The Cracking of Concrete Jungles: Practicing Indigenous Kinship in Diaspora

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Abstract

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In this thesis, I ask what does it mean to be an Indigenous person, but not to these lands? How might a Native Lenca community displaced from Honduras make intentional kinship with the Paayme Paxaayt (West River in Tongva language) also known as the Los Angeles River? While popular understandings of immigration center on labor and Latinidades, many immigrants are Indigenous and bring with them different languages and relationships to land (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2014; Stephen, 2007). Understanding mobility as a strategy for survival is tied to Indigenous ontologies of kinships and lessons learned from nonhuman worlds like lands and rivers. This relational understanding recenters land as pedagogy where nonhuman beings like rivers serve as teachers by working with Indigenous peoples against the settler-state. Indigenous peoples in diaspora then employ migration as a form of mobility that highlights sovereignty over their own bodies by refusing settler rule through the crossing of multitudes of borders. Urban

geographies like Los Angeles serve as settler borders by uplifting white supremacy through geographical imaginaries and discourses that deny Indigenous presence within urban cities undermining Indigenous futurities through the encasing of land within concrete.

Through migration, Los Angeles has become a hub for Indigenous peoples in diaspora who challenge settler imaginaries by focusing on their rights to self-determination and transforming urban spaces through intentional nonhuman kinships. They intentionally form new commitments to new lands by engaging in new alliances with other Indigenous communities and nonhuman worlds. Through storytelling I'll explain how Indigenous peoples in diaspora from Abia Yala carry land within themselves, transforming public spaces, front/backyards, balconies, and alleys into community spaces of care that chip away and crack the concrete bringing forth Indigenous existence and futurity within urban spaces through kinships.

Alain passing by *milpas de Maíz* growing next to a car wash, and an old-abandoned warehouse in South-Central, Los Angeles highlights how cracks exist within the concrete.

Introduction:

When I was little, my dad used to go outside to our balcony and everyday he would sing to the plants while he cared for them. He had transformed our small apartments balcony into a garden full of tomatillos, chiles, *frijoles rojo* [red beans], *zacate de limon* [lemongrass], and a variety of other succulent plants that we shared with family and friends. One day I asked him "*Pa!* Why do you sing to the plants?" he responded by telling me a story:

> *"¡Mijo! Cuando era joven yo iba a cuidar las milpas y cuando llegaba a la orilla de la milpa yo saludaba al maíz. Y les gritaba "¡buenos días, amigos!" y miraba como las milpas se meneavan bien alegre y sentia como la tierra me reconosia. Entonces, así mismo como el maíz se alegraba cuando yo la saludaba, estas plantas se me alegran cuando les hablo"* [Son! When I was young, I would go take care of the cornfields and when I got to the edge of field, I would salute the maize. I would then yell "good morning, friends!" and then I watched as the maize waved back at me happily and how the land recognized me. So, just as the maize was happy when I greeted them, these plants become happy when I speak to them.].

I didn't know it then, but my father was teaching me how to create relationships by interacting and listening to the desires of nonhuman worlds. Relationships to land, plants, and rivers require a certain understanding of a different language, a language that is learned through our daily interactions, spiritual connection, and care, which highlights the intentionality behind our commitments to our kinships (Million, 2022). For my father the plants that he grows from our balcony are directly connected to his desire to maintain his commitments to his ancestral lands. His ability to communicate with land comes from his intentional commitments and his daily interactions with the plants, and the lessons he's learned from those relationships allow him to better understand the needs of new kinships and new lands. To my father his belief that land is sentient and acknowledges his presence comes from the meticulous care he has dedicated to his bond with the land, and the reciprocity that he's received in return from the land. Kinmaking is a process where one acknowledges their commitments to one another, and in the case of my father, the milpa also acknowledge their relationship. His commitment to the *milpa* has not been severed

by migration instead it traveled with him where it has informed his new relationships to new lands.

My positionality as an Indigenous Lenca in diaspora has been informed by the ontological lessons passed down through storytelling and commitments that I maintain in remembrance to the land and community that we still carry within us. Indigenous peoples in Los Angeles continue to find different ways to transform urban cities, challenging settler imaginaries, as they remake new allegiances and commitments to new peoples and new lands. A relationally that challenges the state's ability to strip Indigeneity from Indigenous peoples in diaspora as they continue to make claims to lands back home. In challenging white supremacy within urban landscapes Indigenous peoples in diaspora creates cracks within the concrete jungles of Los Angeles. The cracking of the concrete is both the physical transformation that urban jungles like South-Central Los Angeles go through, and a metaphysical transformation that's highlights the ephemeral nature of Indigenous resistance in urban spaces.

