



# (Re)riteing the Land: Sogorea Te' Land Trust, Amah Mutsun Land Trust, and Indigenous Resurgence in California

*Abel R. Gomez*

On a cool morning in April 2021, members of the Amah Mutsun Land Trust welcomed a group of volunteers for a workday at Cascade Ranch in Pescadero, California. The group of volunteers included people of varying ages and ethnic backgrounds—myself included. As we gathered outside the greenhouse, a member of the organization explained that we would be working with several native plants: California brome grass, coast tarweed, and foothill needle grass. Today's work would contribute to the organization's goal of returning 90,000 native plants back into this land. After a circle of names and introductions, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band chairman Valentin Lopez offered a prayer. He prayed for the land, for the new plants going into the earth, and for the healing of his tribe and all now living in this territory. Lopez mentioned that these plants are relatives and that those of us gathered that day were also invited to see these plants as our relatives, too. As he prayed, an Amah Mutsun tribal member went around the circle and smudged each of us with a smoldering sage bundle.

I reflected on Lopez's prayer throughout the workday. The work we were doing had cultural and ecological meaning, but it also embodied something more. To understand plants as relatives and to invoke the blessings of the Creator situates the work of land restoration as profoundly spiritual or ceremonial. Such perspective is important to consider as Indigenous peoples call for #LandBack while healing from generations of colonization. Indigenous activists involved in the decentralized #LandBack movement often say land return concerns more than material elements; it encompasses "the reclamation of everything stolen from the original peoples," including land, language,

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ceremony, governance, and kinship as the NDN Collective suggests. #LandBack is about “a relationship with Mother Earth that is symbiotic and just, where we have reclaimed stewardship.”<sup>1</sup> On that April morning, tribal members were not just restoring land but restoring their connection with a robust web of relationships alive in the land and in the spirit world.

While much attention has been paid to the land returned to federally recognized tribes, this article considers what it means for nonrecognized tribes in California to regain (or regain access to) land. This article focuses on the work of two tribal organizations, the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust in the San Francisco Bay area and the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, south of San Francisco Bay, in the Monterey Bay area. These organizations allow tribes an additional strategy to access land, instead of or alongside federal recognition, which has prevented them from establishing a land base. Instead, these organizations build coalitions with nonprofit organizations, academics, community activists, tribal nations, and non-Native peoples to regain access to tribal territories. As a form of land-based Indigenous resurgence, Sogorea Te’ Land Trust and Amah Mutsun Land Trust also catalyze, to various degrees, multiple forms of revitalization, including language, song, and stewardship practices. As I analyze in this article, these forms of Indigenous resurgence are deeply connected to ceremony, to the work of creating futures in which tribal members are connected to lands, waters, ancestors, and sacred beings.

Drawing on Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy’s theory of “(re)riteing,” this article theorizes the revitalization of land-based ceremony as integral to the work of Sogorea Te’ Land Trust and Amah Mutsun Land Trust. I demonstrate that a central part of the work of these organizations is returning ceremony to tribal lands, reconnecting tribal members to a robust web of relations, both seen and unseen. These returns to relations elucidates how land-based resurgence is cultural and political as well as ceremonial, or what some might call religious or spiritual. Returning to land after multiple waves of colonization and dispossession means “(re)riteing” the land through ceremonies, songs, and prayers. As an active form of continuity and survival, the work of these organizations offers an important example of what Laura Harjo (Mvskoke) describes as “Indigenous futurity praxis,” the active work of perpetuating people-specific knowledges, sovereignty, and relationality in the service of Indigenous futures. This article focuses on two tribal organizations to consider how (re)riteing is central to the ways that tribes are enacting Indigenous futures for their peoples.

I write about these tribal organizations as a non-Native Latinx person born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. Like others in California, I went through the fourth grade Missions unit, during which students were told a romantic story of Spanish settlers that sought to conceal violent colonialism in California. California Indians disappear from most school curriculums beyond that point. As an undergraduate engaged in queer and Latinx student organizations, I became increasingly interested in what it means to do student organizing on Indigenous territory. This question led me to participate in ethnographic research and conversations as a graduate student with members of various Ohlone tribes and individuals. A recurring

theme in my conversations and observations was the role of ceremony and spirituality in the many forms of cultural and political resurgence.

As a scholar trained in religious studies, it is significant to me that Indigenous resurgence is often described as religious, spiritual, or ceremonial. As Alexii Sigona (Amah Mutsun Tribal Band) explained,

Isn't cultural revitalization spiritual? I feel like if you're going to engage in culture and revitalize culture, it has to be spiritual. How can you not be spiritual if you're talking about these relationships and kinship relationships, right? Like decolonizing your mind to think about "Oh, these are relatives" and then burning sage and doing offerings of tobacco to land and doing sweats.

While religion, or more often ceremony, comes up in Native American and Indigenous studies theory, it remains undertheorized. This is understandable given that the term *religion* does not easily translate into Indigenous languages and has historically been studied through Protestant Christian frameworks.<sup>2</sup> Suzanne Crawford and Dennis Kelley, a Chumash descendant, describe the many challenges in studying Native religious traditions such as misrepresentation and revealing private materials, though they note the current trend toward collaborative research.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Micheline Peasantubbee (Choctaw) notes that Native scholars have studied religion through culturally grounded analysis, "not as a separate aspect of society but as an integral part of culture and history."<sup>4</sup>

Native scholars have theorized ceremony as relational practices, connecting the human and the more than human, the seen and the unseen, often embedded in specific places. Vine Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) emphasized the connection between ceremony and sites of revelation, suggesting that ceremonies are often communal practices centered in gratitude that seek to continually renew the world and reaffirm relations to land. For Shawn Wilson (Cree), such practices are about bringing harmony to relationships, raising consciousness, and increasing intimacy among humans, lands, and cosmos. In the words of Potawatomi botanist Robin Kimmerer, "Ceremony is a vehicle for belonging—to a family, to a people, and to the land."<sup>5</sup>

Ceremonies are deeply rooted and emerging, sometimes connected to larger religious systems and sometimes small acts of communion with the cosmos. As Wilson argues, "Any exercise that increases connection or builds relationship is spiritual or ceremonial in nature."<sup>6</sup> Such practices are incredibly diverse, rooted in the knowledges and philosophical frameworks of specific Native nations. There are also shared practices across Native communities. The connection between Indigenous knowledges and ceremony is perhaps why Risling Baldy connects ceremony to "decolonial praxis" because it is "theory and knowledge embodied through song, dance, and movement."<sup>7</sup> Ceremonies renew relations, identities, knowledges, and futures through specific cultural protocols. (Re)riteing, the continual process of reaffirming these relations, is an Indigenous futurity praxis. Considering these dynamics in the context of nonrecognized tribes in California also elucidates that religion and spirituality are alive in even the seemingly small acts of prayer, song, and land stewardship. This article seeks to build a bridge between Native American and Indigenous studies and religious studies

by considering how religion is integral to the decolonial futures Indigenous peoples are enacting. I also seek to build upon community-based and academic work highlighting the survival, continuity, and future-oriented work of Native peoples within the San Francisco and Monterey regions and throughout Native California.

