual that they elaborated alongside Catholic religious practice. Their writing and painting suggests how native populations continued to access power despite their political defeat.

Once a majority of people from any single village joined a mission, the tribe effectively lost control over their land. They became "Indians" under

the law.³ The missions claimed the lands of their converts as mission property, and after Mexican Independence in 1821, the government would eventually declare the missions' tribal lands to be the property of the new nation. The Mexican government would grant most of the land in large tracts to cattle ranchers and towns, further eroding indigenous land rights after 1834, though an indigenous peasantry developed as individuals secured titles to small lots of land.⁴

As indigenous leaders faced their inability to reverse the conditions that provoked such tremendous loss of lives and ancestral land, it seems conceivable that Indians became fearful. Certainly fear appears frequently and repeatedly in Spanish documents. Yet that is not how surviving native sources describe it. Even the word *fear* is virtually absent in the colonial indigenous records under examination here, except when it applied to the Spanish. In stark contrast to Spanish assumptions, native histories offered categories of analysis, and histories of indigenous political thought and action, that identified alternate visions and different responses to Spanish colonial rule. Rather than represent themselves as fearful and reduced, indigenous writers and histories spoke to the strengths and political visions alive within their communities. As such, their work suggests that despite certain kinds of political defeat and devastation under Spain and Mexico, native populations still had access to forms of power that their leaders drew upon to mitigate unfavorable conditions.

The virtual absence of reference to fear may be a rhetorical strategy adopted from Spanish writing itself, where attributing fear diminished people, and often obscured historical motives and events. But another reason, perhaps more influential, is that fear remained something conceptualized primarily within an indigenous framework. Looking beyond colonial writing, we shall see here how fear appears in indigenous accounts as a historical emotion, but one elaborated very specifically in relation to native forms of thought and culture.⁵

Attributing Fear and Fearful Geographies

With its deep moorings in Western cultural and political thought, fear seemed to be the dominion of the Spaniards in California. The missionaries frequently attributed fear to indigenous populations. Seeing and representing them as "fearful" diminished them, and denied any semblance of political logic, history, and strategy behind their actions. Consider the use of fear in the writing of missionary Fray Muñoz as he recorded his movement in 1806 through Yokuts territory, now the San Joaquin Valley, east of the coastal mountain chain. In a previous missionary-cum-military expedition to explore and gain converts among the Yokuts just months earlier,

most villagers Fray Muñoz encountered had not fled. In many villages the very old and ill had even allowed themselves to be baptized. However, when he arrived the second time, he frequently found villages empty, or that the women and old people had removed themselves well in advance of the arriving military, missionary, and translators. Fray Muñoz attributed this to fear. "We came upon two villages, but all the people had retreated to the mountains on account of the fear that beset them as soon as they detected our approach."⁶

Near the villages of Chamuasi and Tahualamne the Spanish found refugees high up in caves, in areas well beyond reach of the expedition. When they finally coaxed a group of warriors to a position from which Spaniards and villagers could hear each other, Fray Muñoz reported "their excuse for remaining obstinate and refusing to come down was that they were afraid." Men dressed like the Spanish and on horses had apparently come years before, and killed and captured villagers. Fray Muñoz wrote that once he had convinced the fugitives (through a translator) that the expedition simply wanted "to advance the Kingdom of God and to make friends with them so that their souls might be saved.... They replied that they all wanted to become Christians and have a mission established for them." Muñoz lamented, however, that in spite of their favorable response "it was not possible to achieve a single baptism." As was common in such circumstances, the local men directed the expedition to "six villages above them on the river" but refused to give the names of those villages or to name the chief of their own. Fray Muñoz could only conclude emphatically that "such was their fear or malice. They are poor and very stupid."⁷

But flight, the selective avoidance of contact, and the refusal to be baptized or reveal information while feigning agreement are actions that could have been interpreted differently. They can be seen as strategies developed by many Yokuts to halt the spread of disease and to avoid the potential violence of the soldiers, including rape, and the loss of autonomy and territory upon becoming Christian. In fact, within a decade, a new geography had emerged within Yokuts territory, one that the missionaries would refer to as an *Apachería*: an area in which indigenous people retained political power and autonomy despite the increasing violence that came to define their societies.