Dian Million's conceptualization of (RE)Indigenizing provides new language in understanding how urban Natives transform urban cities through their commitments to land that foreground care. The erosion of white supremacy within urban spaces happens when Indigenous peoples work in a reciprocal partnership with their nonhuman kinships where even land encased within the concrete can work against the state. These moments of ephemeral resistance are temporal in nature as the settler state actively works against the transformation of urban landscape by criminalizing Indigenous peoples in diaspora through the over policing of their communities and the patrolling of borders.

On March 23, 2020, the U.S. Homeland Security posted their first ever Enforcement Lifecycle Report which highlights the detainment and repatriation process of over 3.5 million

immigrants who have been detained in the Southwest borders from 2014 to 2019. [1] This report is of significant interest because for the first time ever in 2019, Central American immigration had surpassed Mexican immigration into the U.S. It signals a substantial demographic shift of the people who are being detained and policed at the U.S. southern border. An analysis of this demographic shift is of pertinent given the rise of violence that Indigenous peoples are encountering due to neoliberal international development and the annexation of Indigenous land at the hands of settler states through the securitization of borders. This constant violence, along with harsh economic poverty, and an increased environmental vulnerability to climate change has forced many Indigenous peoples to seek refuge through mobility leading to mass migration and crossing of borders to survive (Whyte et al., 2019).

In naming this violence I hope to signal the ongoing ways that settler-colonialism transforms and continues the uphold white supremacy through the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their relations to land and other nonhuman worlds. Settler colonialism, although complex and ever changing, is a structure of domination used to exploit Indigenous peoples and subjugate other populations (Wolfe, 2008). As with other forms of colonialism, settler colonialism is tied to the extermination of Native and Indigenous peoples through direct and indirect violence that seeks to undermine their relationality to land. This overlaps with other structures of domination including, but not limited to imperialism, racism, racial capitalism, chattel slavery, and white supremacy (Gilmore, 2007). Settler colonialism is distinct, as it reworks spatial identities based on national allegiances, allowing for the undermining of Indigenous identities with the intent of replacing them with new settler identities through white

[1] In 2020 the Department of Homeland security published it first ever Enforcement Lifecycle Reports which aims to report to the US congress how many people are been detained and repatriated/deported at the southwest border of the US. The data looks at encounters, including breakdowns by nationality, family status, and whether they made a fear claim. This report did not report on Indigenous (im)migrants and lack any mention of Indigenous or Native as a demographical option. (dhs.gov)

supremacy (Fanon, 1963). The dispossession and racialization of these Indigenous peoples signals a new period of ongoing white settler violence which attempts to lay claim to Indigenous lands through settler laws and borders which legalizes state violence against Indigenous (im)migrants. Furthermore, these nation states (which includes all settler-states on Indigenous territories) intensify not only the violence but also their attempts to criminalize Indigenous (im)migrants beyond the point of existence through discourse and narratives of othering in order to paint them as a threat to settler sovereignty. Yet, Indigenous (im)migrant challenge these notions and choose to disengage with the settler apparatus in pursuit of sovereignty through mobility.

As Donald Trump initially criminalized (im)migrants with discourse of violence and prejudice, so too has the president of Guatemala Alejandro Giammattei who declared that (im)migrant caravans are dangerous and riddled with violent gang members that threaten the sovereignty of the Guatemalan state. The positioning of (im)migrants as a looming threat is founded on white supremist ideologies that create differential through race, class, and gender (Gilmore, 2002). The international expansion of settler-state borders can be seen through the policing and securitization of borders, as settler-state governments like the U.S., Canada, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico reposition (im)migrant refugees as threats to their settler-state sovereignties. This new wave of white-supremist settler-state imperialism demands that we not just acknowledge the violence that Indigenous (im)migrants experience, but also recognize the ways that Indigenous existence challenges the settler-state as Indigenous peoples refuse to acknowledge their lands as settled and continue to make land reclamation efforts across settler borders.