## NURTURING INDIGENOUS FUTURES

California is an important site to consider Indigenous histories and futures. Damon Akins and William Bauer, a citizen of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, write of California as a place and an idea. California has a deep and ongoing history as an Indigenous place. “But as an idea—or, as it is often described, a dream—that colonial entities brought with them,” Akins and Bauer write, “‘California’ represented a natural abundance of resources to be exploited; it could not be Indigenous land.”<sup>8</sup> Many continue to experience California as a non-Native place, as a site of refuge and natural beauty for non-Native peoples, even as it has a significant Native population and among the largest number of reservations in the United States. California is often overlooked in Native American and Indigenous studies, too, especially in the case of nonrecognized tribes.

Shaped by multiple waves of colonization, dispossession, and economic exploitation by Spanish, Mexican, Russian, and American forces, California is an important site to consider impacts of global imperialism and Indigenous survival. The establishment of Spanish Catholic missions from San Diego to Sonoma in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries devastated Native populations, bringing epidemics and transforming landscapes. Deborah Miranda (Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation) describes it as “the end of the world” for coastal peoples, as Native peoples were removed from their lands to labor for the Spanish empire.<sup>9</sup> Though most California Indians affected by the missions remained dispossessed following the secularization of the missions and Mexican independence, many remained within their traditional lands as workers within the developing Mexican rancho system.<sup>10</sup> The few Native people in the Ohlone linguistic areas who were granted land following the secularization of the missions and Mexican independence were largely dispossessed of those lands by the 1850s.<sup>11</sup> In the wake of the Gold Rush, the Mexican-American War, and statehood in 1850, California waged genocide against tribes within its boundaries.<sup>12</sup> Though the United States negotiated eighteen treaties with California tribes in 1851 and 1852, they were not ratified. Ohlone and other tribal communities that survived missionization along the central coast were ignored during the treaty process.

Throughout the twentieth century, Ohlone and other tribes along the central coast remained dispossessed, even as other California tribes were granted reservation lands. Bureau of Indian Affairs delegates were sent to California to survey the needs of landless tribes, and though a 1927 report included tribes within Ohlone territories, the agent argued that these communities were not in need of land.<sup>13</sup> Coalitions between California Indians and white allies put pressure on the federal government for the eighteen unratified treaties, leading to the California Indians Jurisdictional Act (1928). This created a census of descendants alive during the 1850s treaty negotiations to

gain compensation for lands taken. California tribes won the case (K-344) in 1944. The Indian Claims Commission Act (1946) allowed California Indians whose lands were not covered in treaties to also gain compensation. Ohlone families sought restitution through both laws.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, some Ohlone families found it odd that they were awarded compensation when they never ceded land nor were formally terminated.<sup>15</sup> With the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, Native peoples from reservations moved to urban places like San Francisco, leading to the famous occupation of Alcatraz by Indians of All Tribes in 1969. Indigenous migrants from Latin America have also moved into California. Today, various Ohlone tribal governments and family lineages persist without federal recognition status, even as their homelands are important hubs of transnational Indigenous cultures and activism.

In his many public talks, Bay Area community leader Gregg Castro (*t'rowt'raahl* Salinan/*rumsien-ramaytush* Ohlone) often describes the history of colonialism and erasure of California Indians as “living in first contact.” First contact speaks to the relatively recent phenomenon of settler colonialism in the Bay Area, just over 250 years, compared to countless generations of Ohlone peoples on that land. Thinking about “first contact” also offers a lens to think about the ongoing confusion and violence California Indians experience as a result of ongoing colonialism. Eve Tuck (*Unangax̂*) and K. Wayne Yang describe settler colonialism as acts of violence against bodies and dispossession of land, generating “profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence” for Indigenous peoples, “reasserted each day of the occupation.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, colonialism is not simply material but has profound immaterial dimensions that include those spheres of cultural life such as ceremony. We can consider this “profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence” to include the ways Indigenous peoples were and are removed from their sacred places and persecuted for their ceremonial practices, rupturing relationships to land, water, and community, including other-than-human beings and sacred forces. Though the land remains occupied, settler colonialism is incomplete and efforts to (re)rite tribal lands are a vital element of decolonial futurity.

The work of Sogorea Te' Land Trust and Amah Mutsun Land Trust are rooted in a long history of revitalization among tribes now called Ohlone. Lumped together as “costeños” by the Spanish and “Costanoan” by anthropologists, the term “Ohlone” does not refer to a unified tribal nation but approximately fifty distinct local tribes near San Francisco Bay and Monterey Bay at the time of Spanish settlement in the eighteenth century. Ohlone is also a contemporary designation for eight related languages spoken by these local tribes. Despite missionization and genocide, these tribes are active in cultural and political resurgence.<sup>17</sup> Les Field et al. recount that in the 1860s, ancestors of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe who had survived Mission San Jose gathered on a ranch called Alisal, south of Pleasanton. Field et al. suggest that the Native peoples of Alisal participated in “the first postconquest Indian revitalization in the Bay Area,” bringing back dance, ceremony (including *Kuksu* and participation in the 1870s Ghost Dance), language, and regalia with influences from various Ohlone, Miwok, and Yokuts peoples. Most left Alisal as a result of fires and economic challenges.<sup>18</sup> However, anthropologists such as J. P. Harrington recorded extensive cultural and linguistic material from Chochenyo (East Bay Ohlone) speakers at Alisal. These ethnographic

materials, along with those related to Mutsun Ohlone (spoken near Mission San Juan Bautista) and Rumsen Ohlone (Monterey Peninsula and inland areas) collected by Harrington and others in the 1920s and 1930s, serve as a vital source for Indigenous resurgence today. Many contemporary Ohlone peoples suggest that the work of these consultants was a future-oriented project for the next generation to recover.

Drawing on ethnographic materials, oral histories, and collaborations with non-Native scholars and allies, diverse Ohlone peoples have participated in what Winona LaDuke (Anishinaabe) describes as “recovering the sacred” since at least the 1960s.<sup>19</sup> For LaDuke this phrase describes the process of healing and cultural renewal of Indigenous peoples in the face of genocide, colonization, and displacement.<sup>20</sup> In the case of Ohlone peoples, this recovery is connected to the revitalization of Ohlone languages, arts, foodways, dance, ceremony, and oral traditions. This resurgence has coincided with efforts to protect burial and other sacred sites, such as the Ohlone Indian Cemetery near Mission San Jose (1971) and a cemetery in Watsonville (1975), as well as the repatriation of ancestral remains from academic institutions. In 1988, Ann-Marie Sayers (Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan) was able to use the Dawes Act (1887) to regain ancestral territory near Hollister, California (known as Indian Canyon), and has since opened the space for Indigenous peoples to use for ceremony. Tribes have also built relationships with local parks to regain access to territory and participate in events to share culture with the public. Today, numerous distinct tribal governments, organizations, and family lineages work on behalf of their specific ancestral territories to create futures for their people. Some actively pursue federal recognition while others engage more specifically on cultural revitalization, though these two are not necessarily always distinct.

