

ONE. INDIGENOUS ORIENTATIONS

For things to be simultaneous, they must be situated within a single frame of reference, in the sense that there is not an absolute time against which all events can be measured.¹ With respect to the contemporaneity of non-natives and Indigenous peoples, the frame for thinking their synchronicity usually is provided by settler discourses, structures, and perceptions. More than offering invidious portraits of Indians as backward and disappearing, non-native accounts, governmental and popular, treat the space of the United States as a given in which to set the unfolding of events, and in this way the political union functions as something of an atemporal container for the occurrences, movements, conjunctures, periodicities, and pulsations of history, providing the background against which the movement of time can be registered. Native activists and intellectuals have argued against the idea of inclusion within the United States, understanding that gesture as an erasure of the specificity of Indigenous geopolitical claims, rights to self-determination, autochthonous existence as polities distinct from the settler state, and, perhaps most pointedly, the ways the colonial violence of settler rule has worked through forced incorporation of Indigenous peoples into the “domestic” space of the nation. Yet the insistence that Native people(s) occupy a singular present with non-natives and that the notion of being-in-time or the potential for change remain contingent on belonging to that shared, unified “now” (which includes a shared “then” of the past) seems to eerily resemble the representation of Indigenous populations and territories as necessarily part of the United States. Asserting Indigenous people’s and peoples’ presence in the present, as opposed to casting them as anachronisms, does not necessarily redress the violence perpetrated through the organization of history around the coordinates of settler occupation—the treatment of non-native temporalities as the baseline for marking Native being-in-time.

Rather than approaching time as an abstract, homogeneous measure of universal movement along a singular axis, we can think of it as plural, less as a temporality than *temporalities*. From this perspective, there is no singular unfolding of time, but, instead, varied temporal formations that have their own rhythms—patterns of consistency and transformation that emerge immanently out of the multifaceted and shifting sets of relationships that constitute those formations and out of the interactions among those formations. As V. F. Cordova observes, “time is an abstraction derived from the fact that there is motion and change in the world.”² U.S. settler colonialism produces its own temporal formation, with its own particular ways of apprehending time, and the state’s policies, mappings, and imperatives generate the frame of reference (such as plotting events with respect to their place in national history and seeing change in terms of forms of American progress). More than just affecting ideologies or discourses of time, that network of institutionalized authority over “domestic” territory also powerfully shapes the possibilities for interaction, development, and regularity within it. Such imposition can be understood as the denial of Indigenous *temporal sovereignty*, in the sense that one vision or way of experiencing time is cast as the only temporal formation—as the baseline for the unfolding of time itself. However, such compulsory interpellation of Natives into U.S. life is never fully accomplished nor fully able to displace Indigenous temporal orientations.

To speak of temporal *orientation* suggests the ways that time can be regarded less as a container that holds events than as potentially divergent processes of becoming. Being temporally oriented suggests that one’s experiences, sensations, and possibilities for action are shaped by the existing inclinations, itineraries, and networks in which one is immersed, turning toward some things and away from others. More than a question of relations in space, orientation involves reiterated and nonconscious tendencies, suggesting ways of inhabiting time that shape how the past moves toward the present and future. In *Queer Phenomenology* Sara Ahmed asks, “What does it mean to be oriented? How do we begin to know or to feel where we are, or even where we are going, by lining ourselves up with the features of the grounds we inhabit, the sky that surrounds us, or the imaginary lines that cut through maps?”; she observes, “The direction we take excludes things for us, before we even get there,” adding, “Depending on which way one turns, different worlds might even come into view. If such turns are repeated over time, then bodies acquire the very shape of such direction.”³ Being oriented, having a feeling of place and self in relation to other places and selves as well as a feeling of where one is going and the pace at which one is heading there, entails moving in particular directions in line with extant patterns.

This persistent (and largely unwilling) regeneration of continuity not only happens “in time” but is the substance, feel, and force of time unfolding.⁴ If one’s perception of the world might be quite different depending on where one turns, we might understand the paths traced out by one’s orientations—following those particular paths in those specific ways—as giving rise to a kind of temporality, qualitatively distinguishable from other experiences of time. We further might understand collective modes of orientation as a temporal formation that has its own frame of reference and processes of becoming.

Native peoples remain oriented in relation to collective experiences of peoplehood, to particular territories (whether or not such places are legally recognized as reservations or given official trust status), to the ongoing histories of their inhabitation in those spaces, and to histories of displacement from them. Such orientations open up “different worlds” than those at play in dominant settler orderings, articulations, and reckonings of time.⁵ Developing such notions of temporal orientation and multiplicity opens the potential for conceptualizing Native continuity and change in ways that move beyond the modern/traditional binary; that do not take non-native frameworks as the self-evident basis for approaching Indigenous forms of persistence, adaptation, and innovation; and that enable consideration of temporal sovereignty, how sensations and articulations of time take part in Indigenous peoples’ operation as polities and their pursuit of self-determination. As Deborah Miranda observes with respect to the history of her people (the Esselen), “Story, like culture, is constantly moving. It is a river where no gallon of water is the same gallon it was one second ago. Yet it is still the same river. . . . Even if the whole is in constant change. In fact, *because* of that constant change.”⁶ What does it mean to consider Native temporalities as having their own flow—as coherent yet changing, affected by other flows but not the same as them? In this way *Beyond Settler Time* explores how Native peoples’ varied experiences of duration can remain nonidentical with respect to the dynamics of settler temporal formations, indicating ways of being-in-time that are not reducible to participation in a singular, given time—a unitary flow—largely contoured by non-native patterns and priorities.

Rather than marking an absolute distinction between Natives and non-natives, suggesting that there are unbreachable barriers that generate utterly incommensurable and hermetically sealed Indian and white forms of experience, I am suggesting the presence of discrepant temporalities that can be understood as affecting each other, as all open to change, and yet as not equivalent or mergeable into a neutral, common frame—call it time, modernity, history, or the present. The aim is not to search for an authentic Indigenous conception of time as against degrading forms of settler influence. The effects

of non-native expropriation, superintendence, and exploitation can be understood as intimate parts of Native experiences of time and becoming, as contributing to Indigenous orientations but in ways that exceed the paths of development envisioned by such interventions and invasions. Instead of juxtaposing the past and the present in order to preserve the former from the ravages of the latter, I am suggesting the importance of attending to Native conceptualizations, articulations, and impressions of time that do not easily fit within a framework explicitly or implicitly oriented around settler needs, claims, and norms—a pluralization of time that facilitates Indigenous peoples' expressions of self-determination.

In this way I seek to offer ways of marking Native peoples' translation into an account of time already oriented around settlement. My focus on the force, effects, and limits of temporal inclusion is not in the interest of authenticating certain ways of becoming as truly Native, or of invalidating others as a version of false consciousness.⁷ Instead, my aim lies in trying to open greater conceptual and discursive room for addressing time in ways that avoid the following: falling back into the dichotomization of tradition and modernization, mandating that Native modes of being-in-time be understood as inherently occupying an experience of the present shared with non-natives, implicitly distinguishing between beliefs about time and its supposed universal facts, and insisting on the adoption of settler modes of time as the real in order to engage with Euro-American historicism(s).⁸ There is an inherently speculative quality to what I'm doing. The position I am taking up is negative dialectical and offered in solidarity.⁹ Dale Turner observes, "The project of unpacking and laying bare the meaning and effects of colonialism will open up the physical and intellectual space for Aboriginal voices."¹⁰ *Beyond Settler Time* is such an effort "of unpacking and laying bare" from the perspective of a non-native, highlighting the violence of extant forms of temporal recognition (and their de facto modes of translation). The critical question, then, is, Does this critical orientation open useful intellectual, imaginative, and/or affective potentials? The materials I work with in this study are intended to be generative for exploring the interpretive possibilities of this mode of analysis—investigating what intellectual and political possibilities are opened through this way of approaching the question of time. In this sense I'm offering less an explanation than a hermeneutic, one that emerges out of a careful and ongoing engagement with Native texts and Native scholars and that hopefully can contribute to the pursuit of Indigenous self-determination by proposing additional conceptual tools for marking the force, effects, and endurance of settlement.¹¹ In this vein my insistence on the

potential distinction between Native and non-native experiences of time may be understood as aiming to facilitate possibilities for temporal sovereignty.

Modernity/ies, Temporal Recognition, and the Limits of “Now”

What does it mean to be recognized as existing in time? The representation of Native peoples as either having disappeared or being remnants on the verge of vanishing constitutes one of the principal means of effacing Indigenous sovereignties. Such a portrayal of Indigenous temporal stasis or absence erases extant forms of occupancy, governance, and opposition to settler encroachments. Moreover, it generates a prism through which any evidence of such survival will be interpreted as either vestigial (and thus on the way to imminent extinction) or hopelessly contaminated (as having lost—or quickly losing—the qualities understood as defining something, someone, or some space as properly “Indian” in the first place). These kinds of elisions and anachronizations can be understood as a profound denial of Native being. They perform a routine and almost ubiquitous excision of Indigenous persons and peoples from the flux of contemporary life, such that they cannot be understood as participants in current events, as stakeholders in decision making, and as political and more broadly social agents with whom non-natives must engage. This making of Indians into ghostly remainders enacts what Kevin Bruyneel has referred to as “colonial time,” in which “temporal boundaries” are constructed between “an ‘advancing’ people and a ‘static’ people, locating the latter out of time,” and, within this dynamic, “increasingly . . . tribal sovereignty [appears] as a political expression that is out of (another) time, and therefore a threat to contemporary American political life and political space.”¹² The temporal trick whereby Indians are edited out of the current moment—or cast as inherently anachronistic—emerges out of the refusal to accept the (geo)political implications of persistent Indigenous becoming, the ways that the presentness of Native peoples challenges settler claims to possession now and for the future. As Jean O’Brien observes in *Firsting and Lasting*, her study of nineteenth-century town histories in New England, “non-Indians refused to regard culture change as normative for Indian peoples”; “Indians, then, can never be modern.”¹³ However, is acknowledgment of Native timeliness the same as according Indigenous peoples status as modern? In what ways is conceptualizing Native being-in-time as the inhabiting of *modernity* (or a shared present with non-natives) equivalent to a bid for inclusion within settler modes of recognition? How might an implicit imperative to become temporally intelligible to non-natives limit possibilities

for envisioning other Indigenous experiences of time and expressions of temporal sovereignty?

The pursuit of recognition by the settler state often results in a translation of Indigenous histories, modes of collectivity, and relations to place into forms that better fit extant legal and administrative frames. Official non-native discourses themselves employ temporal narratives that produce limited visions of Native collective selfhood. In *Native Acts*, Joanne Barker argues, “Native traditions have been fixed in an authentic past and then used as the measure of a cultural-as-racial authenticity in the present,” adding that “through the discourses of recognition, U.S. national narrations represent recognition as an expected outcome of Native cultural authenticity.” She later observes, “If Native peoples are to secure the recognition and protection of their legal status and rights as defined therein, they must be able to demonstrate their *aboriginality*—as pursuit, as essence, as a truth that transcends,” and this standard “makes it impossible for Native peoples to narrate the historical and social complexities of cultural exchange, change, and transformation—to claim cultures and identities that are conflicted, messy, uneven, modern, technological, mixed.”¹⁴ To be authentic means to preserve forms of tradition that emanate from the past in pristine ways; that performance of stasis is the condition of possibility for being accorded status as proper Indians. Such enactments of aboriginality explicitly and implicitly serve as the basis for (grudging, partial, and circumscribed) governmental acknowledgment of Native sovereignty. From this perspective, being recognized as Indian means staging a version of pastness that disavows the “complexities” of Native life, including “the historical realities of accident, succession, alienation, passion, personal conflict, dissension, and disparity.”¹⁵ Miranda wonders, “Those who will not change do not survive; but who are we, when we have survived?” and if as part of that process of survival, as she says, “my tribe must reinvent ourselves—rather than try to copy what isn’t there in the first place”—that very process of reinvention in relation to changing circumstances can become the basis for declaring that a people has ceased to exist as such.¹⁶

If Indigenous peoples are called on to embody an older and purer version of themselves (and understood as actually descended from groups identified as Native only when they do so), the alternative to such time warping seems to lie in a turn to history. Yet what is the relation of history—the narration of the connections among the past, present, and future—to settler institutionalities and imperatives?¹⁷ Viewing Natives as being *historical*, in the sense of acknowledging Native existence in and change over time, includes addressing the effects of settler colonialism on Native lifeways, choices, and modes of collective self-

expression and organization. That awareness of how Native people(s) are affected by the passage of time—or, more precisely, of the operation of Native processes of becoming that are animated by the multifaceted and shifting social, political, and environmental networks in which they are enmeshed—often is portrayed as participation in a singular history alongside non-natives. In *Indians in Unexpected Places*, Philip Deloria sets out “to consider the kinds of frames that have been placed around a shared past,” and later, noting the similarity of patterns of life and material culture among Indians and rural whites in the early twentieth century, he observes that “otherwise critical Indian agents . . . , when pressed, sometimes confessed that Indians and non-Indians were experiencing the world together.”¹⁸ This insistence on synchrony, interaction, and complication in unfolding events works against the denial of Native persistence as well as the attempt to freeze Indigenous persons and peoples into a simulacrum of pastness, a fantasized construction of Indian realness cast as immanently tied to a bygone era.

