Metin & Analiz
Kültürel Çalışmalar ve Strateji Dergisi
Cilt 1 Sayı 1 Şubat 2025

Text & Analysis
Journal of Cultural Studies and Strategy
Volume 1 Issue 1 February 2025

Bad Indians: An Auto-Ethnographic Memoir of Survival

Bad Indians: Oto-Etnografik bir Hayatta Kalma Hatırası

Esra ÖZTARHAN*

ABSTRACT

Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* portrays the story of her life and the history of Californian Indians who had survived the literal and cultural genocide. It can be regarded as an auto-ethnographic text as she engaged in the narration as a witness and a researcher of her community. The paper aims to analyze her memoir using terminology created by Native American writer and critic Gerald Vizenor. He explains Native American literature with terms like survivance, postindian, and storying. Firstly, Miranda uses the memoir genre to construct a story about her people and family. In Vizenor's terms, the storying is her tool for deconstructing the stories told by mainstream culture for centuries. Secondly, she is a postindian, someone who defies the established norms expected from Native Americans. She wants to correct the racist stereotypes about Native Americans as primitive, lazy, godless, and ugly people. Moreover, she resists the notion that their people were considered an extinct race. Lastly, the text unites her own experiences with the survival story of her tribe. This is the core of Vizenor's concept of survivance, a word that combines the words survival and defiance as a continuation of existence and perseverance.

Keywords

Autoethnography, Indian American literature, memoir, hybrid text, Gerald Vizenor

ÖZ

Deborah Miranda'nın Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir kitabı kültürel ve fiziki soykırımlara rağmen hayatta kalan Kaliforniya Yerlilerinin ve yazarın yaşam öykülerini anlatır. Bu oto-etnografik bir metindi çünkü Miranda anlatıda hem yazar hem de araştırmacı olarak kendi toplumunu anlatır. Makalenin amacı bu anı kitabını Amerikan Yerlisi yazar ve kuramcı Gerald Vizenor'un yarattığı terminoloji ile analiz etmektir. Vizenor yazdığı çeşitli kurmaca ve kuram kitaplarında direnerek hayatta kalma (survivance), Amerikan Yerlisi sonrası (postindian), öykü anlatma (storyin) gibi terimler kullanmıştır. Öncelikle Miranda, kendisi ve kabilesi için bir öykü yaratmak istemiştir. Vizenor'un terimi ile bu öykü anlatma durumunun amacı yüzyıllardır baskın kültürün yarattığı öyküleri yapı bozuma uğratmaktır. İkinci olarak Miranda Amerikan yerlisi sonrası durumun bir temsilcisidir. Bu Amerikan yerlilerinden beklenen davranış ve inançlara uymama durumudur. Dolayısıyla yarattığı anı kitabıyla Miranda onlar için kullanılan ırkçı söylemleri eleştirir. Amerikan yerlilerinin ilkel, tembel, tanrısız ve çirkin insanlar oldukları görüşünü düzeltmek ister. Ayrıca soyları tükenmiş bir ırk olmadıklarını, hayatta kaldıklarını bu kitap ile açıklamak ister. Son olarak da bu kabile anısı olarak adlandırılan eser ile hem kendi topluluğunun hem de kendisinin yaşadığı anı ve travmalarla başa çıkmaya çalışır. Bu da Vizenor'un bahsettiği survivance teriminin gerçekleşmesidir. Bu terim hayatta kalma, karşı gelme ve azim kelimelerinden oluşur.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Oto-etnografi, Amerikan Yerli edebiyatı, hatıra, melez metin, Gerald Vizenor

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Ege University, Department of American Culture and Literature

E-mail esraoztarhan@yahoo.com
Orcid 0000-0001-6332-5521.

Araştırma Makalesi *Research Article*
Başvuru *Submitted* 16.01.2025
Kabul *Accepted* 13.02.2025