Part of this analysis will be dedicated to the work that Indigenous organizers do in

creating coalitions and how they negotiate their positionalities with other communities. My work with the Eagle and the Condor Liberation Front will highlight how Indigenous ontologies work to find common understanding through reciprocity and relationality with the worlds around them. Their intentionally relationality is driven by their commitments to deconstructing structures of power and nurturing reciprocity through their nonhuman kinships. ECLF members are made up of diverse Indigenous peoples including those in diaspora that continue to work towards collective liberation through the sharing of ceremony, collective space, and communal living with other Indigenous communities and nonhuman kin.

In contrast my experience with a different organization, that will go unnamed, out of respect for the victims and my unwillingness to promote their agenda will highlight how spaces of healing can become overwhelmed by sexual violence. Indigenous organizing work demands accountability and part of this conversation will explore when accountability is not reciprocated by those who used their power to prey on community members. Although this project was not originally meant to engage with sexual abuse and sexual violence; I was confronted with the unfortunate reality that people within the leadership of this organization were abusing community members within our Indigenous organizing community in Los Angeles. The question that keeps eating at me is, how do we overcome this, and where do we go when the people, we trusted fail to be held accountable and victimize community members?

To answer this question, I will briefly touch upon my experience with this organization where a lack of accountability and consideration for the victims and survivors highlighted the entanglements that happen when Indigenous organizing fails to account for reciprocal relationalities that lead to sexual abuse. Gender and sexual violence is a tool of the

oppressor who uses violence to subjugate and isolate their victims. In the many ways that the state enacts its disdain towards women, queer, 2spirit, and trans peoples through domination; organizing spaces can embody these qualities that manifest themselves through sexual and gender violence. Although I cannot do this topic justice at the moment due to the timing of the situation and where I am with this thesis; I want at the very least to explore this issue through my initial reflections as I experienced the situation developed and the outcome that ensued following the stories of these brave women.

Chapter 1: Settler Violence and Criminalization of Native Peoples at Borders

> *"In the colonial context the settler only ends his work of breaking in the native when the latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man's values."* (Fanon, 2004 [1961])

I start this chapter by naming the different ways that settler-state enacts direct and indirect violence against Indigenous peoples in diaspora. By naming this violence, I hope to provide a glimpse into the different ways that Indigenous peoples in diaspora are 'othered' and why they choose to disengage with the settler-state. On March 2, 2016, Berta Cáceres, renowned Goldman Environmental Prize winner, Indigenous Lenca leader, and water and land defender were assassinated in her own home in La Esperanza, a city in the department of Intibuca Honduras. She spent years resisting the development of the Agua Zarca dam, an international megaproject approved without consulting the Indigenous local communities—a violation of Indigenous peoples' rights under international law. Her assassination is one too many examples of the ongoing attacks that Indigenous peoples suffer at the hand of neoliberalism and settler-nation states which seek to use dispossession as a tool for severing Indigenous relationality from their lands. Jody Byrd reminds us that the settler state is backed by its own rule of law, and through it employs state violence to discipline, reclassify, criminalize, and to destroy Indigenous sovereignty (Byrd, 2011). Borders are settler enclosures which then becomes a tool for exclusion designed to imprison excess populations through a war on the commons which target racialized identities (Kelley, 2017; Walia, 2021). If those who are deemed undesirable cannot be converted into excess labor, they must be criminalized and commodified behind a carceral system which seeks to condemn racialized peoples to a perpetual state of death. What then does this redefining of labor relations mean to Natives who are trapped in a perpetual cycle of criminalization through border securitization? This question explores what Harsha Walia calls "border security"

which is a byproduct of borders that forces us to interrogate the root causes of "displacement" through conquest, capitalism, climate change, and white supremacy that drive migration. (Walia, 2021) Border securitization is then part of the settler apparatus which aims to restrict the mobility of subordinated peoples through the militarization of borders. The emphasis on "immobility" highlights the reality that most people seeking to migrate in search for safety are actually unable to do so or intentionally restricted through borders.