The terms *Apachería* and *Comanchería* referred to the indigenous borderland of northern Mexico, where different groups including Apaches, Comanches, Navajos, and Utes maintained and augmented their control through raiding, trading, slavery, and warfare with and against each other and Spanish and Mexican settlers. The emergence of an *Apachería* in California emphasized the limits of Spanish control within the larger region. Yet, as elsewhere, the Spanish and Mexican presence contributed to the creation of new indigenous borderlands. Historians have recently

reconceived these borderland histories to emphasize native power and the territorial expansion of particular societies during the colonial era.⁸ They trace the expansion of indigenous political control, and explore the integration of native and colonial societies as new economies and political alliances formed within a vast region.⁹ Warfare, systems of slavery, and escalating violence "remade Native worlds" during this era, and indigenous ethnicities underwent dramatic redefinitions.¹⁰

Missionary references to *cimarrónes* and the *Apachería* also suggest how quickly California became part of the geography of the colonial Americas. The word *cimarrón* is of Antillean indigenous origin, and first appeared in Spanish writing in 1535. It referred to those people and animals who fled to the hills and mountains, where Indians and blacks established communities that remained autonomous from the colonial coast.¹¹ The word carried into the French and English as *marrones* and maroons. In Yokuts territories as elsewhere, indigenous communities of *cimarrónes* integrated individuals and groups who had escaped slavery and coercive conditions of labor. By 1816, within a decade of the first explorations, Fray Muñoz claimed to have encountered *cimarrónes* in every Yokuts village he visited.¹²

In light of Yokuts political strategies and actions in creating their geography of resistance and their absorption of other escapees from direct Spanish rule, one must perforce reconsider the fear that the missionaries ascribed to them. Rather than identifying a cause of behavior, the missionaries' recourse to the word *fear* made it part of a set vocabulary that offered a limited range of concepts to identify native people. Given their thin grasp of the indigenous world they encountered, the missionaries used a language that reflected a set of narrow, seemingly timeless perceptions, despite vast differences among the indigenous people they encountered and, ironically, the availability of ethnographic work by Franciscans, Jesuits, and (as we shall see) indigenous scholars that acknowledged native forms of knowledge.

For the missionaries, the designation "Indian," another word in this set vocabulary, functioned as an insult; conversely, not seeming Indian could be used as a compliment, or even a means to defend someone from exemplary punishment. For example, in 1799 a man named Raymundo was accused of stealing a pen. Writing to the governor of California to try and lighten the sentence of "poor Raymundo," his local cleric, Fray de la Cruz, affirmed Raymundo's qualities by stating that "he doesn't even seem to be Indian," further suggesting that he "only stole a pen" in order "to amuse his friend." Despite this, the colonial government took the stealing of an object that would enable Raymundo to write without authorization as a serious offense, proposing to place him in permanent exile from his family, tribe, and territory by sending him to another military district and mission in California. Careful to not appear too pro-Indian, De la Cruz qualified

his appeal by stating that Raymundo was a good worker who had a son for whom he expressed feelings of compassion. That said, affirming the unity between the Church and military in defense of the colonial order, the obedient friar concluded that he only wanted lenience for Raymundo "if he wasn't found guilty of the robbery."¹³

Both the Church and the state meant to instill fear in Indians through the punishments they inflicted. In a dispute with Commander Don Felipe de Goycochea of the Presidio of Santa Barbara over accusations he had launched against the missionaries there, the latter defended themselves in 1800 against every accusation except one, concerning the severity of their punishment of the mission Indians, which they proudly affirmed. The matter had come to a head when Goycochea reported that the missionaries poorly fed, clothed, and housed the Indians, did not extend them passes frequently enough for them to go back to their territory or to move about freely when off work, and impeded their learning of Spanish by allowing them to use their native languages. In response, missionaries Cortes and Tapis leveled accusations of their own regarding Goycochea's mistreatment of Indians at the presidio even as they defended with pride the whippings, chains, and irons they used to discipline mission Indians who broke rules. For instance, they exemplified such righteous discipline relating a series of events that had transpired in the mission's textile rooms in 1797. It was common practice at that time for a friar to go to the textile works in the morning and "read the list to see if any of the spinners, carders, or any weavers were missing." While workers sometimes responded that those missing could be found washing wool elsewhere in the mission, in one particular instance, the inspecting friar found that a Chumash weaver called Agapito had been working for five days in the textile workshop of Goycochea himself without a license or pass. They therefore brought Agapito back to the mission and gave him eight lashes, emphasizing that such was "what we always do when we know one is going to work in the textile rooms of Don Felipe."¹⁴

Though severe, eight lashes were comparatively few and reflected the high status of weavers, and the need to keep them doing quality work. After Independence in 1821, the Mexican state declared indigenous people equal before the law and tried to eliminate the corporal punishment regularly administered at the missions. But colonial relations shifted slowly, and a statement acknowledging that the practice could continue accompanied almost every written decree that arrived in California against whipping and other types of violence. Mexican officials ultimately followed recent Spanish precedent in reducing the accepted number of lashes to twenty-five for each offense.¹⁵