Atıf / *Citation* Öztarhan E. (2025). Bad Indians: an auto-ethnographic memoir of survival. *Metin & Analiz*, *1*(1), 121-134.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of her memoir *Bad Indians*, Deborah A. Miranda asks, "Isn't it time to pull off the blood-soaked bandages, look at the wound directly, let clean air and healing take hold?" (Miranda, 2013, p. 208). Native American history is the story of pain and suffering, and she claims that they should be remembered and written for past traumas to heal. Writing a memoir is her answer to the question and saying that the time has come to heal as she identifies herself "as a descendant of survivors of a great holocaust: out of an estimated one million indigenous inhabitants, only twenty thousand survived the missionization era" (Miranda, 2013, p. 76). The words she creates will survive like Indians who survived both literal and cultural extinction. Thus, Miranda's narrative is tentatively called the memoir of survival. The essay will analyze the memoir as an auto-ethnographic text of survival by applying Gerald Vizenor's terminology in describing Native American literature. He is an American writer and a cultural theorist who is a member of the Chippewa tribe. Vizenor created several concepts like postindian survivance, stories, terminal creed, fugitive pose, shadow distance, manifest manners, etc., in analyzing Native American fiction. Some of these concepts could be applied to explain Miranda's narrative strategies. First of all, her memoir is a mixed genre text of *storying*, storytelling as one of the means to deconstruct mainstream stories. Secondly, she creates a counter-narrative against *manifest manners* as an Indian. Thirdly, her memoir combines her personal and tribal story for *survival.*

Miranda is a contemporary American Indian writer who named her 2013 memoir a "tribal memoir." Her history is inseparable from her tribe's, as they share similar traumas. According to Smith and Watson memoir is "a mode of life narrative that historically situates the subject in a social environment, as either observer or participant; the memoir directs attention towards the lives and actions of others than to the narrator" (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 198). Narratives like this, combines both "private and public" "recalling" of memories and "recording" them (2001, p. 198). Miranda records her community's past like an ethnographer, as she is both the observer and the participant. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* is a memoir that combines personal and communal experiences. Narratives like this combine both "private and public," "recalling" of memories and "recording" them (2001, p. 198). Miranda records her community's past like an ethnographer, as she is both the observer and the participant. When the researcher consciously places himself within the group, this can be called auto-ethnography. It combines the characteristics of life writing with the elements of ethnography.

In autoethnography, there are two main methods of writing: "It is either as an ethnographer writing autobiographically or as an ethnographic subject writing about

their culture. These two authorial positions complicate researchers' understanding of the term and its application as a method" (Autography and Ethnography.). Marechal also defines autoethnography as:

> A form or research method that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic fieldwork and writing. The term has a double sense, referring either to the reflexive consideration of a group to which one belongs as a native, member, or participant (ethnography of one's group) or to the reflexive accounting of the narrator's subjective experience and subjectivity (Marechal, 2009, p. 2).

In auto-ethnographic writing, the researcher, the writer, the viewer, the witness, and the narrator can be the same person. Therefore, the writer's subjectivity makes the text an autobiographic narration.

Moreover, especially native autobiographies can be regarded as auto-ethnographic texts. In terms of Indigenous cultures, the ethnographic studies by the colonizers may disregard the culture of Indigenous people with a Westernized and objective attitude. Thus, researchers ask the question, what if the science of ethnography uses literature as a tool of research? The result would be a more subjective and emotional approach (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 274). Miranda defines her memoir as the ethnographic text of a survivor like herself. Though scientific research needs an objective approach, it becomes more credible with this subjective filter when autobiographical aspects are included in the text. Marechal writes that: "researchers' feelings and experiences are included in the ethnographic narrative, made visible and regarded as important data for understanding the social world observed, yielding both self and social knowledge" (2009, pp. 2-3).

Lastly, *Bad Indians* contain many archival materials, just like ethnographic research. For Ellis, autobiography also looks at the past, researching several materials like photographs, journals, or interviews of others to remember. Ethnographers, while researching, become participant observers of that culture, analyzing cultural values and artifacts like photographs or texts (Ellis et al., 2011, pp. 275-6). They both deal with cultural materials from their own culture and community. Thus, the auto-ethnographer makes the personal experience more meaningful. Miranda constructs her tribal memoir using the archives of government documents, photographs, and diaries like an ethnographer. For her memoir, she even used the writings and field notes of an ethnographer, Harrington. However, his writings were from the viewpoint of the colonial mind, assuming that the Indians and their culture were all extinct. Miranda took her research but rewrote it from her point of view. Martinez mentions this in her article "Intervening in the Archive." She says: "Yet despite Harrington's desire to record what he thought were the narratives of a dying culture, he unintentionally recorded narratives of

genocide, sexual assault, land theft, neglect, and displacement of others to remember" (Martinez, 2018, p. 63).

This was a documentation of injustice to her people. Miranda didn't believe in the "objective truth" written by the others. In her version of the truth, she researched and wrote about the neglected parts of her culture and community.