However, in countering anachronization, this approach generates a different set of temporal difficulties. Deloria argues “that some Indian people—more than we’ve been led to believe—leapt quickly into modernity,” adding, “They leapt, I think, because it became painfully clear that they were not distinct from the history that was even then being made. Whether they liked it or not, other people were building a world around, on top of, and through Native American people. That world took as its material base the accumulation of capital ripped from indigenous lands, resources, and labor over the course of centuries.”¹⁹ The sharedness of Native and non-native coexistence and influence on each other appears here as mutual participation in modernity, but given that some Native people “leapt” into it, modernity also indicates something that exists separately from the temporal experience of Natives prior to that point. The shift from that earlier experience of time to modernity is explained through Native subjection to enduring kinds of expropriation and exploitation of their homelands, communities, and bodies. The resulting “history,” then, clearly involves Indigenous people(s) but arrives as a “painful” and violent disruption whose propulsive force arises from the “other people” who “were building a world” around and on top of them, primarily against their will (or at least without their meaningful consent). Characterizing such an unfolding as “shared” seems to emphasize the facticity and importance of Native presence while still putting it in relation to settler-driven change, noting the important and varied role of Natives within a story that is still ultimately oriented around non-native transformations. What would an account of Indigenous experiences of time on their own terms look like, one that also suggests the profound effects of the forms of invasion,

seizure, and occupation to which Deloria points? Put another way, can the complex choices made by the people Deloria addresses be understood in ways other than as a “leap” into some other kind of time called modernity, and what possibilities for envisioning temporality (and its relation to self-determination) might such a shift enable?

Characterizing Native and non-native experiences, trajectories, and orientations as all occurring within a singular shared modernity (or history) engages in important intellectual work: insisting on Native survival and significance, refusing the idea that people can be assessed against frozen images of tradition, and highlighting the role of settler colonialism in shaping non-native lives (in ways spectacular and quotidian). However, positing such temporal sharedness implicitly affirms a kind of recognition that merges Native people(s) into a conception of the present whose contours emerge from the ongoing assault on Indigenous sovereignties. What precisely does (entry into) modernity entail? Deloria insists, “Lives lived around liberating travel and cosmopolitan sophistication mattered. So did engagement with technology—not just cars, but sewing machines, merry-go-rounds, telephones, and film cameras. All these things pointed to the ways in which Indian people created modernity in dialogue with others.” Movement outside the boundaries of reservations (including transoceanic journeys), alterations in material culture, and participation in new industries and forms of exchange are collated here as participation in *modernity*, which then can be characterized as something that Natives cocreated. Deloria further suggests, “The members of this Native cohort [in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries] were not the first Indian people to engage American popular culture, to be sure. They were the first to do so, however, in its particularly modern form, at the very moment when those forms were developing.”²⁰ The notion of the modern here suggests a certain way of inhabiting and experiencing time, one that is not reducible to *engaging* with forms of non-native cultural production and commerce per se or to adopting, appropriating, or adapting particular once-alien practices, patterns, objects, or beliefs.

Instead, being modern, or inhabiting modernity as a shared experience, involves a qualitative shift from something that came before. Deloria observes that “the final moment, of conquest, pacification, and incorporation of Indian people, then, might also be seen to represent one of the many critical instants in which the United States became aware of its own modernity.”²¹ The emergence and recognition of modernity as a specific sort of temporal experience appears intimately connected to the decimation of Native peoples, but more than simply providing a period marker (with *modern* serving as a name for

what comes in the wake of allotment, for example), the use of modernity as a means of describing and understanding forms of presentness in which both Natives and non-natives were enmeshed (a “world” inhabited “together”) seems to be shaped by forms of settler extension and extraction that are taken as fundamentally altering the conditions of being-in-time for Native peoples. Co-participation in chronologically unfolding time, then, is not distinct from immersion in the modern as a particular epoch defined by specific kinds of shifts, including in the experience of time itself.²² O’Brien suggests that “non-Indians actively produced their own modernity by denying modernity to Indians,” raising questions about the capacity of modernity—or any way of marking and relating time oriented around settler interests—to express Native modes of temporality.²³ If “Indian people created modernity in dialogue with others,” as Deloria says, such contribution seems to involve *leaping* into a world whose condition of possibility lies in “conquest.”

To be clear, my questions are not about whether to emphasize the extent of ongoing settler violence, to highlight its intensive continuing effects on Native peoples, or to explore the significance of settlement for all aspects of non-native life. Rather, my inquiries tend toward the following: how does conceptualizing time as itself a mutual experience for those initiating and subjected to such violence make temporality into an extension of settler colonialism? What happens to the possibilities for conceptualizing Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination when they, a priori, are understood as occurring within a singular temporal formation oriented by settler coordinates?²⁴ How might we see, in Veena Das’s terms, “the signature of the state” at play in these ways of marking time?²⁵ The notion of a shared past and present depends here on joint participation within a period whose character is defined by non-native actions and frameworks. How does settler time—notions, narratives, and experiences of temporality that de facto normalize non-native presence, influence, and occupation—come to serve as the background for articulating and recognizing Native being-in-time? How might such temporal incorporation be understood as part of the dynamics of settler colonialism, constraining and effacing other ways of apprehending Indigenous temporality and processes of becoming? Describing the famous image of the Chiricahua Apache warrior and leader Geronimo riding in a car, Deloria argues, “A powerful and important cultural vitality coheres around the figure of Geronimo in an automobile. It insists on the autonomy of Native individuals, cultures, and societies, and it demands recognition that perhaps your modernity is not distinct from—or better than—mine.”²⁶ While Deloria indicates that Natives may experience modernity in ways that sustain their “autonomy,” what remains unclear here is

what makes the act of riding in an automobile an index of participation in modernity in the first place. What other kinds of temporal orientations—other sorts of “vitality,” ways of being-in-time, and relations to Chiricahua pasts and futures—might that act have, without it being construed as part of an encompassing synchronous formation called *modernity*?

Such a de facto unification can implicitly establish Euramerican frameworks as the standard against which to assess Native deviations. In the introduction to his collection *Alternative Modernities*, Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar illustrates this dynamic. He states, “Born in and of the West some centuries ago under relatively specific sociohistorical conditions, modernity is now everywhere,” and its qualities entail the creation and extension of capitalism, the self-reflexive rejection of tradition as such in potentially freeing ways, and a struggle around forms of mechanized standardization. “Non-Western people,” then, have “hybrid modernities,” which have arrived as “modernity has travelled from the West to the rest of the world,” and such hybridities enable one to “think with a difference” about modernity writ large.²⁷ The global movement of a formation called modernity whose qualities and emergence are tied to conditions in “the West” can somehow encompass presents elsewhere in ways that bear little relation to the rhythms, trajectories, and momentum of time that preceded the modern in the spaces in which it arrives. Or such dynamics appear as forms of *hybridity* or *difference*, epiphenomenal variations in the face of a presumed temporal linkage within modernity. Saying that modernity arose out of confrontations between *the West* and *the not-West* (however these terms are mapped) does not obviate the problems with presuming participation in a common temporal formation, in which the dominant coordinates of Euro-American sociality and governance still provide the basis through which to register processes of becoming. This problematic arises in a number of prominent efforts to try to map the violences of what is envisioned as the contemporary world system. For example, Walter Mignolo emphasizes the centrality of the conquest of the Americas to the emergence of the modern world, and while he continually foregrounds the ability of Europe and the United States to extend and impose the terms of their “local histories” on a planetary scale, these various histories remain part of an encompassing formation—a modernity defined by “coloniality” and the production of “colonial difference”—in which “border epistemologies emerg[e] from the wounds of colonial histories, memories, and experiences.”²⁸ Similarly, Sylvia Wynter speaks of “our present single world order and single world history,” and she suggests that the forms of global connection that have proliferated in the wake of the Columbian encounter can enable a new revolution in human global consciousness that transcends the

European-derived racial hierarchy, which itself has thwarted a conception of collective human identity and history as such.²⁹ Addressing the dynamics of forced incorporation into Euro-American social systems, José Rabasa observes that “nonmodern subjects might actually learn the ways of European thinking without necessarily abandoning their capacity to dwell in their own worlds,” later adding, “Revisionist histories produce narratives that assess the contributions of non-Western peoples to modernity without giving much thought to the paradoxical integration of the onetime nonhistorical peoples into what ends up constituting by definition a universal single history.”³⁰

To the extent that the existence of the U.S. nation-state and its jurisdictional authority over Native peoples provides a constant for forms of temporal reckoning, including a “shared” role by Native people in national history, it serves as the background through which understandings and experiences of the unfolding of time gain orientation. Ahmed notes, “We can think . . . of the background not simply in terms of what is around what we face . . . , but as produced by acts of relegation: some things are relegated to the background in order *to sustain* a certain direction.” More than referencing that which has been consigned to the role of set piece as opposed to active agent, the background indicates what is held constant in order to perceive movement, including the passage of time. It serves less as an inert setting than as the condition of possibility for registering action, change, survival. Ahmed further suggests that “the figure ‘figures’ insofar as the background both is and is not in view” and that “a background is what explains the conditions of emergence or an arrival of something as the thing that it appears to be in the present.”³¹ Absent a background, nothing can figure in or as the foreground and be available for attention, perception, or acknowledgment. If the coherence of the settler state and its presumptive absorption of Native peoples serve as the implicit structuring frame through which to approach and understand temporality on lands claimed by the United States, both the sharedness and the direction of unfolding events will be experienced as consonant with that geopolitical imaginary. All those subject to the state’s jurisdiction in domestic space will appear as occupying a common time. Exploring what constitutes the background for marking and experiencing time, then, draws attention not only to the milieu, at whatever scale, that serves as the context for thinking and feeling time’s unfolding but also to the taken-for-granted processes through which temporal dynamics are figured, including the following: the timeframe thought relevant to address events (especially the editing out of generations, if not centuries or millennia, of inhabitation in a given place or region); the kinds of causal explanations offered, as well as conceptions of who or what constitutes an actor

in the making of history (including discounting the presence and effectivity of ancestors, nonhuman entities, aspects of the landscape, collective stories, and ceremonies); the coordinates one uses for conceptualizing relevance (like measuring forms of continuity and change against phenomena that ostensibly illustrate national subjects, in Deloria's terms quoted earlier, "experiencing the world together"—for example, events taken as of national significance, like the Civil War); and assumptions about what can be held constant (such as national jurisdiction) and, thus, how to conceptualize the potentials for change.

While not denying numerous and ongoing forms of interaction among Natives and non-natives and the profound influence of settler governance on the shape of those relationships, I want to trouble the idea that asserting the existence of a singular present into which Indigenous peoples are always already incorporated serves as a means of breaking the hold of colonial influence by recognizing Native agency and contemporaneity. The positing of inherently mutual participation in the unfolding of time—itself imagined *de facto* as a line reaching from the past toward the future—contributes to the adoption of a standard model of development in which non-Euro-American conceptions and experiences of time appear as deviations that are transitioning toward a dominant framework. As Dipesh Chakrabarty notes in his critique of Euro-American historicism, "This transition is also a process of translation of diverse life-worlds and conceptual horizons about being human into the categories of Enlightenment thought," a process in which "the overriding (if often implicit) themes are those of development, modernization, and capitalism."³² In other words, when Euro-American temporal formations provide the background for conceptualizing time itself, "diverse life-worlds" are implicitly translated into the normative frame of those formations, limiting possibilities for (Indigenous) self-determination by presuming the necessity of transitioning to particular forms of self-organization, narration, and governance.