In 1829, near the end of the first decade of independence, soldiers arrested and beat three Chumash healers, charging them with witchcraft

after they led a ceremony for the sick at Mission Santa Ines. Witnesses at the court claimed that the devil had appeared to the men, who then spread word for people to bring the sick to the home of a certain José. Rumor spread that if they didn't go, they would die. People had therefore carried their sick relatives and friends to the house and paid the healers in beads, seeds, and other things for their services during three successive nights of dancing—an activity about which much more will be said below. Four months later a military court tried and sentenced them. The liberal governor José María Echeandía, who had arrived from Mexico with the intent to emancipate Indians from the missions and encourage their treatment as equal citizens, signed the judgment, thereby accepting the punishment. Of those charged, the judge set Apolonio free because he had already served time. Anastasio and José, however, were each sentenced to twenty-five lashes after mass on Sunday, and in front of the entire mission population, before being set free.¹⁶

This and similar impositions of corporal punishment in front of the congregation on Sunday constituted a common act of humiliation that Europeans deployed to incite a fear they considered part of just governance. As will be discussed below, such violent incidents in front of the local churches certainly remained etched in Chumash collective memories, yet in ways unanticipated by their inflictors.

Native Sources: Fear and Triumph through Dance

The public whippings and other brutal punishments that led to agonizing humiliation and even death produced conditions for historical trauma that indigenous leaders addressed in the missions and beyond. Yet fear did not seem to enter the recording of native history during these years. Instead of a community living in fear, or overwhelmed by the Spanish conquest, Stephanie Wood has shown that indigenous writers and oral historians of colonial Mexico bequeathed accounts that emphasized "pride in their own leadership and ancestry...the moments in history that strengthened their communities and autonomy, that pointed to their own heroism and even their own conquests."¹⁷

Such an approach is relatively new, given that scholars had long regarded native writing and painting as poor attempts at reproduction, insignificant and imperfect creations that were neither Spanish nor Indian. By contrast scholars now tend to see in such expressions qualities that reflect both indigenous and Spanish forms, and that present something new as a consequence.¹⁸ Indeed, even when indigenous writing conformed to the canonical genres—as in the case of wills, land and municipal documents, petitions, and correspondence—James Lockhart has found that

they prioritized different categories, events, and places, thus challenging historians to rethink the nature of our own narratives.¹⁹

The distinct categories, events, and places found in native sources are present, for example, in the writing of indigenous scholar Pablo Tac. Born in 1821 at Mission San Luiseno Rey in current northern San Diego County, Tac wrote an extraordinary history (as well as a grammar and partial dictionary in Luiseño-Spanish) while at the Collegium Urbanum de Propaganda Fide in Rome. Tac wrote this for the linguist and Vatican librarian Cardinal Guiseppe Mezzofanti as he successively studied Latin grammar, rhetoric, humanities, and philosophy in Rome between 1834 and 1841.²⁰

Fear appears but three times in Tac's history—twice attributed to the Spaniards and once to express the fearlessness of Luiseños. In the first version of Tac's history of Luiseño-Spanish contact, "Conversión de los San Luisenos de la Alta California," Tac relates the friendship that developed between a Luiseño leader and a Franciscan missionary. Because the leader spoke "in favor of the whites," the Spaniards were not killed. Tac then comments that he finds it "almost hard to believe" they didn't kill the Spaniards, "because they never wanted other people to live among them." Still, because of his friendship with the leader, the missionary "didn't fear anything," though the fearlessness of the Luiseños would have otherwise given him cause to be afraid in the territory that Tac refers to as "our country."²¹

In contrast to Luiseño fearlessness, Spanish fear appears in Tac's history of the ball game called *uauquis*. He discusses one game that turned into a fight between two groups of indigenous people from the missions of San Luis Rey and San Juan Capistrano. The fight ended comically, it seems, given that the people from San Juan Capistrano departed when the Spanish soldiers arrived "trembling." By contrast, among the Luiseños "no one was afraid." To this end Tac reports on the verbal wit of one Luiseño leader who "spoke like the Spaniards" but played to the crowd when he mocked them in his own language, declaring "raise your sword and I then will eat you."²² Like others writing in Spanish, Tac attributed fear to his opponents to diminish them, while ascribing its absence among his fellow Luiseños to their tenacity and wit.