To create her story of the past, she used several narration techniques. The memoir is a collage of different materials organized in a fragmented and non-linear way. It is composed of written and oral testimonies. It also combines fictional and non-fictional material like poetry, essays, government documents and ethnographic field notes. Moreover, there are also many personal material-like photographs, family stories, and the diaries of explorers and Franciscan priests. A mixed-genre text broadens the possibilities of the written text. When words will not be enough to convey the message, photographs will help. When the memories fail to remind the readers of what they had lived, they will use historical documents. The media used in these texts enriches the effect of the message as the reader will be exposed to different materials from multiple perspectives. The presence of other voices adds strength to the overall message of the life narrative, which contains similar viewpoints on the traumas of the past. The memoir is one person's experiences and an ethnographic study of multiple testimonies. Thus, it establishes a more critical analysis of the past. Informative, fictional, and visual texts are self-contained and created for different purposes, but within multi-genre texts, they all combine to form one grand narrative. Katie Farris calls the texts which have multiple genres as hybrid texts. In an interview, she says these texts make the impossible possible (Darling, 2019). Smith and Watson argue in *Reading Autobiographies* that sometimes writers need to apply multiple means and systems of remembering: "Some of these sources are personal (dreams, family albums, photos, objects, family stories, genealogy). Some are public (documents, historical events, collective rituals)" (Smith and Watson 2001, pp. 20-21).

Writing a mixed-genre memoir, using lots of resources, also enables the writer to claim subjectivity for herself and her community as a member of a powerless group. Anderson claims that autobiography has been one of the most important genres for the oppressed and culturally dislocated. This genre provides them a right to speak their agendas. The ones who felt powerless before finding the opportunity to speak out with their voices (Anderson, 2001, pp. 103-4). Her tribal memoir is also a means of getting empowerment through writing. In the introduction, Miranda declares that she writes:

> To create a space where voices can speak after long and often violently imposed silence. Constructing this book has been hard, listening to those stories seep out of old

> government documents… the diaries of explorers; it's been painful, dreaming of destruction (Miranda, 2013, p. xx).

She writes that stories enable Native Americans to claim their existence and, thus, survive. After centuries of suffering and silence, writing her story and her tribe's story feels like rebuilding something after the shipwreck. The stories give strength, togetherness, and power to exist. For Miranda, showing the Native American side of the story, using multiple perspectives, and including various materials are the means to resist extinction. Her purpose in writing the memoir can be analyzed using Gerald Vizenor's terminology of Native American discourse. Vizenor writes in *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* that mainstream narratives still dominate Indians. These dominant discourses are called manifest manners (1999, p. 3). He says:

> These histories are now the simulations of dominance and the causes of the conditions that have become manifest manners in literature. The postindian simulations are the core of survivance, the new stories of tribal courage. The simulations of manifest manners are the continuance of the survivance (Vizenor, *Manifest* 1999, p. 4).

Storying

The first narrative strategy of Miranda's memoir is storytelling. Miranda's act of resistance is to create narratives about her people through storytelling. She believes that stories save cultures from extinction. She also wants to distinguish between stories told by her people and stories told by mainstream culture. Mishuana Goeman writes in *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* that Miranda's memoir can be regarded as a "remapping." She says:

> Imperialism and colonialism brought complete disorder to colonized people disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, their languages, their social relations, and their ways of thinking, feeling, and interacting with the world (Goeman, 2013, p. 3).

The term is defined as a strategic way of using literature to resist the disempowerment of the Natives. Colonial powers had been using different ways to reinforce their hegemonic and racist ideologies toward native people. This includes mapping and writing history. According to Martinez, the ethnographer's "fieldwork and the Smithsonian's subsequent archive construct the metanarrative about Indigenous cultures and languages that he assumed were soon to disappear" (Martinez, 2018, p. 63). The idea of remapping, recreating the history as opposed to the colonial discourse, and writing subjective accounts of the past is what Vizenor defines as *survivance—the* act of surviving as a result of resisting. According to Miranda, this resistance could only be possible by storytelling. She says:

> Who tells a story is a mighty piece of information for the listeners; you must know what that storyteller has at stake. Demanding to know who is telling your story means

> asking. "Who's inventing me, for what purpose, with what intentions? (Miranda, 2013, p. xvi).

She criticizes the nonexistence of self-representation for Indians before the 1970s because non-Indians always wrote their stories for them (2013, p. xvi).