In *X-Marks* Scott Richard Lyons offers a powerful account of Native being-in-time that illustrates this problem. For him, the *x-mark*, which literally refers to a treaty signature, "symbolize[s] Native assent to things (concepts, policies, technologies, ideas) that, while not necessarily traditional in origin, can sometimes turn out all right and occasionally even good." Repudiating cultural purity as a goal (and referring to those who seek it, and who police others in its name, as "culture cops"), he embraces what he characterizes as contamination and hybridity, seeking to move toward a reckoning with the complexities and diversities of contemporary Native identity, practice, collectivity, and self-articulation. However, his refusal of stasis and unanimity is accompanied by an epochal account of the onset of the modern that performs the kind of

transition narrative to which Chakrabarty refers. Lyons argues, “X-marks are made in a different kind of Indian time that must be characterized in some potentially problematic ways. First, I distinguish between traditional and modern time, clocking the supplanting of the former by the latter at around 1492, or really when the treaties were made,” further noting that “the original x-marks were pledges to adopt new ways of living that, looking backwards, seem more accurately described as modern.” The modern constitutes a new “kind” of time, one that appears to alter the dynamics of change itself. Certain “ways of living” count as modern and, as such, are inherently disjunct from what transpired previously—in “traditional” time. Lyons later notes that “indigenous people have the right to move in modern time” and that “our ancestors promised that their descendants would be part of the modern world.”³³ To live “in modern time” is to be on the other side of the break, in a time and “world” shared with everyone else, and in this way *modern* functions less as simply descriptive (later in chronological time) than as normative, a right to inclusion in a certain kind of shared time. Being in the present, changing over time, being in a universally common time, and having specifically modern “ways of living” become fused with each other, and the processes and legacies of settler coercion provide the background that orients this unity.³⁴

The price for Indigenous peoples of such forms of temporal recognition is being enfolded into frames not of their making that can normalize non-native presence, privilege, and power. In *Liberalism and Empire* Uday Singh Mehta says of English notions of universal personhood that, in theory, also could apply to non-European populations, “Behind the capacities ascribed to all human beings exists a thicker set of social credentials that constitute the real bases of political inclusion,” adding, “They draw on and encourage conceptions of human beings that are far from abstract and universal, and in which the anthropological minimum is buried under a thick set of social inscriptions and signals.”³⁵ One could say similar things with respect to notions of participation in a shared modernity: that behind the apparent extension to all lies “a thicker set” of assumptions about what it means to be modern and to participate in this formation, including treating specific (geo)political formations (“social inscriptions and signals”) as the background against which to register—in Ahmed’s terms, to *figure*—meaningful being-in-time.³⁶ Although the formulation of Indigenous being-in-time as inclusion in the present (or in a mutually made past or prospective future) may operate as a way of challenging racializing forms of anachronization, it threatens to elide other ways of envisioning the multivectoral dynamics of Native peoples’ continuity and change that exceed a frame that centers on coparticipation with non-natives. As part of her

critique of the ways white histories deny modernness to Indians, O'Brien suggests they "narrate Indian degeneracy, whereas for non-Indians . . . change is inextricable from the progress narrative that signals their difference and superiority." Such accounts cannot acknowledge the possibility of Native survival into the future via adaptations to altered conditions: "their field of vision narrowed to the local, and they refused to understand the persistence of Indian kinship and mobility on the landscape, not to mention their ongoing measured separateness as political entities."³⁷ Various forms of persistence and separateness cannot be grasped within this framework, since Native peoples can signify only as remnants. However, does incorporating Indigenous peoples into, in Deloria's words quoted earlier, "a world [built] around, on top of, and through Native American people"—a temporality in which the ongoing existence of the settler state provides the de facto background—engage such continuities and autonomies any better? As Glen Coulthard suggests, "Instead of ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence grounded on the ideal of *reciprocity* or *mutual* recognition, the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of . . . power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend." To what extent does the notion of shared time, of temporal recognition, engender possibilities for Indigenous self-determination, and to what extent does it reproduce the normalization of, in Coulthard's terms, the "inherited background field" of "colonial relation"?³⁸

What can figure in this context, and what remains unrecognized? In *Mohawk Interruptus* Audra Simpson argues, "There is a political alternative to 'recognition,' the much sought-after and presumed 'good' of multicultural politics. This alternative is 'refusal.'" Such "refusal" entails a rejection of being translated as "different" within the dynamics of settler governance, being seen as possessing a "culture that is defined by others and will be accorded a protected space of legal recognition *if* your group evidences that 'difference' in terms that are sufficient to the settlers' legal eye," with Simpson further insisting that such transposition of indigeneity into multicultural *difference* "is politically untenable and thus normatively should be refused."³⁹ Rather than suggesting that Native peoples (the Mohawks of Kanawahke in particular) live outside the orbit of settler imposition, she presents them as "operating in the teeth of Empire, in the face of state aggression," and as "exist[ing] without recognition, in states of strangulation." Thus, the idea of refusing recognition is less about being unimplicated in the choices, affects, policies, imaginaries, and brutalities of non-natives than about insisting that Indigenous peoples have an existence not a priori tethered to settler norms and frames.⁴⁰ As Miranda says

of Tom Miranda (her paternal grandfather), “His stories about his parents and their parents before them remind me with painful but enlightening clarity how it is that California Indians lost so much culture, language, land, identity—and yet still have an identity and community, albeit often fragmented and/or re-invented.”⁴¹ Despite not being acknowledged by the U.S. federal government, Miranda’s people, the Esselen, maintain “an identity and community,” passed on through stories that themselves enact forms of continuity while also indicating the collective effects of settler violence that influence the Esselens’ experiences of time.⁴² To be officially recognized would entail manifesting “culture, language, land, identity” in ways that could testify to documentable forms of continuity that could be correlated to dominant historical reckonings, figuring Indigenous collectivity against the background of modes of settler time. Moreover, Esselen responses to fragmentation and processes of reinvention have their own rhythms that are not necessarily commensurable with, in Mehta’s terms, the “thicker set of social credentials” that constitute participation in the modern or the present.⁴³

The issue I seek to raise is not whether Native peoples can choose to engage in practices that could be characterized as modern, or whether they could characterize their own experiences of time as modern, but what the stakes are of treating such participation or experience as necessarily indicating entry into a singular temporal formation that itself marks the sole possibility for moving toward the future. Might such practices (including treaties, centralized modes of government, particular forms of infrastructure, kinds of commodification and exchange, etc.) also gain meaning and be envisioned as choosable within the context of existing and evolving Indigenous experiences of time, change, and continuity—Native lifeworlds—rather than as a shift to some other sense of time called modern? Might such practices be understood as helping to (re)orient existing Indigenous social trajectories but in ways that do not necessarily create a temporal break (or, in Chakrabarty’s terms, “transition”) from what came before?⁴⁴ How can we think about the effectivity of the kinds of stories Miranda cites and the ways resulting forms of “identity and community” remain oriented by the persistence of peoplehood while also giving rise to forms of reinvention? Lyons offers another account of Indigenous experiences of time somewhat different from what I addressed earlier. He says, “It is also the case that since modernity’s onset in Native America—a process that happened by way of conquest and colonization—there has [*sic*] always been a great number of different, interlocking ‘epochs’ or *durées* at any given moment: multiple modes of production, diversities of belief, contending memories, and competing future visions—in other words, different times unfolding in common

space,” adding, “If the expression ‘Indian time’ means anything, it should signify this history of temporal multiplicity.”⁴⁵ The variability of Native responses to conquest, choices made when faced with its imperatives, and social practices and visions while living under it can be understood as *temporal multiplicity*. While this phrase might mean the copresence of various stages of being and becoming modern existing side by side, it also opens the possibility for considering the copresence of varied ways of living time, the coexistence of temporal formations that cannot be assessed against a presumptively modern present—a singular background for a necessarily shared history.

What possibilities are there for temporal multiplicity under the conditions of settler dominance? In seeming to grant temporal equality or recognition, the sense of shared time can efface collective forms of becoming and ways of being-in-time that arise out of Indigenous histories, territorialities, and ordinary experiences of peoplehood. In *Translating Time* Bliss Cua Lim notes, “The rhetoric of anachronism is consistently employed by proponents of homogeneous time whenever a stubborn heterogeneity is encountered. One comes to expect that wherever anachronism is shouted, conflicting, coexisting times are being hastily denounced.”⁴⁶ In this sense the rejoinder to the anachronization of Native peoples may be to argue not that they occupy the homogeneous time of the present but that Indigenous temporalities may conflict with, or simply be heterogeneous to, settler time. To be clear, though, I do not seek to cast the modern as somehow inherently anti-Indigenous or a sign of a loss of Indigenous authenticity, nor do I want to police the boundaries of indigeneity or of Indigenous temporal self-understanding. Instead, I seek to explore the following: What possibilities does the pursuit of temporal recognition bracket or defer? What ways of engaging Indigenous historicity and futurity—and of contesting settler epistemological privilege—does such recognition forgo, and what might be the value of conceptual alternatives? Another way of posing this question might be, what possibilities are opened by the effort to think Indigenous temporal sovereignty (in terms of both the relative autonomy of Native experiences and articulations of time and the violence of imposing settler temporal frameworks through which Native experiences of time are assaulted, denied, and reordered)?

Temporal Formations, Frames of Reference, and the (Im)Possibilities of Translation

In the absence of recourse to a sense of time as simply marching forward in universal synchrony, with everyone occupying a singular now, there must be a way of thinking the plurality of time.⁴⁷ Rather than a successive series of presents,

each becoming past in turn, being-in-time can be understood as fundamentally oriented. More than simply existing as a unit unto itself, the present bears within itself an impetus born from what's been and directed toward particular goals, ends, horizons. Neither inalterable nor ephemeral, these inclinations contour and animate processes of becoming that have their own trajectories.⁴⁸ Each trajectory might be thought of as having specific tendencies and itineraries that exceed the notion of the present as a series of slices of time. Without a notion of supervening, encompassing, and singular time in which all events unfold, there are only disparate temporal formations emerging in their own ways that have shifting effects on each other as they come into contact.

Such an accounting of temporality/ies starts from a different set of presumptions than those of post-Enlightenment historicist time. As Cordova argues, "There can be no universals in the face of an infinity of complexity. There are no absolutes. The complexity is infinite because part of that complexity is change, motion. Whatever is, is in motion, and change is inevitable in the world."⁴⁹ Similarly, Russell West-Pavlov describes time as "the pulsating drive of the unceasing transformation of being itself," adding that "there is no 'time' outside of the multiple ongoing processes of material becoming."⁵⁰ Without a homogenizing conception of contemporaneity and succession, in which the universal movement of time itself functions as a causative principle, change, motion, and relation immanently arise through extant and emergent dynamics, as they shift and develop through their own internal processes and in connection with each other. West-Pavlov further notes, "Temporality is not the environment of these processes, or the measuring stick to calibrate them, but rather, the processes themselves," and these processes give rise to "multiple temporalities which are immanent to the very processes of material being itself in all its manifestations."⁵¹ Noting the existence of multiple temporalities that cannot be unified into a singular time, then, means acknowledging the diversity of processes of becoming and the variety of potential interrelations among those processes.⁵² Attending to such multiplicity, though, is not the same as offering a broad typology as the basis for distinguishing settler and Indigenous experiences of time—such as linear versus circular or having a sensibility based on time versus one based on space. These blanket descriptions tend to freeze the terms (settlers and Indigenous peoples, as well as time and space) into a static opposition that denies internal forms of difference as well as meaningful relation.⁵³ Thinking in terms of a plurality of processes of becoming that interact with each other in complex ways shifts the discussion of temporality from an insistence on the sharedness of *now* (as well as implicitly of *then* and *will be*) toward a consideration of what constitutes a temporal formation and how such

formations might engage with and alter each other without becoming—or being plotted on—a singular timeline.

This approach undermines the idea of a given physical “now,” a self-evident contemporaneous copresence among people(s). Johannes Fabian argues, “The very notion of [the] cultural construction [of time] . . . implies that cultural encoding works on some precultural, i.e., ‘natural’ or ‘real’ experience of Time.”⁵⁴ Insisting on the shared “intersubjective time” of the present works to avoid casting some people(s)—nonwhite, non-Western—as residual or anachronistic as well as to highlight the role of forms of contemporary force (like colonialism) in shaping extant relations.⁵⁵ However, treating participation in an inherently mutual now as a given approaches relations in the present as themselves transparent, as if all that mattered was their occurrence in a particular slice of time rather than either the process by which persons, peoples, movements, and institutions come to be active in that moment and in that place or the horizons toward which they move.⁵⁶ Asserting the intrinsic unity of time homogenizes all of the trajectories that supposedly intersect in the present. This conception of temporality implicitly suggests that the orientations borne from the past that shape movement toward the future are somewhat irrelevant when compared with a notion of temporal copresence, of simultaneity. For example, Miranda observes of her people, “Much of our culture was literally razed to the ground. I refused to believe that the absence of language meant my culture was nonexistent, but since even other Indians thought ‘all you California Indians were extinct,’ it’s been a tough road. Along the way, I’ve learned a lot about stories, their power to rebuild or silence.”⁵⁷ Focusing on the encounter *now* privileges the account of “California Indians” as gone because of the absence of clear signs of “culture,” such as Native language use, at a given moment in time. Taking the necessary coevalness of the present as a starting point would seem to require manifesting evidence of the current content of Native “culture” as a means of registering a people’s existence as such, rather than seeing the articulation of relevant time-frames and of means of connecting the past to the present as part of the expression of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. From the perspective of a “natural” now, stories of Indigenous survival in California cannot testify to the existence of distinct processes of motion and change that affect collective ways of inhabiting the present—how histories of violence, practices of survival, and the stories that encompass both might orient action and meaning in ways irreducible to a set of relations within an ostensibly shared slice of “real” time figured as the present.