Unlike the records left by the military and missionaries about Indians in California, in which a certain stasis appeared in the language and concepts used to describe native people, Tac's writing elaborated his verbal dexterity and humor, and his lament at the defeat of his ancestors. In fact, shadows of lamentation pass over the pages of the grammar that he wrote. Tac frequently chose verbs such as "to cry" to demonstrate grammatical usage. In recording the sorrow he felt in regard to the political defeat of his ancestors, Tac's writing is once again similar to indigenous histories told around the time of Spanish conquest elsewhere in Mexico. Sorrow, grief, anger,

lamentation for the dead, and stories of defeat and war predominate, yet fear rarely appears.²³ But in contrast to the limited representation of native history and native authority in the colonial archives, Tac's history focuses on and elaborates how Luiseños accessed power in both traditional and new ways despite their political losses.

When identifying Luiseño forms of power, Tac embraced a shamanic concept in which power could be accessed by ritual practice and specialized knowledge, and wielded according to both social and natural laws. Even within the confines of defeat, the shaman could access power to provoke change, including transformations within the social and political sphere, and in individual lives.²⁴ Tac emphasized the importance of traditional elders and their forms of knowledge. He documented the new power of native men who spoke and dressed as Spaniards and rode on horseback—people who moved more easily between cultures, languages, and political systems even as they maintained their allegiance to other Luiseños. As a scholar, Tac too could be seen as drawing upon such new forms of power.

Tac tells four distinct stories within his history, using a form common in Luiseño storytelling in which the singer used the repetition and variation of stories to define a set of concepts and precepts.²⁵ Tac repeats his overarching story, "Conversión de los San Luisenos," three times with variation. Each version emphasizes the concept that the Spaniards built their colonial institution on land that remained in Luiseño possession, and that they could do so only through their alliance with the Luiseño leader. Two of the versions also emphasize the changing forms of Luiseño authority after their political defeat.

The other three stories concern areas of life in which Luiseños continued to exercise power, and emphasize the concept that Luiseños could access authority and transform conditions despite their political defeat. Two of these stories concern dance, an activity described twice with variation under the rubric of "everyday life"—in which Tac foregrounds the authority of the father and the sentimental realm of laughter and tears within the family home. The third appears under the rubric of "the ball game," which had social and spiritual significance for Luiseños. The later two stories seem almost anecdotal, and yet they show how Luiseños dealt with their losses, the change in their power after defeat, and the areas that offered them rejuvenation. In writing on the ball game, for example, Tac emphasizes twice that it "serves us well, very well," alluding to spiritual and political well-being.²⁶

In the two versions of the history of dance, Tac elaborates on the way that Luiseños continued to access knowledge and power through dance practice. The missionaries referred to Indian dance at the missions as a "diversion," but in California as elsewhere, Europeans confronted societies that still allowed the body to produce knowledge, and to render into

corporeal existence the spiritual world.²⁷ Dance enabled those trained in specific rituals to act upon the world and to attempt to rectify loss. Dance kept alive the power and skills of traditional elders during the mission era. "No one can dance without the permission of the elders, and they have to be of the same people," wrote Tac. The religious leaders from each village—including those within the mission proper, where territorial identities persisted—included singers who possessed the songs and taught the dance according to the song. The singers, whom Tac generally declared were "the old people," might still include younger members, "but of the same people," who governed song and ceremonial knowledge. The elders selected each dancer, and made and kept the dance regalia.²⁸

In keeping with what has been described as Western societies' insistence on divorcing bodies "from their capacities to theorize," the missionaries and colonial officials lacked the language and concepts to value or analyze dance.²⁹ Colonists and colonial officials alike thus recorded little more than the mere existence of movement, sound, ritual, and bodily practices like tattooing. Relying on such meager records and their own assumptions, historians have virtually written dance out of life at the missions, even though sources such as Tac's history, and the single ethnography on colonial California written in the early 1820s by Fray Geronimo Boscana titled *Chinigchinich*, take it up as a major theme.³⁰

Tac makes clear that dance constituted group identity in ongoing ways, and he helped to conceptualize changes in that identity and condition during the colonial era. Writing about other tribes he had seen at San Luis Rey and elsewhere, he observed that they all had their own distinct dances.³¹ In California, then, dance constituted precisely what Zoila Mendoza terms a "site of confrontation and negotiation of identities"—identities shaped from within the indigenous communities and through their interactions with new structures of power imposed by the colonial order.³²