Bad Indians combine historical texts with personal stories when writing her and her tribe's story. The memoir uses various storytelling methods such as prose, poetry, photography, cartoons, diagrams, diaries of explorers, ethnographic materials, newspaper articles, ancestry charts, and stories from her childhood. Smith and Watson argue that autobiography offers subjective truth, while the historical narrative offers facts (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 10). However, the genres of life narrative and history help each other, as one can read autobiographical texts like historical documents. The autobiographical accounts narrate the historical events from the perspective of the writer. For the aim of rewriting the history of her tribe, Miranda writes poems in the voices of indigenous people. These poems are reflections of the brutality they faced under the mission system and Colonization. Thus, their first-hand voices, as opposed to those of the colonial historical texts, are a form of remapping. Miranda writes a multi-dimensional story from the perspective of a Native American. She says: "…even historians often learn and perpetuate only one story about California Indians: conquest, subjugation, defeat, disappearance. … this story is one-dimensional, flat, and worst of all, untrue" (2013, p. 193). She also adds illustrations of whipping materials like flogging, corma, cudgel…etc. used in the missions to discipline Natives. The pictures of these torture tools tell a lot more than any written text about the extent of brutality they faced. They are part of the story that Miranda wanted to create as well. The pictures of these tools alone don't need further explanations about the past.

Another way to rewrite history is by using historical documents in the memoir. She uses some documents from an ethnographer that prove the violence towards Native women at the hands of the missionaries. This time, Miranda uses the name of the victim from these documents, who was raped a hundred years ago, and writes her a letter. Miranda tells the victim girl that it was brave to say to people what happened. Besides, the truth became public with the efforts of the ethnographers who recorded it. Miranda writes: "One hundred years ago after the padre raped you in the church, Isabel told your story to Harrington…. Isabel told the story like it happened to her, or her daughter" (24). By giving voice to the oppressed and speaking back to her, Miranda exhibits reality from a first-hand source. Furlan states that:

> Miranda is not the first Indigenous author to go to the archives to reconstruct and write the history of her people, but what makes this text unique and compelling is how she calls attention to and interprets the colonial record and how she positions Indigenous archives and knowledge (Furlan, 2021, p. 28).

Many theorists define her reconstruction of history, as quoted in Furlan's article, as "restoring, memory work and story work" (2021, p. 29). Despite different definitions, Miranda reconstructs dominant narratives with her memoir. She gives voice to her people. The rewriting of the past becomes an empowering tool in her memoir.

Postindian

The second narrative strategy by Miranda is creating a counter-narrative against the centuries-old stories told by the mainstream white culture about her tribe and Native Americans in general. Thus, Miranda speaks as a postindian postindian in Vizenor's terms. According to him, the narratives are full of "representations of invented Indians" (Vizenor, *Manifest* 1999, p. 3). Colonization caused the annihilation of their lands, the extinction of their people, and the disappearance of their cultures. Indians, being deprived of their stories and languages, remained in silence and thus powerless. It can eliminate the narrative's dominance when postindians create their versions. For Vizenor: "The postindian warrior is the simulation of survivance in new stories" (1999, p. 11). The memoir aims to create a space of resistance against the stereotypes about her people. Vizenor claims that these negative stories about Native Americans should be rewritten. In his essay "Trickster Discourse," where he writes about postmodern aspects of Native American literature, he claims that both "American Indian histories and literature, oral and written, are imagined from wisps of narratives" (Vizenor, "Trickster" 1990, p. 277). It is a combination of many stories to form a big communal narrative. It resembles Miranda's multi-genre memoir. For Vizenor, it is possible to create accurate representations of tribal narratives. He says: "The world is what we say it is, and what we speak of is the world." Thus, it is essential to form their discourses as opposed to the representations made by colonial powers throughout centuries (Vizenor, "Trickster" 1990, p. 278). It is a way of overthrowing meta-narratives.

The meta-narratives about California Indians were created centuries ago. Hence, Miranda wrote a memoir to show the damage these misrepresentations have done to her people. Her solution is to create stories instead of those made by the mainstream culture with negative connotations. Miranda's memoir requires changing these images by creating a multi-genre narration. One of the stereotypes about American Indians is calling them "diggers" in many sources like newspaper articles and government documents. Correspondingly, in the narratives of fictional and nonfictional works, her people are depicted as "primitive, ugly, passive, drunken, immoral, lazy, weak-willed people" (Miranda, 2013, p. xvi). Throughout her tribal memoir, she also mentions many other stereotypes used for her people like: "godless, dirty, stupid" (p. xvi), "Indian outlaws, banditos, renegades, rebels, lazy Indians, sinful Indians, "troublemakers, horse

thieves, fornicators, […] polygamists, Deer dancers, idol worshippers" (p. 97), "pagans who refused to convert" (p. 99).