To what extent, then, does the notion of mutual participation in the “real” time of now help in understanding interactions between persons, polities, in-

stitutions, and so on? More specifically, does referring the experience of the present to “natural” time provide ways of addressing distinctions in that experience? How can we account for the relation of experience in the present to what’s come before, the pace and rhythms of how events unfold, the sensations and inclinations of moving toward what’s to come, the implicit itinerary/ies in which one is immersed, the modes of temporal cross-referencing through which moments gain relative significance, and the stories that guide one’s ways of being and becoming? Does the supposed physical self-evidence of *now* offer ways of encompassing the multiplicity in lived temporalities? Or does the ostensibly inevitable sharedness of “real” time function as an orienting background that normalizes particular spatiotemporal formations (such as the settler state), foreclosing or silencing countervailing stories and sensations? Indigenous narrations and sensations of time may not accord with dominant settler accounts or models in a variety of ways, including the following: modes of periodization; the felt presence of ancestors; affectively consequential memories of prior dispossessions; the ongoing material legacies of such dispossessions; knowledges arising from enduring occupancy in a particular homeland, including attunement to animal and climatic periodicities; knowledges arising from present or prior forms of mobility; the employment of generationally iterated stories as a basis for engaging with people, places, and nonhuman entities; the setting of the significance of events within a much longer timeframe (generations, centuries, or millennia); particular ceremonial periodicities; the influence and force of prophecy; and a palpable set of responsibilities to prior generations and future ones.

“Natural” time appears as if it were a singular, neutral medium into which to transpose varied experiences of becoming, such that they all can be measured and related through reference to an underlying, “real” continuity—a linear, integrated, universal unfolding. Chakrabarty notes that European historicism employs a conception of time that “is godless, continuous, and, to follow [Walter] Benjamin, empty and homogeneous”: “the assumed universal applicability of its method entails the further assumption that it is always possible to assign people, places, and objects to a naturally existing, continuous flow of historical time,” such that one “will always be able to produce a timeline for the globe, in which for any given span of time, the events in areas X, Y, and Z can be named” — “put[ting] them into a time we are all supposed to have shared, consciously or not.”⁵⁸ The supposedly objective givenness of simultaneity, of an unmediated mutual now, depends on a historicist conception of time as an unfolding, universal line of development. Within that frame the idea of a shared present overrides the possibility for conceptualizing discrepant temporal formations,

or, at best, such formations are reduced to forms of consciousness that can all be situated within the physical reality of a supervening, homogeneous flow.⁵⁹ Certain events simply are simultaneous or are objectively separated from each other by calculable units of time in ways that define possibilities for meaningful relation or causality. Further, any sense of discontinuity or disjunction between temporal figurations and formations can be explained as a result of a failure to understand their relation to this singular commonsensical medium. Positing a “natural” time that underlies any “cultural construction,” then, implicitly casts non-Euro-American forms of temporal experience as a form of belief, rendering them less real than dominant accounts of a shared, linear time.⁶⁰

To avoid this kind of culturalization, other temporalities need to be understood as having material existence and efficacy in ways that are not reducible to a single, ostensibly neutral vision of time as universal succession. The concept of frames of reference provides a way of breaking up this presumed timeline by challenging the possibility of definitively determining simultaneity while still holding onto the potential for thinking about collective experiences of time—temporal formations.⁶¹ Within Einsteinian relativity, simultaneity depends on one’s perspective based on one’s frame of reference.⁶² As Peter Galison observes in his cultural history of the emergence of relativity, within Newtonian conceptions of absolute space and time there is a “universal background of a single, constantly flowing river of time,” but within Einstein’s theory of special relativity (originally published in 1905) “there was no place for such a ‘universally audible tick-tock’ that we can call time. . . . Time flows at different rates for one clock-system in motion with respect to another: two events simultaneous for a clock observer at rest are not simultaneous for one in motion.” Put another way, “the clock systems of every inertial reference frame were equivalent in the sense that the time of one frame was just as ‘true’ as any other.”⁶³ An *inertial frame of reference* refers to objects moving in uniform motion with respect to each other. The classic example is the difference between people on a station platform and people on a train passing by the station: those on one are moving at a uniform speed with respect to the other, so the train and the platform are each their own frame of reference.⁶⁴ If asked whether two events were simultaneous (such as a ball hitting the floor on the train and a clock striking twelve), the people on the train and the people on the platform would have different answers. The people on the platform will see the ball hit the floor on the train at a different time (a different point on the clock) than the people on the train will. When did the event happen? Who is right? The answer is both and neither. In *Time and Space* Barry Dainton explains special relativity by noting, “Spatially separated events that are simultaneous from the perspective

of one inertial frame are not simultaneous from the perspective of all inertial frames, and since the perspectives of all inertial frames are equally valid, there is no sense in the idea that the events in question are ‘really’ simultaneous or not.”⁶⁵ Both accounts of when the ball hit the floor are equally valid, since there is no inherent reason to privilege one frame of reference over the other.

Those in different frames of reference will offer varied accounts based on the point (the time shown on a clock) at which they register something as having occurred. If there is no absolute time against which these discrepant measurements can be reconciled, then *now* has no meaning outside of the frame of reference in which it is articulated. As Steven Savitt observes, “There are (at least) as many *nows* as inertial frames, and there are a non-denumerable infinity of such frames.”⁶⁶ For two people to inhabit shared time or to partake in a common present, they would need to occupy the same frame of reference. Following this logic, we cannot really speak of a global “coevalness”—the absolute time of Euro-American historicism—in the sense that such a concept presumes a singular timeline in which everyone moves in synchrony, rather than attending to perspectively relevant frames of reference that provide the basis for understanding lived temporalities. When addressing the relations between Natives and non-natives, then, scholars should not presume that Indigenous “identity and community,” in Miranda’s terms quoted earlier, can be plotted into an account of time defined by the coordinates of settler governance and sociality, which does not encompass Native stories of both fragmentation and reinvention on their own terms (rather than in terms of a settler frame of reference).

While ruling out the possibility of a frame-independent sense of simultaneity, and thus of a singular and universal time that encompasses everything, relativity still is able to situate frames of reference in relation to each other, making them mutually intelligible, through various forms of quantification. Within relativity, *time* refers to the regimented regularity of ticking clocks. As N. David Mermin explains, “While it is commonly believed that there is something called time that is measured by clocks, one of the great lessons of relativity is that the concept of time is nothing more than a convenient, though potentially treacherous, device for summarizing compactly all the relationships holding between different clocks.”⁶⁷ In this way, time is, in West-Pavlov’s terms quoted earlier, an external “measuring stick” separate from the contents and processes within any given inertial frame of reference. Additionally, the distinctions among frames are themselves defined in terms of their velocity with respect to each other. Thus, all of these relationships are presented in terms of numerical values that can be made commensurate through mathematical operations. Furthermore, the varied perspectives offered by different frames of reference can be triangulated

through reference to the speed of light.⁶⁸ Since the speed of light does not change, it offers a constant by which to calculate the “interval” between frames of reference, their relative movement in space and time. As Brian Greene observes, “Special relativity declares a . . . law for all motion: *the combined speed of any object’s motion through space and its motion through time is always precisely equal to the speed of light*,” which leads to the following proposition: “Since all inertial frames are equivalent, there is no fact of the matter as to the correct decomposition of the interval into spatial and temporal components, and so the only objective (frame independent) fact about the events is the magnitude of the spacetime interval that separates them.”⁶⁹ In doing away with a notion of absolute time, special relativity replaces it with a system of reference in which mathematics and the speed of light enable translations among disparate frames of reference.⁷⁰

This process of quantifying and mathematizing time, though, runs up against the problem of whether the ticking of clocks and the calculation of the relation among points and trajectories in a four-dimensional spacetime can account for the forms of lived experience also encompassed by the concept of time. Such questions were raised perhaps most forcefully in the early twentieth century by the philosopher Henri Bergson. In all of relativity’s frames of reference, time is defined as the ticking of a clock, a mechanistic process of dividing temporality into successive, homogeneous units. As against this uniformity of division, Bergson presents *duration* as the transition among qualitatively differentiable sensations such that they permeate each other in ways that defy enumeration. In *Time and Free Will* he argues, “It seems . . . that two different sensations cannot be said to be equal unless some identical residuum remains after the elimination of their qualitative difference”; “we may conclude that the idea of number implies the simple intuition of a multiplicity of parts or units, which are absolutely alike.” Rather than seeking to divide time into discrete, homogeneous units, Bergson conceptualizes it as “a continuous or qualitative multiplicity with no resemblance to number.”⁷¹ Approaching time as a quantity that can be infinitely divided into equivalent units denudes temporality and the experience of time of everything beyond the “identical residuum” that supposedly can be found within (and can be commensurate with) “different sensations” as they slide into and through each other. The idea of simultaneity as a physical property of time, then, suggests that one can cut up time into equivalent units and that all the events that are spatially copresent on that temporal plane are simultaneous with each other (treating space itself as an infinitely divisible grid of equivalent units).⁷² However, if duration is a “qualitative multiplicity” that is “continuous,” the idea of simultaneity cuts into the continuous experience of

time in order to declare that a set of events that are ostensibly spatially copresent with one's "sensations," yet do not necessarily impact them, all have an inherently shared existence, an insistence that reduces those sensations to a set of equivalent units that can be plotted along a (time)line. What does such spatial copresence at a supposed moment of time mean in terms of thinking the relation between those "simultaneous" events? What does that spatial copresence have to do with the flow—processes of unfolding, becoming—within the experience of duration? What does presence *at the same time* mean in these terms except being able to be plotted on a grid such that events occupy an "identical" temporal plane? From within Bergson's analysis, an insistence on "natural" time—that everyone occupies a singular present—looks like a mathematizing abstraction that effaces the experience of duration. In this vein, to what extent does the notion that Natives and non-natives necessarily occupy a shared temporality rely on homogenizing space and time such that ostensible copresence in space (sizing that grid at whatever scale—a particular region, the territory of the nation-state, the globe) on a slice of time (however wide—an instant, a year, a decade) is taken to mean a common inhabiting of "modern time," regardless of how Natives and non-natives enter into each other's sensations and experiences of duration?

Additionally, seeking to enumerate time—to make it determinate and calculable (and as such also convertible into a coordinate axis within a spacetime grid)—runs into the problem of its resulting frozenness.⁷³ If time can be plotted like a series of points on a graph, what happens to the movement between those points, "what takes place in the interval between two simultaneities?" Bergson suggests that in dividing up time into equivalent units, "as for the interval itself, as for the duration and the motion, they are necessarily left out of the equation."⁷⁴ Similarly, in *Matter and Memory* he observes, "While the line AB symbolizes the duration already lapsed of the movement from A to B already accomplished, it cannot, motionless, represent the movement in its accomplishment nor duration in its flow," later adding, "In a space which is homogeneous and infinitely divisible, we draw, in imagination, a trajectory and fix positions: afterwards, applying the movement to the trajectory, we see it divisible like the line we have drawn, and equally denuded of quality."⁷⁵ In order to understand time, according to Bergson, we must treat it as constantly in motion and, thus, not divisible into discrete units. Without such standard units, though, there is no way to determine simultaneity, except inasmuch as it is experienced as part of a lived trajectory—a qualitatively shifting process of becoming (like, in Miranda's terms, "a river where no gallon of water is the same gallon it was one second ago. Yet it is still the same river").⁷⁶ If a trajectory can be

decomposed into a number of points, each one occupying a slice or plane of infinitely divisible (because homogeneous) time, there can be no movement. Reciprocally, the continuity of duration cannot be broken into units that would make experiences of time *simultaneous* with other events that lie outside a given trajectory. A given point of time cannot be separated from the orientation, momentum, and dynamism of the trajectory—and the attendant “quality” of motion—without compromising a sense of flow. Approached in this way, the representation of Native becoming as contemporaneous with that of non-natives in “natural” time (the grid of homogenized space and time) reduces the immanent trajectories of indigeneity (processes of Native becoming) to a set of points—the supposedly shared now of the present, modernity, national history, and so on. This abstract configuration (situated within a settler grid of intelligibility) itself is treated as the neutral, natural, self-evident frame for understanding time’s unfolding.⁷⁷

If one reinterprets relativity in light of Bergson’s insistence on continuity, movement, and qualitative multiplicity, the notion of frame of reference can be reconceptualized in less quantitative terms as a means of talking about collective regularities (shared backgrounds and orientations) in how time is experienced. In an unacknowledged Bergsonian turn, Lee Smolin, himself a theoretical physicist, critiques post-Einsteinian physics for its tendency to reduce time to a segment of a four-dimensional spacetime whose properties and development can be apprehended as a singular block. In *Time Reborn* he suggests that in removing the dynamism of time from its equations, physics seeks to measure the universe through conceptual tools that are treated as themselves unaffected by the processes they seek to describe. Such conceptual procedures, which he characterizes as “the background,” provide “the terms that give meaning to the motion described. . . . A distance measurement implicitly refers to the fixed points and rulers needed to measure that distance; a specified time implies the existence of a clock outside the system measuring the time.” He adds, “These background structures are the unconscious of physics, silently shaping our thinking to give meaning to the basic concepts we use to imagine the world. We think we know what ‘position’ means because we are making unconscious assumptions about the existence of an absolute reference.”⁷⁸ What happens if, hearkening back to Ahmed, we approach “the background” not as a limitation (a set of unexamined presumptions that hamper something like proper measurement or an adequate understanding of “real” time) but as the conditions of emergence for particular temporal sensations, orienting the qualitative dynamics of duration as a collective experience of time?