In the case of Indigenous peoples in diaspora borders work to not only restrict their movement but reclassify Indigenous peoples through illegality by stripping them of their claims to Indigeneity. Settler societies then use prison system to exclude Indigenous peoples from settler societies by reclassifying them as the criminal through racial capitalism. The criminalizing element of the carceral state is a punitive system which seeks to strip racialized identities from its human eccentric value with social attachments and relationships. As Katherine McKittrick reminds us that part of the othering that criminalization serves is to make us imagine "geographies of dead and dying communities, and those who inhabit spaces of otherness, are actually not connected to us" (McKittrick, 2011). Criminalization then commodifies racialized identities as only having value as forced labor behind carceral system that uplifts white supremacy. For Indigenous (im)migrants this criminalizing element serves several purposes: it continues the ongoing processes of Indigenous genocide in criminalizing Indigeneity legitimizes settlers claims to Indigenous peoples' lands (Hernández, 2017). The stripping of personhood legitimizes the settlers' states right to Indigenous lands and delegitimize Native and Indigenous peoples claims as they no longer hold human value as criminals within settler societies.

While popular understandings of immigration from Latin America center on labor and Latinidades (Akers Chacón and Davis, 2006; De Genova, 2004; Herrera, 2016), in Latin

America Indigeneity works against mestizaje which is another form of whiteness that actively restricts Indigeneity through punitive laws that limit mobility. Mestizaje as part of Latinidad works as a nation state building project based on a racist caste system that denies and obscures Indigenous ways of life and presence within Latin American settler states. (Akers Chacón and Davis, 2006; De Genova, 2004; Herrera, 2016; (Cusicanqui, 2010) Latinidad as a national identity also conceals white supremacy, settler colonialism, and ongoing processes Indigenous erasure through the domination of peoples and land. In other words, through mestizaje, white supremacy works to undermine Indigenous sovereignty by creating false narratives of sameness through nationalistic settler identities. White descendants or *mestizos* then make claims to Indigeneity as Indigenous peoples are positioned as only existing in the past, where everyone is now considered equal, and therefore both colonizer and colonized. As such, global projects of white supremacy have transformed borders as locations that restrict Indigenous mobility through the carceral system by constantly patrolling the borderlands for Indigeneity and delegitimizing Indigenous peoples through criminalization.

In 2019, while the Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH) was being questioned by the U.S. government for his affiliation to money laundering and narco trafficking; citizens all over the country were protesting against the impunity and corruption of the current regime. At this time, I had just arrived to the capital city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras where I was visiting my cousin who at the time was working as a university student photographer. That same day there was a planned protest comprised of a coalition of Indigenous communities, university students, environmental and human rights activist, education and medical professional protesting the privatization of the education and medical sectors. Among the protestors was also a resounding demand for justice in the ongoing case for Berta Cáceres decrying the role that the

U.S. government and JOH regime played in her assassination. Protestors then displayed their displeasure over US intervention by lighting the US embassy on fire which resulted in the burning of the front door and some other property damage. Following the protest, the Honduran state issued warrants for the arrest of at least 12 members from *Comité Municipal de Defensa de los Bienes Comunes y Públicos* (CMDBCP) an organization comprised of Indigenous land and water defenders and human right activist who protect the San Pedro and Guapinol rivers in Honduras. The Honduran state wrongfully accused CMDBCP members (including Antonio Martínez Ramos, who died three years before the events he allegedly took part in) and unjustly arrested and labeled them as a radical group, inciting civil unrest, and labeled them as criminals who instigated the arson of the US embassy. CMDBCP contest that community members have been targeted in connection to the human rights defenders' activities in protecting the San Pedro and Guapinol rivers in 2018. Between August and October 2018, community members peacefully occupied the margins of a public access road leading to a mining project operated by Los Pinares (a mining company). The human rights defenders maintain that this was a peaceful protest against the violations of local communities' rights to access land, food and water in Guapinol. Since then, twelve CMDBCP members have been falsely arrested in connection to the defense of the Guapinol river, and as of August 2020, the Court of Appeals of Francisco Morazán had revoked the dismissal of five of the 12 defenders for lack of evidence without any explanation.[2]

The Honduran state like all other settler states use the 'rule of law' to criminalize Indigenous peoples and human rights defender by working to detain them behind prison systems.