Another misperception about Indians is assuming they are all extinct. Miranda quotes General Philip Sheridan: "The only good Indians I ever knew were dead" (p. 97). She gives an example from her experience with a child who was surprised to know that there are still Indians living:

> Little Virginia, however, was shocked into silence. Her face drained, her body went stiff, and she stared at me as if I had risen, an Indigenous skeleton clad in rags, from beneath the clay bricks of the courtyard…I thought that poor kid had never seen a live Indian, much less a Mission Indian- she thought we were all dead! (Miranda, 2013, p. xix).

Vizenor criticizes the perception of Native Americans being extinct, too. He says: "Treating living Indians as the source for a literary construction of a vanished way of life rather than as members of a vital continuing culture" (Vizenor, *Manifest* 1999, p. 8). The name of the book comes from another stereotype about her people, which says the Indians are evil and violent. She gives examples from newspaper articles to show how various sources create this stereotype. For instance, one of them writes about "an Indian coming out of his cabin with a 44-caliber Winchester followed by his daughter with a six-shooter and his wife with a double-barreled shotgun" (p. 96). She claims it is brave to be bad and resist the system. Her memoir enables her to create a powerful identity from that derogatory term. The concept of postindian also requires this bravery, according to Vizenor: The book's name comes from another stereotype about her people, which says the Indians are evil and violent. She gives examples from newspaper articles to show how various sources create this stereotype. For instance, one of them writes about "an Indian coming out of his cabin with a 44-caliber Winchester followed by his daughter with a six-shooter and his wife with a double-barreled shotgun" (p. 96). She claims it is brave to be bad and resist the system. Her memoir enables her to create a powerful identity from that derogatory term. The concept of postindian also requires this bravery, according to Vizenor:

> The postindian warriors encounter their enemies with the same courage in literature as their ancestors once evinced on horses, and they create their stories with a new sense of survivance. The warriors bear the simulations of their time and counter the manifest manners of domination (Vizenor, "Postindian," p. 4).

Just like the postindian situation that criticizes centuries-old norms and situations, Miranda criticizes the mythology of the mission as a place where Indians were content and peaceful. According to the mainstream sources, it was the place where they were "civilized" and Christianized. She finds this myth racist and reductive. She comments on a nineteenth-century drawing in a magazine about the Indians from her region. They were depicted as "obedient, hardworking, unambitious" people who do the

chores of the mission (2013, p. 68). She calls this picture "Mission mythology of happy Indians working at productive and useful chores instead of lolling about the undeveloped and wasted paradise of California" (2013, p. 63). However, from her perspective, "a mission was meant to suck in Indigenous peoples, strip them of religion, language, and culture, and melt them down into generic workers instilled with Catholicism, Spanish values" (2013, p. 16). She exemplifies this misrepresentation of the mission concept with the "mission project" given to all fourth-graders in California, where they visit one mission and then create a work about its history. She says:

> That's why it's time for the Mission Fantasy tale to end. This story has done more damage to California Indians than any conquistador, priest, saldodo de cuera (leather-jacket soldier), smallpox, measles, or influenza virus. This story has not just killed us, it has taught us how to kill ourselves and kill each other with alcohol, domestic violence, horizontal racism, and internalized hatred (2013, p. xix).

In the story, Miranda's presence intervenes in the Mission Mythology, which denies the existence of living Mission Indians and their land claims. As an adult, she creates her mission project and includes it as a chapter in the book.

Survivance

The third strategy of her memoir centers around writing consciously as a part of a larger group, linking her personal story with the story of her tribe. For Miranda, survival is only possible with the community, not alone. Choctaw author LeAnne Howe has theorized a similar rhetorical style. She claims that Native people use this writing style as one of the ways to stay together, and she calls it the term "tribalography." She writes:

> Native people created narratives that were histories and stories with the power to transform... The study of tribalography is advanced by first looking at how Indian people made stories from events and non-events (Howe, 1999, p. 2).