If one suspends the use of the homogeneous successions of clock time as “an absolute reference,” frames of reference would refer to qualitatively different processes of becoming that have no inherent, neutral means of being articulated to each other, instead requiring complex processes of translation in order to be made mutually intelligible.⁷⁹ Within such an analysis, the emphasis lies on how social formations achieve substantive, if shifting, cohesion through their backgrounds, orientations, and trajectories (including the influence of nonhuman entities and forces on them).⁸⁰ Cordova suggests, “Each of us occupies a world that is made by our predecessors. We are given ‘reality’; we do not *discover* it,” further indicating that “there are no individual *realities*, only communal ones” and that “we reinforce our communal sense of reality. . . . We act on it. In it.” She later observes that “when two people from different cultures come together,” “they find it difficult to communicate with one another—their frames of reference do not meet.”⁸¹ In addition to indicating the potential for moving beyond the idea of disparate sets of *beliefs* about time that can be triangulated against the *real*, Cordova indicates the imbrication of physical reality and collective modes of perception by characterizing those “communal” orientations (trajectories of *action*) as “frames of reference.” Furthermore, noting the problems of communication raised by having nonidentical frames of reference, Cordova implies that such difficulties evidence the need to *translate* among varied forms of temporal experience. Rather than engaging directly in a mutual and self-evident now, relations across temporal formations would entail, in Chakrabarty’s formulation, “translations that do not take a universal middle term for granted,” including the putative physical givenness of the present.⁸² Each collective frame of reference might be understood as having its own forms of continuity, flow, trajectory—processes of becoming—that cannot be segmented into slices of time (in Bergson’s terms “simultaneities”) so as to be made commensurate with moments in other frames of reference (such as in settler-endorsed forms of historicism).

In the absence of a mutual frame of reference (a common background) between Natives and non-natives, non-natives engage in forms of translation, not primarily to understand Native temporalities but to insert them within settler timescapes. That process of interpellation is not acknowledged as such, and through it, Indigenous experiences appear as exception (an alarming rupture in time, as in the persistence of Native sovereignty or the use of violence to defend it, discussed in chapter 2), absence (the need to engender proper forms of ambition and life rhythms, as in allotment policy, addressed in chapter 3), and superstition (the denigration of complex, noncontiguous relations across time,

particularly as instantiated by prophecy, taken up in chapter 4). However, recognizing such temporal inscription or conscription as part of the dynamics of settlement can open room for articulating forms of being-in-time—in terms of territoriality, politics, everyday socialities—that do not need to take settler formations as the implicit standard for what constitutes the present or historicity. Discussing the ways Indigenous philosophies and modes of living remain alien to dominant narratives of settler governance, Turner argues, “The asymmetry arises because indigenous peoples must use the normative language of the dominant culture to ultimately defend world views that are embedded in completely different normative frameworks.”⁸³ Attending to Indigenous temporal sovereignty, then, draws attention to the ways in which settler superintendence of Native peoples imposes a particular account of how time works—a normative language or framework of temporality that serves as the basis for forms of temporal inclusion and recognition. Settler time reduces the unfolding and adaptive expressions of Indigenous peoplehood to a set of points—the supposedly shared now of the present, modernity, and national history—within a configuration that is positioned as the commonsensical frame in ways that deny the immanent motion of indigeneity. Native peoplehood gets plotted in ways that deny the movement inherent in its ongoing emergence.

In contrast to the insertion of Native peoples into settler time, the ongoing history of a people’s becoming can be understood as providing an orienting background and momentum in engaging with non-native persons, practices, material culture, infrastructures, and institutions. Rather than instantiating a break into the modern, which provides the implicit framework for mutual engagement in the present, those encounters, including the experience and memory of modes of settler dispossession, will themselves become part of a people’s experience of their own duration.⁸⁴ As noted earlier, Miranda suggests of Native peoples in California, including her own, that they “lost so much culture, language, land, identity—and yet still have an identity and community, albeit often fragmented and/or reinvented,” and she further connects her experiences of her father’s abuse to this history: “Flogging. Whipping. Belt. Whatever you call it, this beating, this punishment, is as much a part of our inheritance, our legacy, our culture, as any bowl of accorn mush, any wild salmon fillet. . . . More than anything else we brought with us out of the missions, we carry the violence we were given along with baptism, confession, last rites.”⁸⁵ The violence of the missions here marks less a break in Indigenous temporalities than a reorientation of them, one that informs experiences of “identity and community”—an “inheritance” that comes to serve as part of the background for action in the present and toward the future. The legacies of the missions

become part of Indigenous frames of reference, even as the attempted decimation of peoplehood through missionization fails. The losses do not themselves eliminate a sense of indigeneity even as they affect its texture and trajectory. In the introduction to her text, Miranda asserts, “Culture is ultimately lost when we stop telling the stories of who we are, where we have been, how we arrived here, what we once knew, what we wish we knew; when we stop our retelling of the past, our imagining of the future, and the long, long task of inventing an identity every single second of our lives.”⁸⁶ The missions and their ongoing effects play a crucial role in the story of “where we have been, how we arrived here,” and as such, they neither merely interrupt a sense of peoplehood nor simply supplant prior *retellings* and *imaginings*, which would generate something like a disjunction in temporality itself. In this vein, discussing the effects of forms of state violence in India, Das asks, “Are there other paths on which self-creation may take place, through occupying the same place of devastation yet again, by embracing the signs of injury and turning them into ways of becoming subjects?”⁸⁷ Mission stories, and those that follow, enter into existing frames of reference, becoming part of the totality of stories, altering them, offering new challenges and struggles, while still participating within an ongoing process of Indigenous becoming—of *invention*—as peoples shaped by lived stories and sensations.⁸⁸

How, though, can one physicalize such sensations? How might we understand the plurality of Indigenous temporalities as having material efficacy, irreducible to “belief”? If frames of reference cannot be determined and measured against “objective” criteria, and the attempt to do so can be understood as itself an imposition of settler time, then we might turn to perception as a way of approaching Indigenous temporal formations. In *Phenomenology of Perception* Maurice Merleau-Ponty argues that perception operates holistically, taking in an environment as a “whole perceptual context” rather than a piecemeal set of sensations about particular objects or relations, and, in affectively apprehending his or her existing circumstances, a “normal person *reckons with the possible*,” meaning that perception is guided by the potential for action in the world.⁸⁹ Determinations about what is possible unfold from a history of engagements with shifting environments, and such ongoing interactions work less as a set of propositions that are verified or falsified than as a continuous enmeshment in the world in which feeling, response, and judgment arise out of sensory connections to one’s surroundings. In this sense perception connects a person to his or her environment, operating not as a separate consciousness or screen distinct from the actual but as an encompassing capacity for relation influenced by existing conditions and circumstances that are themselves

changing—what Merleau-Ponty describes as “the momentum of existence.” That process of “reckon[ing] with an environment,” engaging it as a “field of possibility,” further involves drawing from past encounters in order to make sense of present experience. Merleau-Ponty suggests that “since sensation is a reconstitution, it pre-supposes in me sediments left behind by some previous constitution,” and he later notes, “The *person who* perceives is not spread out before himself as a consciousness must be; he has historical density, he takes up a perceptual tradition and is faced with a present.” Engagement in the present is shaped and made possible by the “historical density” of a person’s accreted experiences, a legacy that bears on the current moment by necessarily situating it within an extant “perceptual tradition” that is formed by the life one has lived up to that point and without which current stimuli would have no appreciable meaning.⁹⁰ As Das suggests, in a somewhat Bergsonian vein, “The simultaneity of events at the level of phenomenal time that are far apart in physical time makes the whole of the past simultaneously available.” Das later adds, “There is also the process of rotation in which, independent of my will, certain regions of the past are actualized and come to define the affective qualities of the present moment” as part of the process of perception.⁹¹ Here we also might recall Miranda’s discussion of the role of the missions in affecting forms of feeling and action among contemporary Native peoples in California. In *The Memory of Place* Dylan Trigg observes, “*We carry places with us*,” further noting, “We are never truly ‘in’ place without already having been in another place, and that other place is never merely left behind. . . . Rather, coming into a place means inserting that lived history into the present,” and he later refers to such accretions and projections of sensation as an “embodied hermeneutics.”⁹² The process of contextualizing, or orienting, new sensations within an already active set of tendencies, memories, and histories (themselves based not simply on beliefs about the world but on the accretion of material interactions in it with all sorts of entities, human and otherwise) extends beyond the present into the future. More specifically, my anticipation of the future and acting in ways that reach toward it (consciously and not) shapes the texture, contours, and dynamism of my engagement with the present, such that there is no now that can be treated in isolation from a momentum toward what will be. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, “In every focusing movement my body unites present, past and future, it secretes time.”⁹³

Following Cordova’s caution about needing to understand experience as enmeshed within communal processes and formations, we can understand the notion of a “perceptual tradition” as itself exceeding individual sensory fields. More than indexing a given person’s idiosyncratic experiences and the ways

they affect the apprehension of the present and movement toward the future, perception draws on collective histories and anticipations in ways that include the following: long-standing inhabitation in a given place, or regular return to that place, and exposure to its physical and social landscape; shared material circumstances that engender common sets of concrete situations and potentials for response and agency; memories and stories of such experiences that generate feelings of belonging to a group and that inform future action; histories transmitted within and across generations that offer ways of conceptually and emotionally understanding the relation between the past, present, and future and the horizon toward which one moves as a member of the group; and the legacies of past actions by and toward members of the group that contour the “field of possibility” in the current moment (as a practical matter, not solely one of belief). These suprapersonal dynamics orient the ways one affectively encompasses, assesses, navigates, and engages the “whole perceptual context.” In this way forms of perception, and experiences of duration, indicate not just generic human sensory capacities but socially mediated formations of becoming that develop and inculcate their own ways of experiencing time—what I have been characterizing as frames of reference.⁹⁴ Moreover, if perception emerges out of the materiality of one’s current and previous experiences, what constitutes a “material” part of the environment, and thus a potential causal agent within it, can also be distinct among varied social formations.⁹⁵ If collective dynamics and histories shape individual forms of temporal experience, incorporating the present into the trajectory formed by such de facto belonging (chosen or not), then they provide the nonconscious background against which to register the potential for present and future action. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, “Whatever I think or decide, it is always against the background of what I have previously believed or done.”⁹⁶ However, since such forms of collectivity are themselves not static, instead taking part in processes of becoming (such as Miranda’s image of the flow of a river), we might characterize their role as an active and shifting process of *backgrounding*. Thus, while, in Ahmed’s terms, “a background is what explains the conditions of emergence” for what appears in the foreground, the background itself is subject to change but helps shape frames of reference for temporal experience.⁹⁷ Backgrounds and modes of backgrounding provide a means by which to distinguish between temporal formations.