Federal recognition as Indian tribes remains controversial among Native peoples broadly and within Ohlone territories specifically.<sup>21</sup> Since 1988, several tribes within Ohlone territories have sought federal acknowledgement, in large part to regain ancestral lands, arguing continuity with the previously recognized Verona Band, San Juan Band, or Monterey Band. Descendants of these tribes have reorganized as tribal governments including the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, and the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, respectively.<sup>22</sup> The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has gone the farthest toward recognition, though ultimately denied because the Bureau of Indian Affairs argued the tribe could not prove (1) ongoing identification as an American Indian entity since 1900, (2) that their members presently compose a distinct community, and (3) that leaders maintain ongoing political influence over membership—three of the seven criteria for federal recognition.<sup>23</sup> Olivia Chilcote (Luiseño, San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians) notes, “The destructive forces of Spanish and Mexican colonization, a state- and federally funded genocide, the denial of treaty ratification, and the federal government’s history of uneven treatment of California Indian tribes and peoples . . . make it difficult, if not impossible, for California tribes to meet [the] criteria for federal acknowledgment.”<sup>24</sup> Given the circumstances stacked against them, some nonrecognized tribes like the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe created organizations such as the Amah Mutsun Land Trust and Muwekma Ohlone Preservation Foundation, respectively,

to access land for cultural uses while still pursuing recognition. Other entities such as Sogorea Te' Land Trust (Confederated Villages of Lisjan), Ramaytush Ohlone Land Trust (Association of Ramaytush Ohlone), and Cultural Fire Stewardship Program (Tamien Nation) allow those not actively seeking federal recognition to access ancestral lands.

In conversations with Ohlone leaders, they have stressed that one of the central reasons they seek to regain land is to engage in ceremony. Indigenous resurgence is about (re)riteing their ancestral lands, of reawakening ceremony and reconnecting to ancestors and sacred beings. Cutcha Risling Baldy theorizes the revitalization of the *ch'ilwa:l* (flower dance), a women's coming-of-age-ceremony among the Hupa, as "a (re)writing, (re)righting, and (re)riteing of Native Feminisms."<sup>25</sup> As a ceremony that celebrates menstruation and the sacredness of women's bodies, *ch'ilwa:l* is a practice through which tribal members embody Hupa epistemologies and follow cultural protocols. Risling Baldy also explains that the dance connects tribal members to ancestral land and the K'ixinay spirits, celebrating "the girl's newfound ability to commune with the sentient powers of the universe."<sup>26</sup> Considering the concept of "(re)riteing" points to the ways that Indigenous resurgence is not just intellectual or political but has important ceremonial dimensions. The *ch'ilwa:l* is, after all, one of several Hupa world-renewal ceremonies.<sup>27</sup>

The "re" in Risling Baldy's theory also points to the dynamism of Indigenous resurgence. I build on Risling Baldy's idea of (re)riteing as a lens to consider how ceremony is partly a creative negation with history and a contemporary experience. For example, Charlene Eigen-Vasquez (Confederation of Ohlone People), explained thus:

We live in contemporary times, and the fact of the matter is [that] no matter what you practice, it'll never be that ancient way. It's a new world. Our traditional land is covered with asphalt. How in the world are you going to conduct the same ceremony that you did 500 years ago when the entire Bay is melted over with a new society? So, the best thing you can do is, in a prayerful way, reach back into your dreams, reach back to your ancestors and ask for permission to do the things the way they want you to, and they'll tell you how to do it.<sup>28</sup>

Ceremonial resurgence is an active process by which Indigenous peoples reconnect human and more-than-human relations ruptured through colonization.

The ways that ancestral traditions are creatively revitalized are complicated and contested. Deborah Miranda theorizes what cultural revitalization and healing might look like in the wake of colonial rupture. She writes that European colonization in California has meant the loss of culture, land, and religion to such an extent that things can never be what they once were. Rather than abandon the quest for healing, Miranda considers putting together the pieces of culture that survived as a mosaic. She writes,

If we allow the pieces of our culture to lie scattered in the dust of history, trampled by racism and grief, then yes, we are irreparably damaged. But if we pick up the pieces and use them in new ways that honor their integrity, their colors, textures,

stories—then we do those pieces justice, no matter how sharp they are, no matter how much handling them slices our fingers and makes us bleed.

Though things can never be as they once were, cultural healing and revitalization as a mosaic offers a model for Indigenous cultural survival.<sup>29</sup> Cultural revitalization is a creative negotiation with the past and the future, but it still allows for cultural identity and the relationship to community and ancestral lands to continue. Miranda notes further, “We think we are too broken to ever be whole again. But it’s not true. We can be whole—just differently.”<sup>30</sup>

Native and non-Native scholars have theorized the dynamism of Indigenous resurgence, noting the role of ceremony in reestablishing relations with land and cultural traditions.<sup>31</sup> This follows an important pattern of previous anticolonial Indigenous movements, such as the Ghost Dance Movements (in the 1870s and ’90s) and the American Indian Movement. Vine Deloria’s famous *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*, published during the height of the American Indian Movement, made note of how the movement inspired Native people to return to and revive ceremonial practices and defend sacred places. These are examples of what Laura Harjo describes as “Indigenous futurity praxis,” which is “the enactment of theories and practices that activate our ancestors’ unrealized possibilities, the act of living out the futures we wish for in a contemporary moment, and the creation of conditions for these futures” and “operates in service to our ancestors, contemporary relatives, and future relatives.”<sup>32</sup> In what follows, I consider (re)riteing as a related futurity praxis through which the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust and Amah Mutsun Land Trust enact futurities that are rooted in relationships to ancestral lands, cultural knowledge, and sacred beings.

## SOGOREA TE’ LAND TRUST

On a sunny Friday morning, I parked my car in a residential area of urban Oakland to volunteer at a space managed by justice-oriented organization Planting Justice. Part of this community garden space was the first plot of land formally “rematriated,” or returned, to Ohlone peoples in the East Bay through the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust. This site, renamed Lisjan by Sogorea Te’, serves as a garden space for numerous community initiatives, including permaculture gardens and a reentry program for formerly incarcerated individuals. I passed through the opened fence into an area that had a shed, portable toilets, a yurt, large garden spaces, a green house, and a setup that almost looked like it was ready to sell plants. There were several Latinx-looking people working in the garden as I arrived. I met Loa Niumeitolu (Tongan), the volunteer coordinator for Sogorea Te’, who was in one of the shed spaces by the gate. She led me to the quarter-acre portion of the garden that was formally returned to Sogorea Te’ as we passed areas of the garden that had hand-painted signs of plants with their Chochoyeno Ohlone names. Loa pointed to the Ohlone ceremonial arbor, the roof of which was still being completed with woven tule reed mats. A sign at the opening of the arbor held up with string had the words “Eastern Gate (ceremonial space)—Do not enter without *permission*.” Next to the arbor was a large metal shed with various gardening tools as well as nonperishable foods. As we waited for the other volunteers

to arrive, Loa mentioned how beautiful it is that so much of Ohlone culture is coming back: ceremony, traditional foods, language, and especially land. We are witnessing healing taking place, she told me, and we are invited to be a part of it.