[2] Frontline Defenders is a transnational organization that tracks the violence that human rights defenders experience in Honduras. The unjust imprisonment of the 12 CMDBCP members and the ongoing persecution of the Guapinol river defenders is one of many examples of the type of violent corruption and impunity that the state engages displacing Indigenous communities. (frontlinedefenders.org)

This criminalizing element of settler states is designed to restrict Indigenous movements within zones of death or borders seeking the premature death of generations of Indigenous peoples through dispossession. This is significant because settler-colonialism is dependent on the idea that Indigenous peoples have ceased to exist and only exist within its historic past. Cedric Robinson describes dispossession as the "liquidation of Indigenous people" as the systematic destruction—or at least attempt—of the metaphysical and material relations of people to land, culture, spirit, and each other (Robinson, 2000). Borders are then expressions of white supremacy that not only seeks the physical destruction of Indigenous bodies, but also of their ontological understanding of kinships, culture, and spiritual relationality. As such towns, cities, and all other expressions of borders are the spatial embodiment of the settler projects that polices Indigenous peoples through violence in order to uphold white supremacy. Borders are then what Melanie K. Yazzie names a byproduct of Bordertown's, as every settler town is a border, and because every border is on Native land, Indigenous peoples who exists on these lands, whether in a city or on the reservation, represents and embodies the active ongoing failure of the settler project (Yazzie et al., 2021) The growing violence of white settler nationalism around the world due to anti-native discourses which paint (im)migrants, the poor, and Native and Indigenous peoples as a threat to the settler state sovereignty is a byproduct of white supremacy.

As Byrd highlights how "Trump's populism, and the seething white settler racism and entitlement that underlie it, manifests the ongoing cultural, political, and economic spirit of late colonialism. It is a mode of settler mastery that reads white precarity and dispossession through the normalization of Black and Indigenous precarity and dispossession in order to naturalize racism and colonialism while demanding an end to the predatory capitalism targeting white settlers." (Byrd, 2018) Part of this power relationship between Native peoples and the white

settler-state is formed through the racialized power differentials of inequality and inequality which settler colonialism structures through the fatal couplings of power and difference (Gilmore, 2007). This fatal coupling manifests itself through the institutional practice of racial capitalism which benefits from the imprisonment of (im)migrants and Indigenous peoples alike.

Indigenous peoples disproportionately experience criminalization by white and non-white settler-states which in turn forces them to flee from their lands to survive. The settler-state then positions Indigenous (im)migrant as criminals who can only be comprehended through their premature death behind prison bars. Ruthie Gilmore argues that this violence is connected to the twinned fates, in which chattel slavery and the premeditated murder of Indigenous peoples as foundational to U.S. economic and territorial growth. The differentiation of both immigrants and citizens are central to the production of the U.S. master-race. This violence is then reproduced at settler-state borders as Native peoples are re-criminalized through the securitization of borders. This continual criminalization by white and non-white settler states is significant because it serves to undermine the Indigeneity of dispossessed Natives stripping them of their claims as Indigenous people through the discourse of illegal immigration.

The Lenca are the largest Indigenous people in Honduras, comprised of nearly 455,000 people and representing more than 60% of the total Indigenous population in the country (Minority Rights Group International, Minority Rights Group International [MRGI], 2018). The Lenca practice traditional cultural practices, including a relationality with land through agricultural and respect for natural world through their relationships to rivers. Yet discriminatory practices by the Honduran state that targets their cultural practices, economic constraints, and liberties have compelled many Lenca to leave their lands and families in search of other income-generating opportunities (Larson et al., 2019). The Lenca who have migrated externally

primarily move to the United States, Canada, Italy, and Spain. (Jaramillo, 2021) Migration to North America is a risky decision as the main way of traveling is by crossing a multitude of borders illegally, thus potentially becoming victims to criminalization. (Ramirez, 2020) For Indigenous peoples in diaspora there is also the component of leaving their families and community behind which historically has required Indigenous men leaving women and children behind to tend to the land. This along with an ever-growing threat of climate and economic vulnerabilities has led to an increase of unaccompanied minors and family units of Indigenous peoples migrating to North America to survive. In just one year, from 2020 to 2021 the US has seen an increase of 168% of unaccompanied minors and 128% of family units detained at the southwest border of the US.[3]

Indigenous Lenca women have also taken up to challenge the racist, heteropatriarchal, homophobic, and transphobic Honduran state as they work to organize for more equal opportunities for their communities. Berta Cáceres was an Indigenous Lenca leader who was born in La Esperanza, Intibuca a department in Honduras. She was a founding member of the Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH) an organization that defends the rights of Indigenous peoples, lands, and rivers in Honduras. Berta's unrelenting work in defending *el Rio Gualcarque* a sacred river for the Lencas' from being dammed and contaminated prompted the attention of transnational dam developers Sinohydro (a Chinese hydroelectric dam developer), Desarrollos Energéticos (DESA) a local Honduran hydroelectic company with political ties to Honduran elite, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) who were all working in developing the Agua Zarca hydroelectric project without the consent of local Indigenous communities. These three transnationals developing