Within such an account, the practices, knowledges, and forms of collective identification often characterized as *tradition* can be understood as distinctive ways of being-in-time. They emerge from material processes of reckoning with an environment and are open to change while helping provide an orientation

and background for everyday Native experience. At one point Turner notes, “The first difficulty is to know how we ought to characterize the distinct forms of knowledge embedded in indigenous communities. Phrases like ‘traditional knowledge’ and ‘indigenous ways of knowing’ have become commonplace in both mainstream and indigenous cultures, yet we are not at all clear about what they mean *in relation to the legal and political discourses of the dominant culture*.”⁹⁸ Turner focuses on the need to engage in a process of translation whereby Indigenous self-articulations and knowledges can be made intelligible within the dominant frameworks and discourses used by the settler state, but that problem of institutional intelligibility can be reversed to suggest that the use of *traditional* to characterize Indigenous knowledges, experiences, and lifeworlds already tends to situate them within normative settler temporality. Traditional serves as the opposite of modern, indicating not simply chronological dating but qualities that belong to a different epoch—that do not fit the contours of the present. From a settler perspective, the present entails, in Mehta’s formulation, “a thicker set of social credentials” that are implicitly cast as if they were simply a neutral description of now.⁹⁹ To the extent that the givenness of state sovereignty provides a significant part of the background for non-native historicism(s), the use of tradition and modern as paired and contradistinguished ways of conceptualizing Native processes of becoming often ends up translating Indigenous experiences of time into settler paradigms in ways that powerfully constrain possibilities for envisioning and realizing self-determination. Rather than arguing for Native access to modernness, which I have characterized as temporal recognition, then, I have been suggesting that the development of a notion of temporal frames of reference can provide ways that Native and non-native trajectories (as well as modes of backgrounding) might be distinguished without resorting to a notion of shared time (almost always skewed toward non-native framings), thereby opening up room conceptually for the expression of varied forms of temporal sovereignty.

In particular, “the land question,” as Paul Chaat Smith puts it, can be understood as helping to generate a background that orients Native temporalities in multifaceted ways.¹⁰⁰ Native territorialities provide a sense of direction, regularity, and historical density for the continuing emergence of peoplehood and for figuring self-determination.¹⁰¹ One might think of a people’s accreting connection to a given place and neighboring peoples over generations (and the ways life in that space is affected by the interweaving climatic, vegetative, animal, social, and diplomatic dynamics at play there) as creating an experience of being and becoming whose textures, regularities, and negotiations cannot be captured

through reference to a universal chronology.¹⁰² Modes of emplacement and enduring relations to homelands—even if such zones shift (as in removal, addressed in chapter 2), are fractured (as in allotment, addressed in chapter 3), or are more extended geographically (as in movement to urban sites elsewhere, addressed in chapter 4)—shape Indigenous peoples’ becoming, powerfully influencing the felt dynamics of Native being-in-time. With respect to dispossession by settlers, Miranda observes, “The loss of land is a kind of soul-wound that the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation still feels; a wound which we negotiate every day of our lives,” adding, “The loss of land clearly presaged intergenerational trauma with the accompanying loss of self-respect and self-esteem.”¹⁰³ Collective temporal dynamics, then, also include histories of displacement and dispossession that inform contemporary Native sensations and self-understandings, potentially lived as forms of bodily affect (“a wound”).

Furthermore, quotidian ways of living Indigenous peoplehood have their own rhythms and momentum, giving rise to ways of inhabiting time that endure even as they remain open to alteration. In the process of, in Simpson’s terms, “refusing to go away, to cease to be, in asserting something beyond difference,” Indigenous people(s) testify to a persistently reactivated continuity that is not the replication of the unchanging same.¹⁰⁴ The project of addressing Indigenous temporality, therefore, becomes a matter of attending to peoples’ own frames of reference for their experiences of time: not just as beliefs set within a supervening or underlying “natural” timeline but as a basis for understanding the materiality of their ways of being and becoming. Doing so reverses the tendency to assess contemporary Natives in terms of their deviation or declension from a putative origin (their *aboriginality* in Barker’s terms).¹⁰⁵ As Cordova observes, “the goal of persons who envision themselves in a world of motion, change, and complexity is to create and work on maintaining stability in the face of all that,” and the emergence and regeneration of such stability (not to be confused with sameness or unanimity) over generations entails a continuing engagement with changing circumstances, including responding to the violence of settler impositions and displacements as well as incorporating once-alien ideas, practices, objects, and modes of institutionality.¹⁰⁶ In this way, becoming needs to be thought of not as a break with what’s come before but as an inherent dynamism within being, in which continuity is itself an effect of activity rather than being treated simply as stasis or inertia.¹⁰⁷

Miranda addresses this complex interplay of historical density, collective orientation, and engagement with current conditions and potentials in her account of Indigenous futurity in California:

I've been thinking about the shattering and fragmentation of California Indian communities since Contact. . . . Sometimes something is so badly broken you cannot recreate its original shape at all; you will always compare what your creation looks like with what it used to look like. As long as you are attempting to *recreate*, you are doomed to fail! I am beginning to realize that when something is that broken, more useful and beautiful results can come from using the pieces to construct a mosaic. You use the same pieces, but you create a new design from it.¹⁰⁸

What *was* does not provide a set pattern, like a mold, for what *will* or *could be*. Rather, the exertion of temporal sovereignty in the face of a history of settler violence and displacement consists in an ongoing *re-creation* oriented by an engagement with the historical density—the “pieces”—of collective identity and experience. The feeling of belonging to such “communities” provides a frame of reference and a trajectory for the effort to move forward in ways that are neither equivalent to nor simply disconnected from the past, generating “a new design” that can engender livable forms of stability. In this way, the dynamics of peoplehood take part in a continual process of creation that responds to the force of settler colonialism, as well as taking part in other forms of historical change, while not being reducible to the “shape” of peoplehood at any particular prior moment in history.

One concern about a concept like Indigenous frames of reference (or a particular people having a frame of reference) is that it will be homogenizing, effacing the variability of experience and the diversity among peoples as well as among persons who are part of the same people (Esselen, Osage, Dakota, etc.). I have been using the term *momentum* as a way of characterizing how processes of becoming carry their own immanent tendencies and directions, and, in doing so, I am suggesting less something like inertia (a simple continuance of a trajectory produced by an initial, activating external force) than the ongoing effects of patterns of regularity (which is not equivalent to sameness) that give cohesion to Native social formations. In other words, the various interanimating dynamics that sustain the collective experience of peoplehood produce forms of regularity that do not simply exist at a given moment in time but influence how a people moves toward the future.¹⁰⁹ Yet the boundaries between temporal formations are not inherently clear, and, like Bergson's “qualitative multiplicity,” they can be understood to shade into each other, remaining dynamic and thus open to change and reorientation. An active question for this way of conceptualizing time, then, would be, what kinds of change lead to individuals, groups, or peoples diverging such that they no longer share a frame of reference? Also,

a person might live in and move among varied spatiotemporal formations, and the process of doing so would be affected by the relative similarity of those formations, the conditions of that transition (especially in terms of the institutional force at play in it, such as needing to make oneself and one's people intelligible to the U.S. government), and the kinds of translation (acknowledged or not) at play in such transitions. Reciprocally, occupying a shared frame of reference is not the same as agreement, although it would entail having some shared set of experiences and modes of perception: in Miranda's imagery, having in common a history of "shattering and fragmentation," and an impetus toward re-creation even if there is disagreement about the contours and content of the "new design." Moreover, if the idea of Indigenous temporal formations or orientations raises such questions, these problems are not avoided by presuming the inherent mutuality of the present. Instead, doing so, in Mehta's terms, posits an "anthropological minimum" that serves as the necessarily shared background against which to register and reconcile, in Chakrabarty's terms, "diverse life-worlds and conceptual horizons about being human."¹¹⁰

Adopting sovereignty and self-determination as normative principles guiding the approach to time opens the potential for thinking Indigenous temporalities—temporal multiplicity—in ways that exceed the forms of presentness posited and imposed through dominant modes of settler time. Doing so entails engaging with the profound effects of colonialism without understanding such force, struggle, and negotiation as yielding a singular kind of temporal experience that would dictate a shared present with a particular content (being *modern*, as opposed to a remnant from the past). Modes of settler invasion, intervention, regulation, dispossession, and occupation become intimate parts of Indigenous temporalities, but they do so as part of Native frames of reference, meaning that they are encountered through a perceptual tradition and a set of material inheritances that includes ongoing Indigenous legacies of landedness, mobility, governance, ritual periodicities, social networks, and intergenerational stories.¹¹¹ Together, these various aspects of being and becoming give historical density to the engagement with settler policies and everyday presence, orienting Native perception and action.

Queer Times, Storied Landscapes, and Indigenous Duration

This account of Indigenous temporalities requires rethinking the meaning of continuity. From within a conventional settler perspective, Indigenous continuity means the persistence of particular kinds of ritual belief and performance, modes of land use, and forms of collective decision making that have remained

relatively unchanged since the period of early contact with non-natives—often characterized as the persistence of tradition or culture. These ideas about Indigenous endurance are institutionalized in various ways as part of state policy, including the mechanisms through which official recognition occurs (legal and administrative determinations of what constitutes an Indian tribe, a land claim, a sacred space, a cultural practice, etc.). Given such narratives of continuity, we should be careful that any effort to address Indigenous temporality/ies be able, in Barker’s formulation, “to claim cultures and identities that are conflicted, messy, uneven, modern, technological, mixed,” avoiding the quite limited visions of authenticity so often championed by the settler state and those whom Lyons has termed “culture cops.”¹¹² How might we think about Native temporal frames of reference as allowing for continuity as well as for complex and varied change without reinstalling the notion of a singular, neutral present? Miranda begins her account of her people’s history, and the enmeshment of her own life within it, by insisting, “Human beings have no other way of knowing that we exist, or what we have survived, except through the vehicle of story.”¹¹³ In this sense, temporal experience itself might be understood as intimately imbricated with story. Miranda’s discussion of the work of story suggests that it functions as a crucial part of processes of becoming. Stories help provide the background for Indigenous experiences of time, shaping perceptual traditions while also influencing sensations of what’s possible. Attending to story as a constitutive element of perception emphasizes the variability and changeability of Native experiences while also addressing the ongoing (re)construction of collective frames of reference, suggesting less the transmission of static narratives than active and ongoing dynamics of perceptual (re)orientation.¹¹⁴ Moreover, if one thinks about Indigenous storying through the prism of recent work on temporality in queer studies, such scholarship can help highlight how stories enact relations across time that cannot be encompassed through conventional notions of tradition and that defy easy translation into the terms of Euramerican historicism.

Often referred to as the *oral tradition*, Indigenous patterns of making and circulating stories could be construed as a set of relatively authoritative texts through which peoples’ histories and philosophies are transmitted across generations. Approaching them in this way, though, can freeze such stories, suggesting that they must be of a certain vintage while also making them into something like a primer rather than a dynamic and embodied part of ordinary experience. As Julie Cruikshank suggests in *The Social Life of Stories*, “Meanings do not inhere in a story but are created in the everyday situations in which they are told”: “If we think of oral tradition as a social activity rather than as some

reified product, we come to view it as part of the equipment of living rather than a set of meanings embedded within texts and waiting to be discovered.”¹¹⁵ Repertoires of shared stories of all sorts, transmitted and added to across generations, provide a means of engaging with extant circumstances in ways that generate continuity while remaining open to addition, revision, and adaptation. In *Remember This!* Waziyatawin Angela Wilson notes that “suggesting that people living today are outside an oral tradition . . . assume[s] that the contemporary person is not part of a living tradition that can incorporate new information,” and being part of such a legacy entails drawing on stories from long ago in addressing contemporary happenings while also contributing to the body of stories by adding recent events and dynamics.¹¹⁶

More than a kind of object inherited from the past, stories contribute to one’s phenomenological frame of reference. If we recall Merleau-Ponty’s point that “since sensation is a reconstitution, it pre-supposes in me sediments left behind by some previous constitution,” we can conceptualize the ways that having bodies of stories in common functions as such a previous constitution, helping orient perception in the present as part of a people’s ongoing processes of becoming.¹¹⁷ Such an embodied sense of belonging as lived through story affects how one situates the present in relation to the past and to future possibilities. Wilson observes, “The power of these stories stems from the connection created between the shaped historical understanding and living within the present. The oral tradition, in all its forms, has the potential to cultivate thoughts, worldview, and to dictate a pattern for living.”¹¹⁸ As Dian Million argues in “There Is a River in Me,” “The stories, unlike data, contain the affective legacy of experience. They are a felt knowledge.”¹¹⁹ This felt knowledge provides a background for Indigenous trajectories and temporalities, and such affective legacies connect to other forms of feeling and sensation, *cultivating* sensibilities that might be abstracted as a “worldview” but that operate in quotidian ways as modes of being-in-time. Such stories can entail transmitting memories of devastating loss (discussed in chapter 2), contextualizing social practices such as dancing and ritual (addressed in chapter 3), or conveying prophecy through social networks that exceed the inheritances of nuclear family homemaking (examined in chapter 4). In other words, stories can be understood as playing a significant role in orienting enduring forms of Native collective feeling, providing momentum for shared sensations of time—even as such feelings are themselves complex, shifting, and engaged with the specificity of varied situations. Discussing the legacies of land loss for Native peoples in California and the felt sense of continuing connection to those places, Miranda insists, “The stories still exist, and testify that our connections to the land live on beneath

the surfaces of our lives, like underground rivers that never see the light of day, but run alive and singing nonetheless. The stories call us back.”¹²⁰ Stories here are not just isolated narratives but themselves register relations between persons and places as well as forms of collective belonging. Such “connections to the land” are lived as forms of bodily sensation, intimately part of the flow of temporal experience (“like underground rivers”), suggesting the ways stories reciprocally inculcate modes of perception and give expression to feelings that “live on beneath the surfaces” and help shape conscious action. Das suggests of the resonance between the actions of particular rape survivors in India and a story from Hindu sacred texts, “It was as if the past had turned this face toward them—not that they had translated this past story into a present tactic of resistance,” and in this way Native stories can be thought of as immanently emerging from and influencing current perceptions and practices rather than as being consciously deployed.¹²¹ The work of storying, then, can be thought of less as the act of telling a story than as the immanent dynamism in the ways stories move through the world, the kinds of qualitative relations they generate as part of producing collective experiences of duration. Further, the process of attending to stories—acknowledging the significance and effects of the forms of temporal relation they both reflect and bear—could be characterized as a mode of temporal sovereignty.