The inclusive nature of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust is rooted in the intertribal activism of Corrina Gould (Confederated Villages of Lisjan)<sup>33</sup> and her friend Johnella LaRose (Shoshone-Bannock/Carrizo). In an interview I conducted with Corrina, she explained,

[T]his land trust is an Indigenous women-led land trust in an urban area. So, it's the first of its kind and it happens to be on my home territory, right? But it is an intertribal Indigenous women's land trust for a reason: I've worked most of my life with intertribal women who have been relocated here through US policies of relocation, [who] have had their children and grandchildren born and raised here in our territory. We have created community together . . . and worked side-by-side around our sacred site issues but also intertribal issues that happen in urban areas.

The name of the organization derives from one of the most significant movements Corrina helped to organize, the 109-day spiritual encampment of the Sogorea Te' shell mound, a burial and village site, in an effort to keep it from being paved over by a parking lot. The encampment took place in 2011 at the Glen Cove Waterfront Park in what is now Vallejo, California. This movement brought people from many backgrounds together to participate in ceremony and protect this sacred site. After more than two decades of organizing, Corrina and Johnella began to envision a way to return land to East Bay Ohlone peoples, a place where traditional foods, ceremony, and culture could be revitalized. The two decided to pursue this dream through the creation of an Indigenous land trust.

As Corrina and Johnella continued to work within their community networks to create the land trust, their efforts came to fruition in the wake of the spiritual encampments at Standing Rock. During my 2019 interview with Corrina in her Oakland office, she recounted that the founders of Planting Justice, Haleh Zandi and Gavin Raders, went to the Standing Rock encampment in 2016 and were deeply moved by their experience. Corrina recounts: "When Haleh and Gavin were there, they asked the elders, 'What are we supposed to do when we go home?' And the elders said, 'You need to work with the First People on whose land you're on.' And so, Gavin and Haleh took that to heart." Transformed by their experience, Haleh and Gavin turned over a quarter-acre of the two-acre property to the Sogorea Te' Land Trust in 2016.<sup>34</sup>

Central to the aims of Sogorea Te' Land Trust is the concept of *rematriation*. During a short talk at the Maori and Indigenous Dance Symposium in November 2019, Corrina cited the definition by Shawnee/Lenape scholar Steven Newcomb: "To restore a people to a spiritual way of life, in sacred relationship with their ancestral lands, without external interference." Newcomb continues: "As a concept, rematriation acknowledges that our ancestors lived in spiritual relationship with our lands for thousands of years, and that we have a sacred duty to maintain that relationship for the benefit of our future generations."<sup>35</sup> Because Ohlone tribes do not have land or federal recognition, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust is one strategy for this rematriation of land to

return.<sup>36</sup> In addition, this return of land is connected to a broader sense of cultural and ceremonial revitalization, to (re)riteing the land. According to their website, the organization envisions the Bay Area as a place in which “Ohlone language and ceremony are an active, thriving part of the cultural landscape” along with social services, housing, cultural centers, and ceremonial land access for intertribal (diasporic) Indigenous peoples. A major concern is also the recovery of ancestral remains and cultural items from academic institutions. The term *rematriation* highlights that the work of this organization is led by Indigenous women and “calls on Native and non-Native peoples to heal and transform the legacies of colonization, genocide, and patriarchy, and to do the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us to do.”<sup>37</sup>

Part of this healing process is (re)riteing ancestral homelands. One of the ways this has happened is through the creation of a *tupentak*, a ceremonial arbor at the Planting Justice space.<sup>38</sup> In 2018, members of the organization gathered redwood trees in Sonoma (Coast Miwok territory). “We laid down tobacco at each of the trees and asked if they would give their lives for this ceremonial place to happen again,” Corrina said. “And they did.” Organization members carried the redwoods in U-Haul trailers to the Planting Justice space, where they waited months for the logs to dry. Volunteers from various backgrounds worked to remove the bark and put the poles in place, designating specific poles for women, men, two-spirit people, elders, and children.

The poles were raised in 2019 in a formal celebration honoring the fact that this was the first ceremonial arbor in that territory in the 250 years since European contact. This dance arbor has since hosted gatherings and ceremonies of diverse Indigenous peoples. Corrina mentioned that the arbor has not yet hosted Ohlone dances, however: “We need to go to those California Native people who are still doing those dances and songs and to thank them for keeping those songs and dances, and to introduce ourselves again and to be at those places and then invite them to come and help us dance this arbor in, in the right way, with food, with gifts, and with song.” While this ceremonial site is offered to visiting and relocated Native people, the return of land also offers the space for Ohlone peoples to bring back their own ceremonies and dances through exchanges with other California Indian communities that were able to maintain cultural practices.

Like the Planting Justice–Lisjan space, additional areas of land rematriated to Sogorea Te are also places where Ohlone and intertribal Native peoples are building relationships to land. The organization made an agreement with Gill Tract Farm in Albany, California, to steward an area of that land in 2017. Owned by the University of California, Berkeley, Sogorea Te’ works with the Black Earth Farms organization to tend this urban farm.<sup>39</sup> During one of my volunteer days, I joined a group that removed mulch from an area of the farm in preparation for a Mexica Two-Spirit ceremony. Like the other spaces stewarded by the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust, Gill Tract is a place where Native and non-Native allies are regularly welcomed to volunteer to work on the land. Dozens of people from various ages and backgrounds worked on the land during a volunteer workday in March 2020, though volunteer days were suspended following the COVID-19 outbreak. The pandemic also paused ceremonies among the Sogorea Te’ staff.

In addition to tending lands, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust also engages in a number of other initiatives, both for the intertribal community in the East Bay and for Ohlone people specifically. The Planting Justice–Lisjan space includes Himmetka (meaning “in one place, together” in Chochenyo), an emergency hub with medicines, food, water catchment system, and other emergency supplies.<sup>40</sup> Corrina’s daughter Deja Gould leads Mak Noono Tiirinikma (“our language awakens”), a Chochenyo-Ohlone language revitalization program through the organization. Deja explained, “With language comes songs . . . so that we’re able to have our ceremonies and prayers and sing our songs.”<sup>41</sup> Through language courses, field trips, and a smartphone application, the language initiative “offers more than just learning words and grammar; it encompasses a way of understanding our world and connecting with each other, our culture, and our ancestral way of life.”<sup>42</sup> COVID-19 halted the many in-person gatherings, including ceremonies for the intertribal community. Instead, the organization initiated Horše ‘Amham (“good food”), a food distribution service for low-income Black and Native communities, as well as launching a Native speakers series on YouTube.<sup>43</sup>

The Sogorea Te' Land Trust is a way some East Bay Ohlone people are reconnecting to their traditional lands in a new way. In the wake of colonialism and the transformation of their homeland into a major urban center, the ways Sogorea Te' is regaining land and operating their programs is largely as a result of non-Ohlone allies. This includes funding from Shuumi (“gift”), a voluntary land tax that East Bay residents can pay to the Sogorea Te' Land Trust.<sup>44</sup> This also includes ceremonial exchanges with various Indigenous peoples and coalition with various Native, racial justice, and social justice organizations.<sup>45</sup> In 2032 the organization was granted forty-three acres in the Oakland hills, purchased through collaboration with the environmental justice nonprofit Movement Generation. At the time of this writing, the organization has access to ten sites, including those with houses and gardens, through legal agreements, long-term leases, and/or deeds.<sup>46</sup> The organization also runs a media fellowship and Mitiini Numma (“to grow the truth”) Youth Program.