When the Luiseño Pablo Tac and the Chumash Fernando Librado Kitsepawit wrote and spoke about dance, they described specific things related to its connection to the cosmological order, and also considered it as a source of indigenous knowledge. This native way of relating the directionality employed in dance reflected the concerns of Luiseño and Chumash astrologers that structures, ritual areas, and ceremonies "conform to their perception of the cosmos."³³ Both Tac and Librado described where the dances took place. They indicated the direction in which the dancers entered, the direction of their movement and gestures, and whether they looked up or down. They indicated the time of year and the time of day the dance took place. Both men emphasized that the song determined the movement.³⁴ Librado made clear that the older dancers insisted strictly on proper movement and the exact paint, feathers, and regalia for each dance. This exactness conformed to the requirements of "divine animation" in

which supernatural beings and animal spirits choreographed their own presence through the steps, and could be recognized through the visual cues associated with them.³⁵

Thus far I have suggested that fear entered native discourse and memory in reference to shamanic and other forms of power that existed within indigenous thought and culture. In the indigenous societies of colonial California, specific skills and knowledge that enabled people to work with forms of power were considered personal qualities the individuals possessed at birth, or were taught by virtue of innate special talents. But power could be used for bad or good purposes, and fear was a legitimate response that acknowledged the need to be wary. More generally in indigenous and mestizo America, *susto* or scare has been and continues to be an important malady treated by healers.³⁶

In a project undertaken to help revive the Luiseño language in the twentieth century, Luiseño speaker Villiana Calac Hyde discussed fear with linguist and translator Eric Elliot in a number of these contexts.³⁷ Speaking of an incident where she was healed at a fiesta in Pauma, Calac Hyde noted that the healer derived his power from the bear. He "turned into a bear," and "when he growled, I got scared."³⁸ When relating the story of a man who loved to hunt, she said "he wasn't at all afraid of the *chawófwut*," which is an evil spirit who lived "long ago." Yet when he saw the *chawófwut*, he "shook so much that he fell to the ground. He crawled away somewhere (safe)."³⁹ Discussing the power possessed by thunder, Calac Hyde noted "if it wants, it can be evil, otherwise it isn't." She mentioned a friend of hers who was "afraid of thunder," though Calac Hyde herself was not. Thunder's power existed in an earlier era; by the late twentieth century, she reflected "I think that's over now. It just exists (but is no longer a threat)."⁴⁰

Fear in Spanish-Language Accounts of the Chumash War

In 1824 the Chumash people of three missions—Santa Ines, La Purisima, and Santa Barbara—organized what, as we shall see, indigenous-community histories call a "war" and Spanish-language sources variously refer to as a revolution or a rebellion. Before the Chumash war, leaders sent sacks of beads to particular Yokuts villages, asking people to join them and provide aid. Some refused, whereas others sent men to help.⁴¹ The war began at Mission Santa Ines on February 21, 1824, when 554 Chumash from Santa Ines took up arms and set the mission on fire. People soon began to leave that mission for Mission La Purisima, where the population joined immediately as planned. At La Purisima the Chumash population of 722 took over the mission, which by evening was occupied by over 1,000 Chumash from Santa Ines and La Purisima alike. They would remain in control

for the next four months. Meanwhile, another 1,000 Chumash from Santa Barbara sought refuge in Yokuts territory, some five days walk away. They remained there for more than four months.

Responding to these events, the missionaries evoked what, following Zygmunt Bauman, we might refer to as "liquid fear" in their accounts of the war, creating the specter of a limitless and amorphous enemy that resided in the *Apachería*.⁴² Missionaries wrote of their certainty that the Indians in the mountains, valleys, and deserts to the east were joining with the rebels at Buena Vista Lake and planning to attack the coast. Fray Martínez's correspondence in particular played up the specter of a united revolt: "without doubt," he wrote, "they will seek protection with the Mojave and those at the head of the Tulares to make raids on the coast with the troop who, with little work, they could destroy by falling here and there." Later he insisted that "an infinity" was approaching along the road of the Mojave to Yokuts territory, and the people gathered there included Indians from Santa Barbara, San Buenaventura, San Fernando, and San Luis Obispo.⁴³ Fray Sarria and Gil y Taboada echoed Martínez's fears of a massive attack.⁴⁴ Fray Blas Ordaz, who remained in the region living among the ashes at Santa Ines, warned of the possibility of a province-wide revolt organized by leaders from La Purisima and Santa Barbara. They had "everyone in the Tulares (Yokuts territory) on their side." They had lots of arms, and the Christian Indians "taught them to shoot at Whites." According to him the mission populations would join together to kill all the *de razon*—as the settler population of the province was known in distinction to the allegedly unreasonable (*sin razon*) indigenes.⁴⁵