However, drawing on story and its intergenerational transmission as a means of detailing Indigenous temporalities might seem to presume a lineage-based model dependent on a heteronormative vision of family. In describing the hardships of trying to survive amid the violences of ongoing settler occupation (specifically in terms of the life of her great-grandfather Tomás Santos Miranda), Miranda suggests, “Sometimes our bodies are the bridges over which our descendants cross, spanning unimaginable landscapes of loss.” Stories and peoplehood might appear as a straight line of descent through familial inheritance, or, at least, such straightness seems to be the case if one understands kinship in linear or lineal terms (which Miranda does not).¹²² Accounts of temporality within queer studies offer other ways of addressing forms of influence and identification that do not follow a linear timeline while also charting the ways that particular notions of continuity become normalized, even as such scholarly work also tends to push against the very kinds of collective continuity necessary to sustaining peoplehood.

The notion of a generic life cycle organized around conjugal union and reproduction functions as perhaps the most prominent way of envisioning the everyday meaning of continuity. Such an account positions marital couplehood as necessary for procreation itself, and thus the survival of the human

species appears to depend on bourgeois family formation and homemaking. J. Jack Halberstam refers to these “conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing” as “reproductive temporality,” suggesting that “queer uses of time and space develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction.”¹²³ From this perspective, queer experiences of time run athwart of a projected life course organized around heterocourtship, conventional marriage, and the generationality of the nuclear family.¹²⁴ More than imposing a particular vision of proper desire and kinship dynamics, this conception of a regular life weds personal development to a universalizing account of the movement of time. That process can be described as *chrononormativity*, which Elizabeth Freeman defines as “a technique by which institutional forces come to seem like somatic facts” and in which “historically specific regimes of asymmetrical power” appear as “seemingly ordinary bodily tempos and routines.” Furthermore, “these teleologies of living, in turn, structure the logic of a ‘people’s’ inheritance: rather than just the transfer of private property along heteroreproductive lines, inheritance becomes the familial and collective *legacy* from which a group will draw a properly political future.”¹²⁵ The heteronormative presumption that the nuclear family and its privatized domestic arrangements serve as the basis for human futurity per se casts the legal, political, economic, and spatial dynamics necessary to sustain that social formation as simply the immanent basis for the unfolding of time itself, as inevitably providing the framework for thinking the past, the future, and their relation to the present. Here Freeman builds on Dana Luciano’s notion of *chronobiopolitics*, developed in *Arranging Grief*, which Luciano defines as “the sexual arrangement of the time of life.”¹²⁶ In addition to being institutionalized in various ways, this specific developmental path comes to serve phenomenologically as part of the perceptual tradition through which people reckon with the possible, and heteronuclearity provides the background against which other modes of making a life appear as queer deviations or perverse orientations.¹²⁷ By seeking to challenge the legitimation and proliferation of straight time (which itself can be understood as a denial of, in Bergson’s terms, the “qualitative multiplicity” of temporal experience), queer critique helps draw attention to how ordinary experiences are influenced by the momentum of dominant formulations of time as well as how such experiences might run in another direction, opening onto forms of temporal feeling that do not fit officially endorsed inheritances and trajectories.¹²⁸ In other words, queer analyses help open ways of registering the imposed *straightness* of time while also highlighting alternative kinds of temporal experience.

These kinds of questions about how one conceptualizes the proper shape of a life certainly resonate with the ongoing subjection of Native peoples to

projects of assimilation that seek to inculcate ostensibly civilized ways of being-in-time. In fact, the imposition of heteronormative social dynamics has been a key part of the U.S. government's efforts to supplant Native modes of collectivity, casting extant Indigenous forms of association, occupancy, household formation, and governance as merely vestiges of a bygone time.¹²⁹ Many of the initiatives within Indian policy have worked to reorient everyday forms of Native feeling and practice, seeking to alter the experience of time so that U.S. legal geographies and claims to sovereignty provide the background. That chronobiopolitical project depends on an encompassing *chronogeopolitics*, implicitly positing the givenness of U.S. territoriality and jurisdiction as the self-evident basis for understanding the movement of time. In particular, the allotment program employs reproductive temporality in ways that justify the jurisdiction of the settler state (chapter 3), and a similar aim can be seen at play in the reduction of Native peoplehood to quantities of procreatively transmitted Indian "blood" (chapter 4). Queer theorizations of temporality, then, aid in understanding Native opposition to such policy framings. From this perspective, such resistance appears not as a refusal of the modern but as an expression of alternative experiences of time that persist alongside settler imperatives, and are affected by them, while not being reducible to them.

This kind of queer scholarship further challenges the implicit developmentalism of notions of a universal *now*, placing under significant pressure the historicist presumption that the past is an alien space separated by an unbridgeable gulf from the present. Carolyn Dinshaw has suggested the need to move beyond a notion of history as straight, as an unfolding "causal sequence" that, as such, rules out "an expanded range of temporal experiences—experiences not regulated by 'clock' time or by a conceptualization of the present as singular and fleeting; experiences not narrowed by the idea that time moves steadily forward, that it is scarce, that we live on only one temporal plane."¹³⁰ The possible range of ways of being-in-time is radically limited if one envisions temporality as singular and linear, as replacing what has come before in its steady forward movement (the kind of synchronous slices of time that Bergson displaces through the notion of duration). Moreover, this notion of time as an unending succession—in which the present unfolds out of the past while supplanting it—can be understood as itself relatively new. As Valerie Rohy observes, "historical alterity is, after all, a recent invention; the conviction that past ages are noncontiguous with modernity is a hallmark of modernity," and in "Queering History" Jonathan Goldberg and Madhavi Menon ask, "Why has it come to pass that we apprehend the past in the mode of difference? How has 'history' come to equal 'alterity'?"¹³¹ The positing of the past as on the other

side of a great gulf contributes to the sense of the present as something of an integrated whole against which to juxtapose historical events or dynamics (*our* understandings now versus *theirs* then), and doing so replaces the coexistence of divergent experiences of time with the difference between the contemporary moment and that which it supposedly has surpassed (such as the antinomy of the modern versus the traditional). The idea of a singular, linear unfolding in which the present supersedes the past might be thought of as a form of “compulsory heterotemporality” in which the understanding of time “mimes the heteronormative demand for proper sexual sequencing,” replaying conceptions of proper individual life sequence at the level of time itself.¹³² Such a vision of history can be seen at play in the imagining of certain national events, like the Civil War, as moments of transition in which the country breaks away from a degraded past (slavery in the case of the Civil War), as opposed to tracing the regularities of settler violence in which the past appears less as a space of alterity than in a relation of continuity with the present (discussed in chapter 2). In this sense, processes of settler temporal recognition and inclusion might be understood as themselves largely enacted through forms of compulsory heterotemporality that depend on treating the straightness of time (and the ongoing transcendence of the past) as given.

If historicism gains legitimacy through its implicit alignment with straightness, deviations from that experience of time can appear as queer. Temporal orientations that do not fit dominant Euramerican frames of reference can be interpellated as abnormal fixations on the past, translated as aberrant tendencies toward anachronism (as opposed to being seen as alternative ways of being-in-time). Within Euramerican discourses, the Indian becomes the paradigmatic figure for these kinds of nostalgic inclinations. Discussing the emergence of protocols of bourgeois grieving in the nineteenth-century United States, Luciano observes, “The life-world of the Indian, exterior to the new nation’s modes of ordering, could only be incorporated into its historical timeline through its construction as permanently anterior,” later adding, “The progressive substitution of Indian melancholia, the ultimately fatal embrace of the past, by white melancholy, the reflective look backward that enabled one to continue moving forward, thus bespoke, to whites, their own more sophisticated comprehension of the ‘true’ nature of time’s passage.”¹³³ The Indian serves as a symbol of backward relations to time, of insurmountable melancholic investments in the past in contrast to the putative straightness of time’s passage. The supposed anteriority of Native lifeworlds provides a model of perverse fixity, and, thus, Indigenous experiences of time seem as if they are a deviant way of remaining caught in the past. From this perspective Indigenous duration

can be only the carrying forward of what properly should be past, an inversion of “real” time or “natural” time which implicitly is that of Euramerican historicism.

Conversely, taking queer insights into account can enrich the meaning of historical density when approaching forms of everyday Native perception, storying, and processes of becoming. Rather than being seen as either a function of straight time (heterotemporal transmission) or simply a deviation from dominant settler linearity, storying can be treated as oriented by its own trajectories, giving rise to fields of possibility that cannot be measured within or through settler frames of reference. Conceptualizing time as not only plural but sensuous, as an expression of affective orientations, directs attention toward the need to consider how quotidian forms and feelings of continuity emerge as part of, in Cordova’s terms, the work of “maintaining stability” amid ongoing processes of transformation and change.¹³⁴ Shared material conditions can engender forms of perception in common, providing a frame of reference through which individuals reckon with their joint environment. However, such an understanding of perceptual tradition can rely too much on the regularity of those shared circumstances and the group’s long-term containment within a fairly circumscribed area. If they were ever applicable to Native peoples, those kinds of consistency do not necessarily characterize a good deal of Indigenous experience in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century, given dispossession, dislocations, privatizations, programs of detribalization, urbanization, and various other mobilities (chosen and coerced). Story offers a means of understanding how collective histories can be immanent within everyday interaction and perception, generating kinds of continuity and connections across time that do not necessarily require immediate contiguity of experience (either geographic or generational). As Miranda suggests, having “an identity and community” is possible even in the absence of a legally recognized land base and amid other forms of fragmentation, and part of what enables the sustaining of peoplehood in conditions of dispersion or diaspora is the felt presence of shared (hi)stories amid the circumstances of ordinary life, stories that intimately animate and orient ongoing collective practices of becoming (of *re-creation*, *reinvention*, and *resurgence*).¹³⁵

However, in challenging presumptions about time’s singularity and developmentalism, as well as exploring the variability of kinds of temporal feeling, queer analyses tend to talk about affective connections (usually individual) that cross the apparent gulf between the past and the present, instead of addressing distinct forms of temporal orientation. For example, we might consider Freeman’s notion of “temporal drag.” In developing this idea of “plastering the

body with outdated rather than just cross-gendered accessories,” Freeman takes to task notions of performativity focused on repetition for their tendency to privilege “novelty” rather than “anachronism” in ways that suggest that “whatever seems to generate continuity seems better left behind.” Freeman, though, seems less interested in investigating the potential for alternative kinds of continuity that are at odds with chrononormative modes of progress than in emphasizing the affective movement across periods, especially inasmuch as it recuperates the “cultural debris” of previous “incomplete, partial, or otherwise failed transformations of the social field.”¹³⁶ Similarly, articulating a notion of “queer spectrality,” Carla Freccero suggests that “doing a queer kind of history means . . . an openness to the possibility of being haunted” by the ways “the past is in the present,” engendering “survivals and pleasures that have little to do with normative understandings of biological reproduction.”¹³⁷ In insisting on the possibility of having experiences that are temporally indeterminate and/or mixed, this scholarship seeks to undo the chronobiopolitical imperative to live time in ways that line up with various dominant forms of straightness and extant modes of social reproduction. Such work aims to proliferate the possibilities for approaching historicity as dependent on forms of (cross-temporal) feeling instead of as a progressive chronology. Yet the methods developed within this kind of queer analysis seem ill equipped to account for collective frames of reference and experiences of duration. Emphasizing the idiosyncratic, the ephemeral, the spectral works as a way of creating room for other forms of being-in-time amid the insistence on heterotemporality, with its clear inheritances and uninterrupted modes of generational succession. However, such figurations work less well as a means of addressing the temporal robustness of Indigenous modes of self-understanding: the duration and renewal of connections to place and peoplehood, processes of intergenerational storytelling, their role in orienting everyday phenomenologies of time, and the ways such modes of continuity might serve as the basis for experiences and expressions of temporal sovereignty.