Central Sogorea Te's initiatives are ceremony and ensuring the continuity of Ohlone culture. Corrina remarked,

We're just a bridge—the humans that are alive here, today, on this earth, are a bridge from our past to the future. That's all we are. How do we continue? How do we create this continuum so that it's not forgotten? Because once those prayers and ceremonies are forgotten, then we've ceased to exist . . . and I cannot allow that to happen.

Through diverse alliances, land is being returned. Corrina and the rest of the team of Sogorea Te' Land Trust is ensuring that ceremonies will continue to (re)rite East Bay Ohlone lands. This reawakening of our relationship to Ohlone lands through the Sogorea Te' Land Trust offers a way for Ohlone peoples to once again pray on traditional lands and invites the various non-Ohlone and non-Native population of the Bay Area to also be a part of this healing process.

## AMAH MUTSUN LAND TRUST

Amah Mutsun Tribal Band Chairman Valentin Lopez invited me to meet him for an interview at Cascade Ranch, close to the Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve at Año Nuevo State Park in Pescadero, California.<sup>47</sup> After driving along a dirt road, Lopez invited me into a two-story house, which he explained is where Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT) stewards sleep when doing work in the Quiroste Valley. As I walked in, I noticed that various objects (door handles, soap, cabinets) had masking tape with the word for that item in the Mutsun Ohlone language. The room where we had our interview was a meeting room for the tribe, including Mutsun language classes. There were signs all over the room with words in Mutsun, including a drawing of a person with arrows to different body parts and the corresponding word in Mutsun. There were also bilingual signs (English and Spanish) from a museum display about the tribe. Today this room serves as a meeting place for tribal members and state park staff members, but nearby was another important meeting place. During their 1769 land expedition, Spanish soldier Gaspar de Portola and his men passed through the nearby village of Mitenne of the precontact Quiroste tribe.<sup>48</sup> At the boundaries of the Ramaytush Ohlone and Awaswas Ohlone linguistic territories, the Quiroste Valley is one of many locations where AMLT engages in research and revitalized Indigenous stewardship practices of their ancestors.

Valentin explained that the Amah Mutsun Land Trust emerged from a direct sense of obligation to (re)rite ancestral lands. He recalls,

In 2006, tribal elders came to a council meeting and they said [that] our creation story tells us Creator gave us a responsibility to take care of Mother Earth and all living things. Then they told us we have to find a way to go back to that. And I left that meeting completely shaken. I go, 'What the heck?' I mean, we own no land.

Valentin expressed that messages from tribal elders carry important weight. This call to return to traditional teachings and practices was not optional. It was a directive to return to what he called a "sacred covenant to take care of Mother Earth and all living things." The tribe engaged in this work by creating the AMLT, which became an official 501(c)(3) Native-led nonprofit in 2013 through collaborations with the Christensen Fund, Sempervirens Fund, Kalliopeia Foundation, educational institutions (including Stanford, University of California, Berkeley, and UC Santa Cruz), and local parks. The organization works to help tribal members restore their relationship with Popeloutchom (Amah Mutsun homelands)<sup>49</sup>, integrating traditional ecological knowledge with western scientific insights, despite being part of a landless, nonfederally recognized tribe.<sup>50</sup> The tribe simultaneously remains in process of federal acknowledgment (petition #120).

AMLT advances the related goals of conservation (including cultural and religious sites), stewardship, and research. According to the organization's website, partnerships with private and public landowners in their homelands allow them to "restore our access to our ancestral lands for stewardship, ceremony, and learning" through which they "are reaffirming our role as stewards of Mother Earth." The organization works toward both environmental restoration as well as cultural and ceremonial restoration, or what I have

been describing as (re)riteing. AMLT write that they envision the land trust as allowing the tribe to “drink safely from our waters,” for example, and to “conduct ceremonies to help restore and maintain balance within ourselves and within our universe.”<sup>51</sup> This work is led by Amah Mutsun tribal members with the support of nontribal members on the executive board and Native and non-Native scholars serving as research associates.

Amah Mutsun tribal members revitalize ecological knowledge through this organization in a number of ways, including through the Native Stewardship Corps.<sup>52</sup> Stewards participate in the removal of invasive species, participate in cultural burning practices, and collaborate on archaeological and ecological research within their territories. In my interview with Alexii Sigona, he mentioned that participation in this program was of profound importance:

[W]e looked at archaeology. We looked at how the land was treated or cared for, and then we are doing stewardship reflective of that particular place and how it was stewarded for generations. This has been probably the most powerful thing I’ve ever taken part in over the past two summers because we do language lessons . . . because we do talk circles and ceremony.

Participation allows stewards to learn from scientists, scholars, and tribal elders in a way that facilitates intergenerational cultural transmission. Sigona, a PhD student at the University of California, Berkeley, focusing on Indigenous land management, also said, “I’m looking at what stewardship is for healing, because I think that’s one of the most important things for us to do if we want to have our future descendants be really culturally connected. We need to heal, too.” Part of that healing is that the Native Stewardship Corps brings tribal members back into direct relation with ancestral lands, including through ceremony. Unlike mainstream forms of conservation which remove humans from lands to restore them, AMLT takes a decidedly Indigenous approach, which means actively stewarding the land and building relationships to those places.<sup>53</sup>

Other programs engage tribal youth specifically, such as internships and youth camp initiatives. Tribal youth who are high school juniors and seniors can work with land stewards over the summer through a paid internship. Valentin explained: “They work side-by-side with our stewards and learn about our ethnobotany, learn about our history, learn our traditions, our ceremonies, learn about what traditional Mutsun stewardship looked like . . . to have relationships with the lands.” Alexii notes that there were five interns, ages fifteen to nineteen, who participated in the five-week program in 2023.<sup>54</sup> During the summer camp, tribal youth go camping for two weeks and learn Amah Mutsun culture and history, including ways that Amah Mutsun ancestors would care for their lands and waters. Valentin said that approximately fifty youth participated in the camp in 2019, though there have been as many as seventy-five youth. He mentioned that this program has particular importance to him as a tribal chair:

I mean, I just say, of everything we do, that’s what makes me the happiest, just the absolute happiest. To see the smiles on their face and to hear them, their curiosity, and their pride in their identity—there’s so much healing. It’s healing for all [members] of our tribe.

In the wake of COVID-19, AMLT adapted this program into a virtual format that included an online series of workshops over five Saturdays along with a camp box that had traditional foods and materials for activities.<sup>55</sup> Through such programming, AMLT brings Amah Mutsun youth into cultural and ceremonial relations to ancestral lands, creating pathways for Indigenous futurity.

