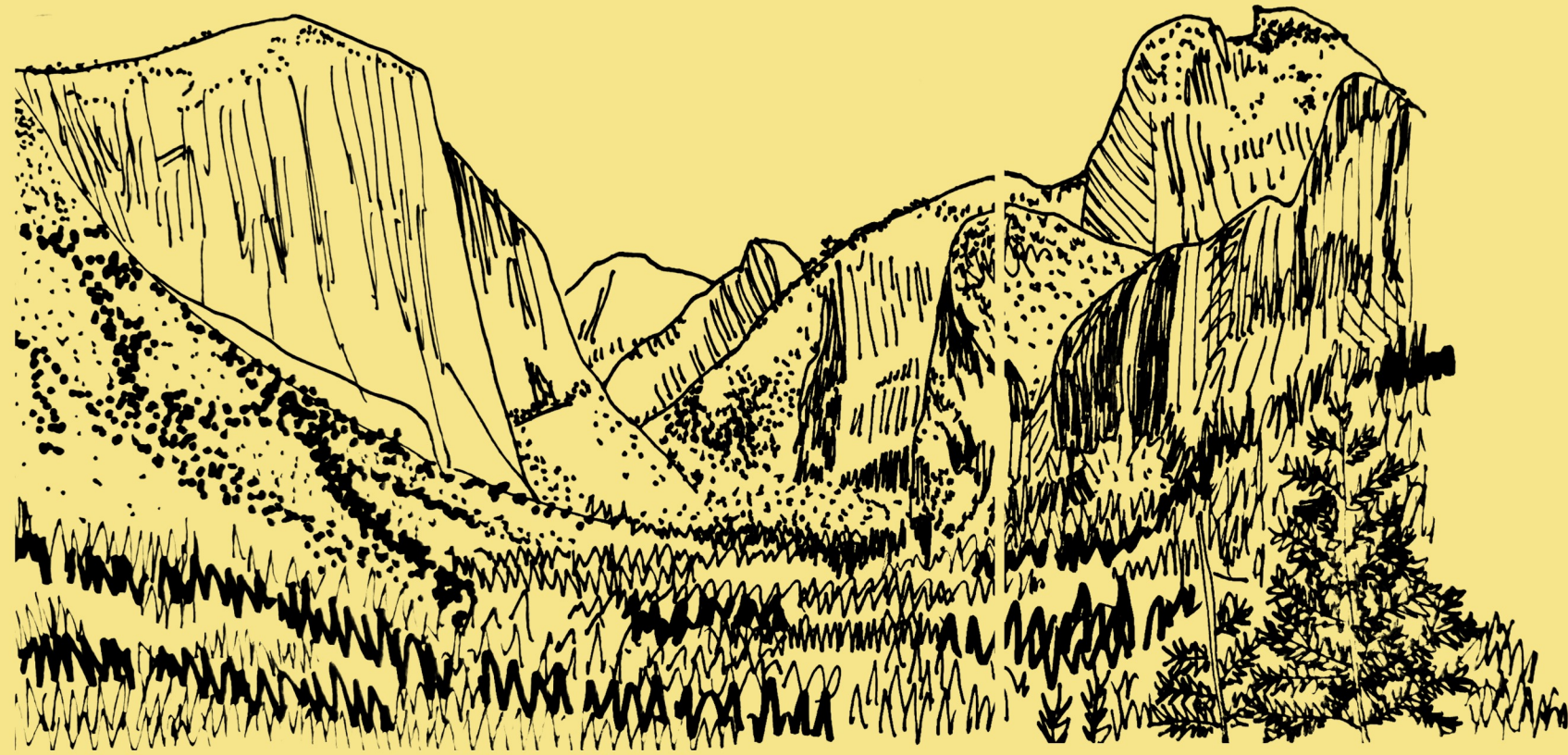


BEYOND THE BINARY



THE WILDERNESS
MYTH

John Muir
stood in
Yosemite
Valley in
1868 and
called it
wilderness...



... but he was
looking at
land that
Miwok and
Yokuts people
had tended
for millennia.

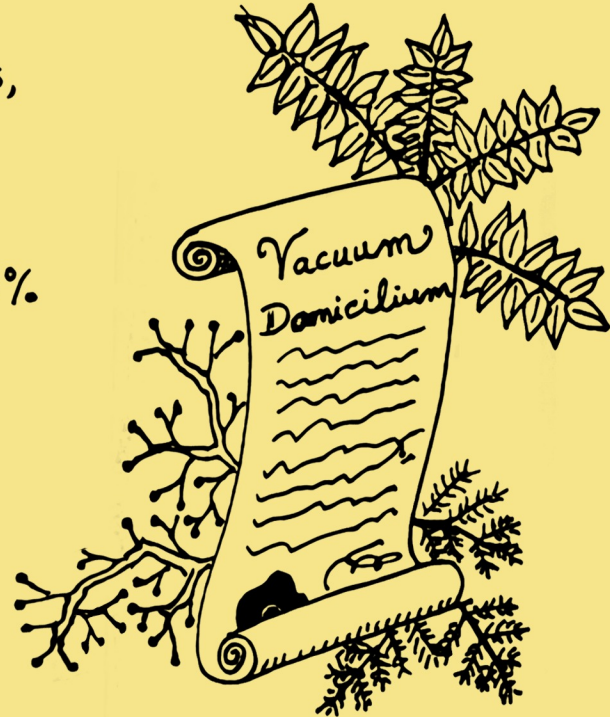
To call the land-
scape of 1492
pristine is to
overlook not just
the sweeping
changes Indigenous
people made to
the landscape,
but their agency
as well.

It is to think
of them as
part of the
scenery, like
animals.

FLIP 

"Indians walk softly and
hurt the landscape hardly
more than birds and
squirrels."
- John Muir

In many regions,
the landscape
looked empty
because 90-95%
of Indigenous
people had
perished from
diseases
brought by
Europeans.



Perceiving the
land as empty
and unmanaged
made it easier
for Europeans
to justify taking
possession of it.



The native/invasive
binary rests in
part on a conve-
nient myth:
that the American
landscape was
untouched before
Europeans
arrived.