In creating this landscape of fear, the missionaries obscured the very specific conditions that made the revolt possible. The three mission populations had deep connections: two missionaries and more than a hundred Indians from the older missions of La Purisima and Santa Barbara (both established during the 1780s) founded Mission Santa Ines in 1804. Those indigenous people who came to compose Santa Ines' population had familial and organizational ties with the other missions that persisted through the colonial era. Much like the indigenous authorities we have met in chapter 3 in this volume, those who translated the doctrines of Catholicism and held religious office within the Church often came from the indigenous political elite who held hereditary positions and often boasted knowledge of healing, astrology, and the environment. In short these Chumash men and women were in charge of acting upon the world to change circumstances and bring harmony. Known as *?antap*, they provided native leadership and maintained their public presence in forms considered acceptable to the missionaries, above all else by overseeing dance. As people entered the missions together with others from their villages, the *?antap* offered the natural means to coordinate action. Certainly they played a

prominent role in organizing the revolt, especially under such leaders as the religiously authoritative *wot*, whose writ extended to people at both Santa Ines and La Purisima.

Promulgating fear also minimized the extreme difficulties that revolt entailed. Compounding the problems attendant on agreeing upon strategy, gathering and making sufficient arms, and creating the necessary alliances, Indians involved in or supporting the war had to feed and maintain the population in exile. Most people preoccupied themselves with life itself during the revolt. Villages that had supported around 250 people or fewer faced the serious problem of addressing the needs of over 1,000 refugees. The missionaries' fears built up the specter of a coordinated revolt that had little to do with the actual situation. The ability to coordinate and carry out such an action remained beyond the reach of possibility at that time.

Ultimately, months into the war, Fray Ripoll from Mission Santa Barbara used fear to plead for the innocence of those involved.⁴⁶ Ripoll blamed a particular soldier, Valentin Cota, for an unlawful whipping of an Indian. This, he said, began the war (despite the evidence that it involved significant preparation). Ripoll purportedly based his account on what he had heard from different indigenous sources, though it is replete with stories of the Indians' fears. Ripoll wrote that one Chumash leader told him "all his people were in a great state of fear." Another said they "were afraid" to surrender. Before they moved across the mountains he again "called them back but they replied that they were afraid to come."⁴⁷

Ripoll argued that Indians joined the revolt because of the many humiliations and despotic actions of the soldiers, but characterized indigenous attitudes as being submissive and fearful. In this sense fear of intolerable abuse offered a legitimate reason for the population to join the revolt, and Ripoll's explanation enabled the governor to issue the pardon that ultimately ended it. Ripoll articulated the political logic of the Church and offered an acceptable explanation through fictionalized indigenous voices. Nevertheless authentic indigenous voices, as we shall see, ultimately offered an utterly different perspective.

Indigenous Histories of the Chumash War of 1824

Though the Spanish colonizers of California attempted to learn about indigenous forms of power and superimpose their own connection to the supernatural to win people over, native writers did not speak to Spanish success in that area, or to fear of the Spanish themselves. Instead, they left histories that communities could draw upon to understand the way their leaders had responded to these colonial impositions. While colonial indigenous writing records other emotions, the recourse to feelings of fear

largely remained part of another discourse. Fear certainly existed in indigenous languages and cultures, but was conceptualized and most commonly expressed within a distinctly non-Western framework.

When the governor finally extended a pardon to the Chumash and people returned from exile, they celebrated the pardon with victorious marches, masses, and festivals, and invited some of the Yokuts who had been involved in the war to join in the commemoration of its ending. But many indigenous people had died or suffered during the precarious movement to and from the coast. Everyone had faced extreme danger during the armed conflict, the fire at Mission Santa Ines, the retaking of Mission La Purisima by the soldiers, and on the five-day walk to and from exile. Even so, native accounts of the revolt that have been passed down within their respective communities do not mention indigenous fear. Instead, they once more validate Chumash forms of knowledge and power, and emphasize the way Chumash leaders could stand up to the missionaries and soldiers alike using the objects that enabled them to access power and which even protected them from their opponents' weapons. Relaying a community history about those distant events in 1914, Maria Solares said that a belief had existed at Santa Ines that the population would be impervious to death if hit by the bullets of the soldiers. According to her, people were saying such things as "if they shoot at me, water will come out of the cannon," or yet "if they shoot me, the bullet will not enter my flesh."⁴⁸ Even so, she also acknowledged the danger, and the population's sense of mortality. The *wot* even sent a messenger to Santa Ines at the beginning of the revolt asking the Indians there to go to La Purisima, so that "if they were all to be killed, they would all be killed together."⁴⁹ Indeed Solares frequently emphasized how people felt that it was important to die together as a group, rather than to leave anyone to suffer death alone.