One of the most exciting endeavors of AMLT is the work of restoring the use of fire to manage the landscape. California Indians historically used fire to increase biodiversity and reduce large fires, among other reasons.<sup>56</sup> Spanish and Russian colonial accounts from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries describe seeing cultural burns in California.<sup>57</sup> Despite their importance to tribes, cultural burning was largely halted as a result of Spanish colonization. Environmental scientist and Amah Mutsun tribal member Chuck Striplen put it like this: "Fire is largely feared today. There's almost 100 percent suppression of fires. Two or three hundred years ago, people had a very different relationship with fire. It was a tool. It was a natural part of the landscape that was occupied by people for thousands of years."<sup>58</sup> AMLT has collaborated with archaeologists to understand the historical use of fire by their ancestors and to bring fire back to those lands again.<sup>59</sup> The Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve of the Año Nuevo State Park are among the places where tribal members have partnered with archaeologists to understand the impacts, degrees, and reasons for cultural burns.<sup>60</sup> In addition to studying ethnographic materials from Harrington, the archaeological record allows the Amah Mutsun another avenue for revitalizing land-based cultural practices. Archaeology, a field that historically has objectified Native peoples, also is serving as a resource to create Amah Mutsun futurity.

Hannah Hagemann of the *Monterey County Herald* (2020) describes witnessing a burn at the Año Nuevo State Park involving eight AMLT stewards. Dressed in fire-resistant clothing, stewards offer a prayer before engaging in the burn. These fires are typically below a foot and a half. The aim of these fires today is to restore the land to its earlier form as a coastal prairie, to restore some of the immense biodiversity of the landscape as it was before European contact. The importance of this process is more than just environmental concerns; it's about restoration of relationship to ancestral lands. Amah Mutsun tribal member Marcella Luna said, "We're relearning our culture, tradition, and learning how our ancestors took care of the lands."<sup>61</sup> In addition, as Sigona put it, "We're relating with the environment in a specifically Indigenous kind of way, or at least a California Indian way." Like the other forms of land-based revitalization, the cultural burnings practiced by AMLT are in creative negotiation with tradition and contemporary circumstances. Through study of available historical materials, AMLT is ensuring that homelands of the Mutsun and Awaswas will once again be shaped by the restorative force of fire.

The work of the AMLT has allowed the Amah Mutsun, a landless tribe, access to additional lands to revitalize cultural, ecological, and ceremonial knowledges. AMLT has worked with Pinnacles National Park since 2008, restoring basketry plants and participating in cultural burns, a collaboration facilitated through a memorandum of understanding with the tribe. A 2013 conservation easement facilitated by the Sempervirens Fund granted the Amah Mutsun ninety-six acres along the coast near

the Costanoa Lodge in Pescadero to restore the land using traditional Indigenous methods.<sup>62</sup> Through gardens at Pie Ranch (near Año Nuevo), Mission San Juan Bautista, and the Amah Mutsun Relearning Program at UC Santa Cruz's Arboretum and Botanic Garden, tribal members relearn traditional ethnobotany. AMLT is also extending its stewardship practices to include care for ancestral waters. This includes participating in a collaborative with fifteen organizations and sixty scientists involved in the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Project, which received \$1.3 million from the Ocean Protection Council to restore the Elkhorn Slough wetlands along the Monterey Bay.<sup>63</sup> In 2023, forty-two youth (between five and seventeen years old), alongside family and AMLT staff members, elders, and other tribal members participated in the AMLT Stewardship Camp to pass on knowledge about Mutsun language, stewardship, and culture.<sup>64</sup> Alongside multiple land trusts, that same year AMLT was granted a cultural easement to a 540-acre ranch, the Harvey and Gladys Nyland Property near San Juan Bautista, for ceremonial, cultural, and restoration purposes.<sup>65</sup> In each of these cases and in the many programs and initiatives of the organization, the processes of revitalizing traditional ecological knowledge is interwoven in the process of creatively restoring language, ceremony, traditional foods, and other cultural practices that restore tribal members' relationship to ancestral lands.

## CONCLUSION: (RE)RITEING INDIGENOUS FUTURES

At the conclusion of his introduction to *God Is Red*, Deloria writes, "It is this unbroken connection that we have to the spirit world that will allow us to survive as a people."<sup>66</sup> Though Deloria is writing about a very different Indigenous context, his words offer an important lens to consider the examples above. The work of Sogorea Te' Land Trust and Amah Mutsun Land Trust suggest that relationships to ancestral lands include sacred, ceremonial relationships in the contemporary world. Through these organizations, particular groups of East Bay Ohlone and Amah Mutsun peoples reconnect to culture through stewardship, language, food, and ceremony. The work of the organizations examined reawakens relationship to land, but also situates that relationship into a much broader framework of ceremonial exchange between the human and the more-than-human, to the plants, waters, ancestors, and spiritual presences alive in the land. In the process, both organizations are enacting futurity. (Re)riteing ancestral lands becomes a "map to the next world," a term Harjo borrows from Mvskoke poet Joy Harjo. (Re)riteing is a map specific to their communities and shares common features with many Indigenous nations and communities working to heal and to enact their own futurities.

Land trusts offer a powerful strategy to regain (or regain access to) ancestral lands and revitalize ceremony, but they come with their own set of challenges. Like the federal recognition process, this, too, requires forms of external recognition, albeit from lower-level agencies and organizations. It also may come with limits to how the land may be used. For example, in 2022 Sogorea Te' Land Trust was granted approximately five acres of Sequoia Point, renamed Rinihmu Pulté'irekne ("above the red ochre" in Chochenyo) through a cultural easement with the City of Oakland for ceremonial and restoration purposes.<sup>67</sup> Sogorea Te staff member Inés Ixierda (Mestizx) explains:

“While access to the land formerly known as Sequoia Point was returned through the cultural easement, many of our activities are restricted by the zoning of the area.”<sup>68</sup> Despite these challenges, land trusts offer a powerful tool to return to land and engage in the processes of ceremonial and cultural resurgence, particularly vital for nonrecognized California tribes.

Just as Sogorea Te’ Land Trust and Amah Mutsun Land Trust participate in (re)riteing through their specific organizations, the tribes involved also work to protect ceremonial spaces. Corrina Gould of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan and allies participated in a multiyear struggle to defend the West Berkeley Shellmound, one of the oldest burial and ceremonial sites in the San Francisco Bay Area, buried below Spenger’s Parking Lot on Fourth Street in Berkeley, California. Activists worked to halt a multistory housing and retail development on the last open space of the Shellmound complex. In March 2024, the City of Berkeley approved transferring title of the 2.2 acre lot to Sogorea Te’ Land Trust following purchase from the landowner.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band is in the midst of a multiyear struggle to halt a sand and gravel mine at the foot of the Santa Cruz Mountains at Sargent Ranch. Known to Amah Mutsun as Juristac, it was the site of world renewal Kuksu ceremonies. As a participant of protests for both causes, I have heard tribal leaders describe the importance of preserving these sites and returning ceremonies to these places so that relationships to those lands can continue into the next generations.