Similarly, autobiography becomes a communal act of writing the survival stories of the tribe in *Bad Indians.* According to Martinez: "While Bad Indians is labeled a memoir, its subtitle defies generic classifications by expanding the scope of the text beyond the individual to include tribal relationships. By its namesake, a tribal memoir must be polyvocal" (Martinez, 2018, p. 55). Furlan and Heberling also explain this polyvocality aspect of the memoir. According to them,

Miranda combines her story, official records, and her ancestors' stories in a single text. They explain her peculiar genre "using the Esselen concept of xu-lin (meaning to reclaim, return, recover)" (Furlan & Heberling, 2021, p. x). This tribal writing aspect of the memoir also resembles Kenneth M. Roemer's term "communitism." The term blends the words community and activism. It is about ''the single thing that most define Indian works of literature relates to [a] sense of community and commitment to it" (Roemer,

2005, p. 15). Therefore, the feeling of interrelatedness saves Native American selves from extinction.

As can be seen in Miranda's memoir, the act of creating life narratives as a part of the tribe makes them survive the cultural genocide. They have fought over losing their lives, lands, and languages. Their cultural existences are banned, and families are separated. Individuals still live with the transmission of the trauma, losses, and pain. Thus, it can be clearly understood how the autobiographical self is related so much to the communal. In *Bad Indians,* the tribe's history is crucial to her life story. In an interview, Miranda says:

> I realized that my life, short as it has been, is like a fractal of my larger tribal history—full of the same traumas the same losses, just on a smaller scale. Poverty, sexual violence, loss of language, family dysfunction, self-medicating with alcohol and sugar—it's all there, in both timelines (Miscolta, 2013, p. 1).

According to Wong, like Native Americans think and feel as one with the others who share the same destiny throughout the ages: "Native American notions of self, while varied, tend to share an emphasis on interrelatedness (not only among people but between humans and the natural world) and community, rather than individuality" (Wong 2005:126). The concepts of polyvocal narratives, communitism, and communal and individual interrelatedness are all reflected in the terminology of Vizenor. In his book *Aesthetics of Survivance*, he defines survivance as "the action, condition, quality, and the sentiments of the verb survive, to remain alive or in existence, to outlive, persevere" (Vizenor, "Aesthetics" 2008: 19). For him to survive extinction and to exist Native Americans have to create. He writes:

> The nature of survivance is unmistakable in native stories, natural reason, active traditions, customs, narrative resistance, and observable in personal attributes, such as humor, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage. The character of survivance creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimry (2008, p. 39).

Miranda claims that this common destiny of pain, loss, dislocation, assimilation, and discrimination belongs to the other members of her tribe as well. Thus, writing the tribal memoir doesn't only mean presenting the events they face chronologically, but also writing is a means of healing from the trauma personally and communally. Miranda calls this trauma "Postcolonial Stress Disorder" or "Historical Trauma." In an interview, she explains that:

> The legacies that Missionization and Colonization have left us: diabetes, substance abuse, obesity, depression, domestic violence, racism. Who needs a colonizer anymore—we can do ourselves quite a bit of damage without outside help! .... one of the key treatments for Postcolonial Stress Disorder (or Historical Trauma) is to tell your story to validate your wounds—it's crucial for healing (Miscolta, 2013, p. 2).

Robertson writes that Miranda uses the genre of memoir "as a space to grieve the historical trauma of colonialism; …to decolonizing pieces of literature and Indian epistemologies and builds on survivance and resistance theories" (Robertson, 2016, p. 250). The evils of Colonization for Indigenous people, like the loss of land and erasure of culture, language, history, and identity, are communal problems. The community can assist each other in healing with resistance and support. As a part of her memoir, she also mentions her family traumas, including physical abuse. She also combines this personal experience with the communal by using documents from the eighteenth century. Miranda writes that the violence Native people experience personally and historically is a result of colonial history (2013, p. 34). These are the generational experiences every Native American felt throughout their lives. Wong writes that it resembles the writing tradition of Native American life stories. These writings are for survival: "What does it mean to have survived a treacherous history that suppressed, destroyed, reformulated indigenous cultures and languages?" (Wong, 2005, p. 135). The erasure of culture, language, history, and identity is a communal problem. The community can assist each other in healing with resistance and support. As a part of her memoir, she also mentions her family traumas, including physical abuse. She also combines this personal experience with the communal by using documents from the eighteenth century. Miranda writes that the violence Native people experience personally and historically is a result of colonial history (2013, p. 34). These are the generational experiences every Native American felt throughout their lives. Wong writes that it resembles the writing tradition of Native American life stories. These writings are for survival: "What does it mean to have survived a treacherous history that suppressed, destroyed, reformulated indigenous cultures and languages?" (Wong, 2005, p. 135).