Each of the stories under discussion here (of Maria Solares, Luisa Ignacio, and Lucretia Garcia) focuses on the discrete memories of the three communities involved, relating the war in narratives "encoded in physical space," as is common in native histories.⁵⁰ Yet these three Chumash accounts also share common elements depicting forms of power that gave protection in a situation fraught with violence and death. In the stories of both Maria Solares and Lucretia Garcia, for example, the power of the amuletic *?atishwin* proved crucial.⁵¹

The *?atishwin* formed part of shamanic practice involving the "dream helper" encountered in a trance, induced by taking a hallucinogen, to help transport the shaman, or *?atishwinic*, into a different realm of consciousness and imbue him with particular powers or knowledge.⁵² Indeed, the powers attributed to the *?atishwin*, which could be symbolized in the form of a talisman, varied. Some could carry a person over the mountains, others protected one from a bear, still other *?atishwin* enabled the

person to disappear. As Lucretia Garcia explained, even if "a whole crowd of men" pursued someone possessed of an *?atishwin*, then they would be made "like a pack of babies," and nothing would happen even if they were to catch him.⁵³

Certainly the Chumash were in need of their *?atishwin*. Maria Solares said that the revolt began at La Purisima following threats made against Chumash men whom a treacherous native sacristan found consuming mind-altering drugs one evening, as part of the indigenous religious practices that persisted at the missions. The Chumash then divided on the question of their invulnerability to Spanish arms, since some had already been wounded by their nervous overseers. After the revolt began in earnest, proof for such beliefs would be forthcoming once the soldiers at La Purisima captured seven Purisimeños, blindfolded them, tied their hands behind their back, and shot them. For it then became apparent that, despite his being repeatedly shot, and while the friars prayed constantly, one of the men could not be killed. "One of them got up after they were shot. The soldiers shot again and he fell. Priest prayed while soldiers shot." When the soldiers examined him, they found that he wore an *?atishwin* of woven human hair about his neck, the destruction of which was necessary to finish him off.⁵⁴

Similarly, in Garcia's account, the *?atishwin* protected its bearer. According to her, three old men responded to a call to attend mass at Santa Barbara, unaware that the revolt had begun. As they approached the mission, the one who wore the *?atishwin* charm felt it "throbbing on his neck and he knew something would happen." Shortly thereafter they came upon soldiers who shot and killed the other two, but the one with the necklace "became invisible for a stretch and ran most swiftly." He disappeared two more times (as the soldiers fired) before he slipped away, invisible, into the mountains. Solares also spoke of a man involved in the war named Estevan, who asked for a *takulsoxsinas*, a woven headband worn at times of war, that he had "guarded away in his house." When a certain Marcos asked Estevan to give him half of the magic string in question, the latter told him not to cut the *?atishwin* as "it would be like stabbing Estevan's heart."⁵⁵

In the stories of Solares and Garcia, the horse, too, appeared as a means of escape, and it formed part of the supernatural world the leaders could access. Once mounted, it could allow its rider to disappear and then reappear at a safe distance, or even vanish altogether. For example, Solares told of a messenger who was walking from La Purisima to Santa Ines when he met a mounted soldier. Thinking he was on his way to join the other soldiers "to kill us," the messenger "commanded him to dismount from his horse and take his clothes off" before killing him and taking his uniform and mount to Santa Ines. On approaching Santa Ines he lassoed a fresh

horse and was putting on a saddle, whereupon he was challenged by one of the "bravest of soldiers... a man named Valentin," who ordered him to take off the uniform so that it wouldn't get stained with blood when he shot him. The Indian announced: "I have killed a man," and jumped on a horse, disappearing with a victorious cry and leaving Valentin "holding pure air." Moments later, "the Indian and horse made an appearance on a hilltop and yelled, here I am. *Quitanme* (Take it from me!)." ⁵⁶

Solares also spoke of the ability of some leaders to transpose themselves into other forms. Transposition played an important role in shamanic systems of thought. Among the Chumash, that power too was tied to the spirit helper who entered the body of the shaman or other political-religious figures. One might be transposed into looking like the helper, or simply use the power to change into other forms. In Solares' story, two brothers named Marcos and Andres entered the jail at Santa Ines "through the keyhole" to free prisoners caught at the beginning of the revolt. This time the infamous Valentin stood in the prison next to the corral, guarding the prisoners. Yet when he looked up and saw the two brothers between him and the prisoners, "Valentin trembled, but did not say a word. Valentin opened the door and went out silently." ⁵⁷