Like Miranda’s quote suggests, Sogorea Te’ Land Trust and Amah Mutsun Land Trust engage in the work of Indigenous futurity as a mosaic. They blend the pieces left by the ancestors with the contemporary world. Throughout this article, I have argued that (re)riteing is a central part of this futurity praxis. Through land-based resurgence, East Bay Ohlone and Amah Mutsun peoples are reestablishing relations to land through various stewardship practices for future generations. In the process, they also reconnect to sacred forces alive in the land through ceremonial practices. In this way, resurgence is both political and cultural as well as deeply spiritual. Paying attention to (re)riteing as a futurity practice among East Bay Ohlone and Amah Mutsun peoples offers a lens to consider how spirituality and ceremony is fundamental to the ways these specific peoples are envisioning and enacting decolonial futures, inviting us to consider similar patterns transnationally of Indigenous resurgence.

## NOTES

1. NDN Collective, LandBack Manifesto, n.d. <https://landback.org/manifesto/>.

2. For important critiques of the category of *religion*, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and the Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993); Charles Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (Aurora: Davies Group Publishers, 1995); and Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

3. Suzanne Crawford and Dennis Kelley, “Academic Study of American Indian Religious Traditions” in *American Indian Religious Traditions: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Suanne Crawford and Dennis

Kelley (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 1–10. The national guild of religious studies scholars, The American Academy of Religion, includes program units dedicated to Native traditions in the Americas and Indigenous religious traditions.

4. Michelene E. Peasantubbee, “Religious Studies on the Margins: Decolonizing Our Minds” in *Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance*, ed. Richard A. Grounds, George E. Tinker, and David E. Wilkins (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003), 209.

5. Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweeds Editions, 2013), 37.

6. Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 91.

7. Cutchá Risling Baldy, *We Are Dancing for You: Native Feminisms and the Revitalization of Women’s Coming-of-Age Ceremonies* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), 126.

8. Damon B. Akins and William Bauer, *We Are the Land: A History of Native California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 4.

9. Deborah Miranda, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (Berkeley: Heyday, 2013), 1.

10. Akins and Bauer, *We Are the Land*, 112.

11. Randall Milliken, Laurence Shoup, and Beverly Ortiz, *Ohlone/Costanoan Indians of the San Francisco Peninsula and their Neighbors, Yesterday and Today* (San Francisco: National Park Service Gold Gate National Recreation Area, 2009), 160. Milliken et al. note that the family of Mission San Carlos descendant Loretta Onesimo (Rumsen) was able to hold on to land for decades following secularization (162).

12. See Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846–1873* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017) and Jack Norton, *Genocide in Northwestern California: When Our Worlds Cried* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1979).

13. Milliken et al., *Ohlone/Costanoan Indians of the San Francisco Peninsula and their Neighbors, Yesterday and Today*, 208.

14. *Ibid.*, 219–20.

15. Les Field, Alan Leventhal, Dolores Sanchez, and Rosemary Cambra, “A Contemporary Ohlone Tribal Revitalization Movement: A Perspective from the Muwekma Costanoan/Ohlone Indians of the San Francisco Bay Area,” *California History* 71, no. 3 (1992): 418.

16. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012), 5.

17. While some embrace the term “Ohlone” broadly, others identify with specific linguistic designation such as Mutsun Ohlone or Rumsen Ohlone. Others may identify with specific tribal governments, such as the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. These communities were distinct precontact and remain distinct communities today.

18. Field et al., “A Contemporary Ohlone Tribal Revitalization Movement”: 425. Several additional Ohlone communities were also active in the East Bay at this time, including in Niles and Sunol.

19. Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (Cambridge: South End, 2005), 11. LaDuke does not define “sacred” in this context. Instead, she notes, “In the end there is no absence of irony: the integrity of what is sacred to Native Americans will be determined by the government that has been responsible for doing everything in its power to destroy Native American cultures.”

20. LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred*, 17.

21. For critiques of federal recognition, see Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014);

Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

22. Field et al., "A Contemporary Ohlone Tribal Revitalization Movement"; E. Richard Hart, "Federal Recognition of Native American Tribes: The Case of California's Amah Mutsun," *Western Legal History* 16, no. 1 (2003): 39–84; Philip Laverly, "The Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation of Monterey, California: Dispossession, Federal Neglect, and the Bitter Irony of the Federal Acknowledgment Process," *Wicazo Sa Review* 18, no. 2 (2003): 41–77.

23. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Final Determination to Decline to Acknowledge the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe," *Federal Register* 67, no. 108 (2002).

24. Olivia Chilcote, "'Time Out of Mind': The San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians and the Historical Origins of a Struggle for Federal Recognition," *California History* 96, no. 4 (2019): 39.

25. Risling Baldy, *We Are Dancing for You*, 7.

26. *Ibid.*, 118.

27. *Ibid.*, 49.

28. Voices of the Earth, "Reconnecting with Ohlone Heritage: Confederation of Ohlone Peoples (Part 2 of 7)," YouTube Video, 6:37, August 21, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oua4qvFVRU>.

29. Miranda, *Bad Indians*, 135.

30. *Ibid.*, 136.

31. See Melissa A. Pflügl, *Ritual and Myth in Odawa Revitalization: Reclaiming a Sovereign Place* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998); Dennis Kelly, *Tradition, Performance, and Religion in Native America: Ancestral Ways, Modern Selves* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Greg Johnson, "Materialising and Performing Hawaiian Religion(s) on Mauna Kea" in *Handbook of Indigenous Religion(s)*, ed. Greg Johnson and Siv Ellen Kraft (Boston: Brill, 2017), 156–75; Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021).

32. Laura Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019), 4.

33. Confederated Villages of Lisjan is an Ohlone tribe whose ancestors were taken to Mission Dolores and Mission San Jose and includes peoples from multiple linguistic areas: "Lisjan (Ohlone), Karkin (Ohlone), Bay Miwok, Plains Miwok, Delta Yokut, and Napian (Patwin). Our territory includes five Bay Area counties; Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Napa, and San Joaquin, and we are directly tied to the 'Indian Town' census of the 1920s and the Verona Band." <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/lisjan-history-and-territory/>.

34. Ryan Kost, "The Ohlone Are Building a New Homeland in the East Bay, One Half-Acre at a Time," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 13, 2021. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/culture/article/The-Ohlone-are-building-a-new-homeland-in-the-15866001.php>.

35. See Steve Newcomb, "Perspectives: Healing, Restoration, and Rematriation," *News and Notes*, Spring/Summer 1995: 3.

36. Indian Canyon near Hollister, California stewarded by the Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan is the only federally recognized "Indian Country" within Ohlone linguistic areas.

37. Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Purpose and Vision," *Sogorea Te' Land Trust*, n.d., <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/purpose-and-vision/>.

38. K. Nicole Wires and Johnella LaRose, "Sogorea Te' Land Trust and Indigenous Food Sovereignty in the San Francisco Bay Area," *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 9, no. B (2019): 34.

39. Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Gill Tract." n.d., <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/gill-tract/> (link no longer active).

40. Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Himmetka: In One Place, Together." *Sogorea Te' Land Trust* n.d., <https://sogoreatelandtrust.org/himmetka/> (link no longer active).
41. Kost, "The Ohlone Are Building a New Homeland in the East Bay, One Half-Acre at a Time," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 13, 2021. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/culture/article/The-Ohlone-are-building-a-new-homeland-in-the-15866001.php>.
42. Sogorea Te' Land Trust, "Mak Noono Tiirinikma," *Sogorea Te' Land Trust*, n.d., <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/mak-noono-tiirinikma/>
43. Abel R. Gomez, "Postapocalyptic Communities: Tribal and Religious Organizations Respond to COVID-19," *The Revealer*, March 9, 2021, <https://therevealer.org/postapocalyptic-communities-tribal-and-religious-organizations-respond-to-covid-19/>.
44. East Bay residents can calculate their voluntary land tax and make donations directly from the organization's website: <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/pay-the-shuumi-land-tax/>.
45. Coalition partners include American Indian Child Resource Center, Black Earth Farms, the Cultural Conservancy, the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, and Showing Up for Racial Justice, among others. See a more complete list on the organization's website: <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/partnerships-alliances/>.
46. Jessica Flores, "'It's Transformative': Bay Area Nonprofit Returns Forty-three Acres to Female-Led Indigenous Land Trust," July 25, 2023. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/ohlone-land-trust-oakland-18199800.php>.
47. Amah Mutsun territory includes the Pajaro and San Benito watersheds, which includes areas of San Benito, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and Monterey Counties. Their ancestors were taken to Mission San Juan Bautista and Mission Santa Cruz. According to the AMLT website, "Historically composed of more than twenty politically distinct peoples, the modern tribe represents the surviving descendant families of these historic groups." See Amah Mutsun Land Trust, "The Tribal Band," n.d., <https://www.amahmutsunlandtrust.org/the-tribal-band>; Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, "History," n.d., <https://amahmutsun.org/history>. Though they have described themselves as comprising Mutsun and Awaswas ancestors, research has shown that the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band are not Awaswas. They continue to steward neighboring Awaswas lands until such point as Awaswas descendants come forward.
48. Kent Lightfoot and Valentin Lopez, "The Study of Indigenous Management Practices in California: An Introduction," *California Archaeology* 5, no. 1 (2013): 216. Milliken et al. note, "The first documented contact between Spanish explorers and people of the greater San Francisco Bay Area took place when the expedition of Gaspar de Portolá arrived from the south at the Quiroste village of Mitenne, near Point Año Nuevo, on October 23, 1769. Portola, governor of Spanish Lower California, had just established a presidio at San Diego in July of 1769. His party, including forty-nine Spanish citizens and fifteen Baja California Indians, was probing up the coast in search of Monterey Bay, where Portolá intended to establish a second presidio." Millikan et al., *Ohlone/Costanoan Indians of the San Francisco Peninsula and their Neighbors, Yesterday and Today*, 89.
49. Though Amah Mutsun Land Trust works on Awaswas and Mutsun linguistic areas, "Popeloutchom" refers specifically to Mutsun lands.
50. Amah Mutsun Land Trust, "Amah Mutsun Land Trust," n.d., <https://parks.berkeley.edu/sites/parks.berkeley.edu/files/Amah%20Mutsun%20Tribal%20Band%20Info%20Sheet%209%273%2719.pdf>.
51. Amah Mutsun Land Trust, "Our History and Mission," *Amah Mutsun Land Trust*, n.d., <https://www.amahmutsunlandtrust.org/our-vision>.
52. Matt Dolkas, "A Tribal Band Reconnects with Ancestral Lands," *Peninsula Open Space Trust*, March 3, 2020. <https://openspacetrust.org/blog/amah-mutsun/>.

53. M. Kat Anderson's well-known study of Native California land-management techniques extensively documents the ways California tribes actively stewarded the land through cultural burns, pruning, harvesting, and other techniques. Like Indigenous peoples in many other territories, these techniques suggest humans were an active element of the landscape. They shaped the land in ways that befitted the land and the human community. See M. Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).
54. Alexii Sigona, "Reflections from the 2023 Native Steward Intern Program," *Amah Mutsun Land Trust* (2023). <https://www.amahmutsunlandtrust.org/nlw23-intern-article>.
55. In August 2020, I spoke with a representative from the Humunya Tribal Foundation of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band about the ways the tribe responded to the impacts of COVID-19. This was part of the larger work of the Center for the Study of Religion and the City's COVID-19 Relief and Restoration Work Program. The full interview is available on the Center for the Study of Religion and the City's website: <https://www.religionandcities.org/relief>.
56. Lightfoot and Lopez, "The Study of Indigenous Management Practices in California: An Introduction," 211.
57. *Ibid*, 212.
58. Oakland Museum of California, "Living with Fire: A Conversation with Scientist Chuck Striplen," YouTube video, 2:42, September 5, 2013. <https://youtu.be/HYQHWZPvVY8>.
59. Lightfoot and Lopez (2013); Valentin Lopez, "The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band: Reflections on Collaborative Archaeology," *California Archaeology* 5, no. 2 (2013): 221–23; Gabriel M. Sanchez et al., "Sensing the Past: Perspectives on Collaborative Archaeology and Ground Penetrating Radar Techniques from Coastal California," *Remote Sensing* 13, no.2 (2021): 1–16.
60. Lightfoot and Lopez, "The Study of Indigenous Management Practices in California: An Introduction," 215.
61. Hannah Hagemann, "Amah Mutsun Tribal Band Reignites Cultural Burning," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, November 26, 2020. <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2020/11/25/amah-mutsun-tribal-band-reignites-cultural-burning/>.
62. Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, "Amah Mutsun Tribe Acquires Conservation Easement," *Amah Mutsun Tribal Band*, August 22, 2013. <http://amahmutsun.org/archives/795>.
63. Erin Malsbury, "Elkhorn Slough Restoration Project Receives \$1.3 Million Grant," *The Pajaronian*, February 25, 2021. <https://pajaronian.com/elkhorn-slough-restoration-project-receives-1-3m-grant/>.
64. Lisa Carrier, "The Triumphant Return of the AMLT Youth Stewardship Summer Camp," *Amah Mutsun Land Trust* (2023). <https://www.amahmutsunlandtrust.org/nlw23-1>.
65. BenitoLink Staff, "Land Trusts Announce Formal Conveyance of Nyland Property," *BenitoLink*, June 20, 2023. <https://benitolink.com/land-trusts-announce-formal-conveyance-of-nyland-property>.
66. Deloria, *God Is Red*, xvii.
67. Sarah Ravani, "This East Bay City Will Be First to Allow an Indigenous Group the Exclusive Right to Use City Land," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 9, 2022, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/eastbay/article/indigenous-land-reparations-17426036.php>.
68. Inés Ixierda, "Rinihmu Resolution," *Sogorea Te' Land Trust*, December 5, 2023. <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/2023/12/05/rinihmu-resolution/>.
69. Janie Har, "Ohlone People Rejoice After City of Berkeley Votes to Return Sacred Land," *KQED*, March 13, 2024. <https://www.kqed.org/news/11979268/ohlone-people-rejoice-after-city-of-berkeley-votes-to-return-sacred-land-to-tribe>.