CONCLUSION

In *Bad Indians,* Miranda not only shares a common past with all its pain but also remembers and writes for her tribe and all Native Americans to build a present and future together. It is her remedy for healing, as they are all descendants of survivors. Her memoir is a memoir of survival. As she states at the end of her book, it is time to look at and heal the wound. It is an ethnographical account from an insider. The writing of the memoir serves as an auto-ethnographic text with a subjective account of the survival of her community. In her narrative, poetry, fiction, fact, personal, and communal all unite to form an unconventional memoir. The mixed genre enabled her to construct her subjective space with multiple perspectives about the shared past of Californian Indians.

The narrative strategies of her memory of survival can be explained with Gerald Vizenor's terminology of survivance, storying, postindian, and manifest manners. First, she used storytelling to reconstruct past stories to bring forward the untold tales of her ancestors. Her memoir tells stories about people who have lost their lands, languages,

and ways of life. The stories she created with her tribal memoir enable her tribe's culture to survive this way. Secondly, she aims to resist the narratives about her people written by others and manifest manners as a postindian to survive, she believes the stereotypes about them should be corrected. She wrote in her memoir that:

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

Lastly, writing a memoir is a means of survival from the pain of the past and wounds of history. Personal experiences are reflected as a part of the tribe's history, creating an opportunity for the tribe to face its traumas. She calls the violence at her home and the violence her tribe experienced as post-colonial stress disorder. The tribal memoir also shows how the personal is related to the communal.

According to her, missionized Indians had gone through so many inhumane experiences throughout history. These were institutionalized, lasted for several decades, and were aimed at the whole community of Indian people. Therefore, all of them affected their descendants. These appear later in each generation in different ways. The trauma continues on an individual level as well because these wounds were never healed. Her memoir aims to heal together from the wounds of history by storytelling, resisting the stereotypes, and claiming an identity as a tribe member. Only this way could her and her tribe's survival be possible.

Ethical Statement and Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the study complies with ethical principles and has no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

Anderson, L. R. (2001). *Autobiography*. Routledge.

Autography and ethnography. (2024). *Encyclopedia of World Geography.* http://geography.name/autobiography-and-ethnography

Darling, K. M. (2019). The impossible becomes possible with hybrid forms: A conversation with Katie Farris. *Kenyon Review.*

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung, 36*(4), 273–290. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23032294

Furlan, L. M. (2021). The archives of Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians*. *Studies in American Indian Literatures, 33*(1), 27-54.

Furlan, L. M., & Heberling, L. M. (2021). Reimagining Native California with Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. *Studies in American Indian Literatures, 33*(1), ix-xviii.

Goeman, M. (2013). *Mark my words: Native women mapping our nations*. University of Minnesota Press.

Howe, L. A. (1999). Tribalography: The power of Native stories. *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, 14*(1), 117-125.

Mieder, W. (1993). The only good Indian is a dead Indian: History and meaning of a proverbial stereotype. *The Journal of American Folklore, 106*(419), 38-60.

Marechal, G. (2019). Autoethnography. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research* (pp. 43-45). Sage.

Martinez, S. A. (2018). Intervening in the archive: Women-water alliances, narrative agency, and reconstructing Indigenous space in Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. *Studies in American Indian Literatures, 30*(3-4), 54-71.

Miranda, D. A. (2013). *Bad Indians: A tribal memoir*. Heyday.

Miscolta, D. (2013, March 4). An interview with Deborah Miranda. https://donnamiscolta.com/2013/03/04/an-interview-with-deborah-miranda

Smith, S., & Watson, J. (2001). *Reading autobiography: A guide for interpreting life narratives.* University of Minnesota Press.

Robertson, D. L. (2016). Decolonizing the academy with subversive acts of Indigenous research: A review of *Yakama Rising* and *Bad Indians*. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 2*, 248-252.

Roemer, K. M. (2005). Introduction. In J. Porter & K. M. Roemer (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Native American literature* (pp. 1-25). Cambridge University Press.

Vizenor, G. (2008). Aesthetics of survivance: Literary theory and practice. In *Survivance: Narratives of native presence* (pp. 1-24). University of Nebraska Press.