In Solares' narrative of this battle between soldiers and Chumash, however, Valentin is a brave soldier and a good match, making it all the more important that the Chumash leader outsmart him and make him tremble. He represents a very different figure from the soldier Valentin Cota in Fray Ripoll's story. Still, it is also worth noting that not all the Chumash accounts are of invulnerability or yet victory. Both Solares and Luisa Ignacio recounted the great despair people felt during the revolt. Solares said that many women left their children by the roadside. Luisa Ignacio emphasized the dangers, stating that many died en route to exile. Solares said the despair was so great that "mothers said 'I am suffering and they are going to kill me and the child. I will throw the child away.'" Still, even when recording such strong emotion, none of the Chumash historians spoke of fear, which was rather the exclusive provenance of the missionaries. Luisa Ignacio told a story drawn from the experience of her mother-in-law, Maria Ignacio, who went into exile from Santa Barbara. The presidio soldiers fought and beat the Indians, and "men and women were already running off over the mountains." The mission official Jaime, whom Luisa Ignacio presented as a shaman or a doctor, singer, and teacher, ultimately persuaded them to return or else, he said, they would be killed by the soldiers. "The women cried, thinking they would all be killed." ⁵⁸ That said, we must bear in mind that the act of weeping varies in cultural significance, and here represents an emotion that Luisa Ignacio did not identify as fear. For her part Solares spoke of the revolt as a war, and of Chumash desires to take revenge for the killing of Indians. She mentioned the vow one father

made to "revenge myself by killing every woman and man of Spanish race" if something happened to his son. She emphasized instances of Chumash rebels humiliating the families of Mexican soldiers at Mission La Purisima by taking off their clothes and leaving them naked.

All three stories referred to above place the cause of the revolt squarely within the native community. All blame it on the duplicity of an Indian sacristan who appears in each account. Luisa Ignacio stated that the sacristan spread the rumor that "they were going to kill the Indians when the Indians entered the church next summer." In Lucretia Garcia's account, the sacristan tells people that the missionary will "call them out [of mass] into another room one by one and put them to secret death." In Maria Solares' story, the sacristan ends up in jail at the end of the revolt for his lies. Luisa Ignacio had him burned, while Lucretia Garcia ended with his burning and dismemberment. All three accounts reveal the etching of the history of punishment in Chumash memory, making such rumors of arbitrary and violent deaths feasible.

In Concluding

When fear is present in colonial documents to identify Indian thought or action, it requires cautious analysis and should generate suspicion, as fear appeared in Spanish writing for many reasons. It formed part of the colonial language used to describe indigenous people as dependent and lacking intellectual traditions, political vision, and cultivated ways of seeing. Colonial authorities considered fearful and humiliating punishment essential to maintain their rule. Missionary Ripoll used purported Chumash fears to absolve their actions and gain them a pardon from the governor during the 1824 war. During the revolt, the missionaries' belief in liquid fear obscured indigenous political alliances and strategies that produced and sustained such a remarkable action. Finally, among the many uses of fear was to attribute it to one's enemies, thus diminishing their political visions and ideas.

In contrast to the many ways fear appeared in European documents, it remained sparsely used in indigenous colonial writing and community memories about this era. Instead native writers used it in reference to Spaniards and other Europeans because attributing fear lent authority to some, while fearlessness demonstrated strength in conflict. But Indian writing delivered other things than a focus on Spanish-Indian relations. Indian writing such as that of Pablo Tac emphasized native forms of power. Chumash memories of the revolt similarly described those things that gave their leadership and community access to power. Native histories emphasized indigenous authority, and the ability of shamans and elders to

transform conditions and gain knowledge through dance and other practices despite the political defeat that led to their loss of autonomy over their lands. The histories represented native communities as capable of addressing the circumstances they encountered under colonial and Mexican rule, and offer knowledge about the past that is constructive in the present.

The Spanish frequently attributed fear to native people in their writings. By the same token, its relative absence in the colonial texts and oral traditions of indigenous people speaks to a deliberate discursive and historiographic strategy on their part to leave a very different record of their response to colonialism. Looking beyond the colonial archive, fear is certainly present in indigenous oral and written culture. Even so, it and other emotions are expressed in very particular ways that relate to enduring dimensions of native thought and structures of feeling well beyond the reach of Valentin Cota.