Queerness, then, cannot itself name all that lies outside of normative conceptions of time. Or, rather, using *queer* in such a way ignores how the particular kinds of temporal relations marked by many queer studies scholars may still occur within a settler frame of reference. How might nonheteronormative temporalities, for example, still participate within the life of the settler state and depend on its jurisdictional structure? How might non-natives who deviate from straight time still situate themselves (explicitly or implicitly) as participants within national history, taking the territorial and jurisdictional coordinates that orient that history as their frame? For example, many non-native

members of sexual minorities envision themselves as inheriting Native peoples' supposedly traditional tolerance of sexual and gender nonnormative people, whom non-natives treat as their own queer Native progenitors. This kind of cross-time identification does not unsettle non-native political geographies or narratives of Native disappearance.¹³⁸ As Beth Brant suggests, "We have learned that a hegemonic gay and lesbian movement cannot encompass our complicated history. . . . Nor can a hegemonic gay and lesbian movement give us tools to heal our broken Nations."¹³⁹ Conversely, to be committed to queer critiques of normalization does not necessarily entail challenging settler frames, nor does it inherently involve a commitment to engaging Native sovereignties and struggles for self-determination.¹⁴⁰

Deviations from straight time need not inherently mean that they are disjunct from the chronogeopolitics of the settler state, in which the nation-state and its coherence serves as the background against which to register forms of temporal feeling and fields of possibility. However, I also want to avoid a homogenizing dichotomy between Natives and non-natives (such as in the notion that time for one is necessarily circular whereas for the other it is linear). Moreover, I've been using the term *non-natives*, but in doing so, I've almost entirely been addressing white perspectives, narratives, and perceptions. Simply lumping in the experiences of non-natives of color with those of whites erases the ongoing dynamics of racialization and white supremacy, including the ways that people of color have experiences of time that differ from the chrononormativities of whiteness. For example, Marlon Ross has addressed how certain prominent ways of narrating histories of sexuality do not work well across the color line, suggesting that the object-choice-based definitions of "modern sexuality" do not fit the ways nonwhites were understood as perverse regardless of their object choice, and that such modernness can be understood as itself "constructed over and against the premodern present of traditional . . . sexual practices being engaged in by those not privy to Europe's progress." These differences, then, can be seen as giving rise to "alternative sexual modernities."¹⁴¹ In a related vein, Afro-pessimist work has suggested that the legacies of the history of enslavement and related modes of antiblackness continue to be determinative for Afro-descended people in ways that mark a clear distinction between black and nonblack social lives, presumably including with respect to experiences of time.¹⁴² Thus, non-natives of color, whom Jodi Byrd has characterized as "arrivants," can be understood as having their own complex relations to dominant modes of temporality.¹⁴³ However, aligning Natives with other racialized groups as fellow people of color also can efface the specificities of indigeneity as well as displace the question of to what extent arrivants' experi-

ences of time draw on settler colonial frames of reference, even as they remain outside of the phenomenology and privileges of whiteness.¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, scholarship on pre-twentieth-century conceptions and experiences of time in the United States suggests the unevenness of the emergence of linear time as the dominant model, also raising questions about the extent to which it should be taken as paradigmatic. For example, Thomas M. Allen suggests, “Temporal heterogeneity . . . becomes central to the experience of modern collective belonging,” adding, “These heterogeneous temporalities are not marginal or resistant to the nation, nor do they represent forms of collective affiliation that will emerge after the demise of the nation. Rather, they are themselves the threads out of which the fabric of national belonging has long been woven.”¹⁴⁵ In a related vein, Lloyd Pratt argues, “Conflicts between different modalities of time . . . forbid the homogeneously linear time whose emergence has sometimes been associated with early American nationalism,” later observing with respect to U.S. regionalism, “Modernity’s distanciation of time and space produces these figures, but it does not reembed them in a single new order of time synchronized with broader translocal norms—quite the opposite. The distanciation of time and space leads them to inhabit several different orders of time.”¹⁴⁶ Yet while these scholars offer differing ways of interpreting the interactions among discrepant temporal modalities, they posit an inherently shared frame of reference—“national belonging” or “modernity”—in and through which these varied times can be brought into meaningful conceptual and causal relation. While displacing linearity as such, then, these accounts posit a particular formation that serves as the background for thinking processes of becoming.¹⁴⁷ To what extent, though, can these frames engage with Native experiences? To what degree do they translate such experiences, and Native social (and temporal) formations, into non-native terms? How might non-native “temporal heterogeneity” or “modalities of time” remain distinct from each other while also taking part in forms of settler expansion and occupation? With respect to settler colonialism and Native sovereignty, what difference do these non-native differences make? Moreover, within such framings, do Native experiences of time appear as parts of a larger formation whose contours and operation remain disconnected from the dynamics of Native peoples’ exertion of sovereignty and self-determination (such as in Mignolo’s account of “coloniality,” discussed earlier)?

Rather than trying to resolve these questions or tensions, my aim is to explore the possibilities that might be opened by conceptualizing Native peoples as occupying temporal formations that are not reducible to non-native ones. I explore how such an approach might facilitate moving past certain intellectual

and political impasses that arise when positing a necessarily shared now between Native and non-natives, while leaving open the question of what such an approach might mean for other groups. In particular, my way of approaching Indigenous duration, orientations, and storying aims to undo the tradition/modernity bind by offering an alternative account of continuity. As discussed earlier, the notion of tradition gains meaning by being juxtaposed with the modern, the current, the new. Representing Native stories, knowledges, and experiences as traditional casts them as residual of some other, older time instead of characterizing them as participating in a present whose frame of reference differs from that of the chrononormativities of settler governance. Conversely, understanding the work of story in the present as something like temporal drag emphasizes the leap from the past to the present, the uncanny reappearance of the former in the latter, instead of highlighting the diffusion of stories through networks of relationships that provide the basis for living peoplehood as an ongoing process (the collective “retelling of the past” and “imagining of the future” that Miranda addresses). This kind of continuity produced through the everyday materiality of storying is neither that of the reproductive temporality of familial relation nor the historicist logic of successive unfolding.

Story engenders ongoing forms of connection that are not necessarily about an unbroken chain of possession or inhabitation, an uninterrupted line that can be traced from the present into the past. In this vein Miranda repeats an observation from a lover’s letter to her: “You do have stories. . . . Those stories your dad tells are connected with older stories, stories that might not have been passed down to you, but which existed and maybe even still exist in a world that isn’t this one. . . . It is a fragment in one way, but like the shard of a pot that can be restored.”¹⁴⁸ The stories that have not “been passed down” can be understood as both temporally continuous and discontinuous in different ways. Their effects on the orientations of older generations may become part of a younger generation’s ways of being in the world, even without the transmission of the stories per se or with the communication of only some or part of those stories. In addition, while the stories here are passed through Miranda’s father, her text suggests the possibility of receiving stories from people other than one’s heteronuclear forebears. Further, the stories may themselves be recovered, reconstructed, or remade from the “fragment[s]” that remain, generating forms of temporal relation that are not those of continuous succession (such as in Miranda’s return to the stories of her great-grandfather and the stories contained in the notes of the anthropologist John P. Harrington—including those of her relative Isabel Meadows). A sense of peoplehood is conveyed as a felt

knowledge that itself gives momentum to the conscious search for such stories, as in Miranda's figure of "underground rivers" that run "beneath the surfaces" of individuals' conscious perceptions.¹⁴⁹ Instead of necessarily following the lineality of familial inheritance, storying accretes cross-references, resonances, and recollections, giving historical density to everyday Native perception by endowing it with collective forms of temporal breadth. As Kimberley Blaeser suggests, "When we invoke teachings and tell ourselves into communities, we build a genealogy of story."¹⁵⁰

To return to "the land question," story provides ways of connecting peoples and places that encompass territoriality as a key part of the sense of time's unfolding.¹⁵¹ Contrasting the legalities of reservation territory with more expansive and shifting Indigenous relations to place (including urban centers), Mishuana Goeman notes, "Stories teach us how to care for and respect one another and the land. Responsibility, respect, and places created through tribal stories have endured longer than the Western fences that outlined settler territories and individual properties that continue to change hands."¹⁵² Being in place entails having collective stories that provide orientation with respect to that place's relation to other places, its ongoing participation in a shared history and futurity, and the ethics that guide how one connects to the land and to other people. Such emplaced and emplacing stories (what Coulthard refers to as "grounded normativities") generate a frame of reference for relation across time, but less like an inheritance passed generationally—something akin to an heirloom—than a potentially open-ended way of (re)connecting to social and physical landscapes.¹⁵³ As Keith Basso says of Apache practices of place naming, "the place-maker's main objective is to speak the past into being, to summon it with words and give it dramatic form, to *produce* experience by forging ancestral worlds in which others can participate and readily lose themselves." Later he observes, "By virtue of their role as spatial anchors in traditional Apache narratives, place-names can be made to represent the narratives themselves, summarizing them, as it were."¹⁵⁴ Stories, then, give meaning to current and former occupancy in particular places while also conjuring the specificities of those places, producing kinds of experience and forms of relation that cross apparent temporal gulfs but do not arrive as an uncanny or spectral remainder. These connections to place exceed the terms of individual affect and transect the chronogeopolitics of settler policy and popular narratives. Everyday participation within such storying produces emotional and sensory investments in placemaking that give shape to and help animate collective processes of becoming and ways of being-in-time that can be understood as expressions of temporal sovereignty.

Conceptualized in this way, Indigenous duration operates less as a chronological sequence than as overlapping networks of affective connection (to persons, nonhuman entities, and place) that orient one's way of moving through space and time, with story as a crucial part of that process. In this way, storying helps engender a frame of reference, such as by providing a background against which to perceive motion, change, continuity, and possible action in the world in ways that cannot be encompassed within dominant modes of settler time. Stories become part of, in Cruikshank's phrase, the "equipment of living," furnishing density to everyday forms of perception, informing the direction of individual and collective trajectories, and giving them momentum.¹⁵⁵ More than representing events, stories, in the words of Heidi Kiiwetinepiinesiik Stark, "*do things*, like provoke action, embody sovereignty, or structure social and political institutions" and, in doing so, they open up alternative temporalities to those institutionalized within Indian policy.¹⁵⁶ Approached in this way, storying can be understood as remaking the potentially rupturing effects of settler colonial violence (like removal, allotment, and termination) into part of the affective repertoire through which indigeneity persists as such despite the force of non-native occupation. Such occurrences clearly have profound effects on everyday experience, yet they need not be understood as a kind of epochal rupture. Rather, they become, via story, part of the perceptual tradition through which the present is experienced—through which to reckon with the contemporary field of possibility. Such stories connect the current moment to other sites and sensations in ways that may be messy, multiple, and conflicted but that remain extensions (rather than disruptions) of the complex temporality/ies of Indigenous peoplehood(s).

The project's turn to textual analysis as a way of engaging with these dynamics reflects a conceptual and political investment in storying as a mode of world making (as well as my own training and inclinations). If story has the ability to realize modes of perceiving and living time, then that potentiality can be enacted through Native forms of writing and cultural production. As Goeman observes, "the literary maps of Native people presented in oral stories, or later in writing" offer "subversive or alternative geographies," later adding that "Native literature provides a mechanism to see the limits of territory, as it is legally interpreted from original treaties, and give sustenance to Native people's relationship to the land" and that such narratives offer "examples of a writer's ability to disrupt the 'truths' of settler colonialism."¹⁵⁷ The Native literary texts I engage can be understood as themselves engaged in a reverse process of translation, seeking less to make Native modes of becoming intelligible to non-natives than to mark that distance and disjuncture in ways that highlight the violences

entailed in normalizing settler time. Attending to Native texts opens up possibilities for envisioning and engaging with alternative temporalities, ones that do not fit within official and ordinary non-native accounts.¹⁵⁸ Reciprocally, settler “truths” about time can be understood as conveyed through non-native texts, governmental and popular, making them valuable as objects of analysis in order to investigate the contours and limits of dominant forms of historicity.

While these various kinds of texts can be approached as instantiations of temporal formations, an analytic procedure I perform at various points throughout the book, I also should note the queerness of my own intellectual aims. As mentioned previously, I’m less interested in demonstrating the accuracy of my claims about time by marshaling proof that it *actually* functions in such ways than in offering this intellectual account of time as a set of interpretive possibilities—as a hermeneutic. How might these texts be read in ways that highlight the potential for alternative experiences of time to those normalized within non-native articulations of *the* past, *the* present, and *the* future? How might we think against the sense of time’s unity and coincidence with settler interests and imperatives, and what might doing so yield? How might emphasizing such alternatives aid in conceptualizing and living forms of Native self-determination? My orientation to the materials gathered in this study, then, might be characterized in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s terms as “reparative,” trying to contest the inevitability of time’s singularity in ways that sketch possibilities for imagining and feeling otherwise.¹⁵⁹