[3] U.S Customs and Border Protection agency publishes the monthly, quarterly, and yearly estimates of unaccompanied minors and family units that are detain at the southwest border in the U.S. (cbp.gov)

entities along with the US government have been implicated in the planning and murder of Berta Caceres.[4]

The murder and assassination of Berta Cáceres is an example of how settler-states like Honduras resolve to murder when seeking to deter Indigenous human right defender from defending their territories. Melissa Cardoza an author and feminist artist of mixed Afro-descendent Garífuna and Indigenous Lenca describes her friend Berta Cáceres in her book *13 Colores De la Resistencia Hondureña*: "Berta hated all oppressive powers and always denounced the US regime for its historical affinity for dominating people, assassinating cultures, massacring life. But she always loved the rebellions unleashed in that nameless country, she would find the most beautiful insurrectionary flowers amidst the empire's putid neoliberal filth" (Cardoza, 2016) For Melissa and many other Indigenous organizers her legacy is tied to moments of resistance that push against empire in which care and love works as instances of insurrections, no matter how small or big. In the ways that Melissa describes Berta's resistance towards U.S. regimes of dominations, assassination of cultures, and the massacring of life speaks to the different ways that settler-colonialism seeks the eradication of racialized peoples. In the many ways that Robinson, Todd, Gilmore, and Byrd critique racial capitalism Berta and Melissa highlight the contemporary ways that the state continues to enact violence upon Indigenous peoples in Latin America.

In naming the ways that settler states uses borders, criminalization, and their 'rule of law' I aim to highlight how white supremacy works in Latin America by targeting Indigenous women bodies through gender and sexual violence. In response Indigenous women from Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH) have taken the mantle of

[4] Frontline Defenders publishes updated statuses of ongoing cases of human rights violation including the case of Berta Cáceres whose assassination continues to demands calls for justice. (frontlinedefenders.org)

leadership which has contributed to an emphasis on deconstructing patriarchal structures of power and an increase of ontological understandings of relationality to nonhuman kinships like rivers. COPINH anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-patriarchal characteristics aren't an end in of themselves but instead a strategy, methodology, and vision for struggles worldwide that is inclusive of the existence of multiple worlds' existing within one. It is a call for coalition building with peoples who are oppressed, discriminated, and excluded, a call for a relationality that ask us to engage and work with the world around us to find alternative paths outside of dominating oppressive structures. Lenca women like Berta Cáceres who once served as General coordinator for COPINH, and her daughter Bertha "Bertita" Zúñiga Cáceres who now serves as the current General Coordinator have taken prominent roles within Indigenous human rights organizing in Honduras. This has also contributed to the growing number of women and human rights defenders working on land and environmental issues who face additional risks due to systemic gender discrimination. They suffer violence from harassment, repression and smear campaigns, facilitated by the context of discrimination already facing women in Honduras. Verbal, physical, and sexual assault are used to silence their opposition to settler projects affecting their communities and lands. As previously stated in the case of CMDBCP members state sanctioned violence is typically justified through criminalization and false accusations which aims to reposition Indigenous water and land defenders as a threat through discourse of security that positions the state as the victim and Indigenous water and land defenders as criminals and terrorists.

When Indigenous peoples in diaspora migrate and settle in urban cities they do so to communities with few familial and community connections to their communities back home. These new urban cities provide little to no support as local policies and norms are based on the

dominant culture, which often excludes Indigenous people from the larger society, forcing them to change their cultural identity to one that reflects dominant cultural norms (Luna-Firebaugh, 2002; Maynard, 2015) This begs the question: did the settler state succeed in stripping Indigenous people of their identity when they are dispossessed of their lands? Jodi Byrd expands on this question by helping us understand how Native and Indigenous peoples are repositioned through dispossession "specifically of the ways in which indigenous arrivants enter other Indigenous lands as a consequence of colonization and diaspora." (Byrd, 2011). In the case of Indigenous (im)migrant who are in diaspora, the ongoing colonization of their land and rivers is very much a contemporary reality where the settler state attempts to take land through allotment, dams, mining and outright murder and theft (Ybarra, 2021). This continual criminalizing element becomes a significant part as to why the carceral state employs the use of borders to restrict the movements of Indigenous peoples. As the Indigenous personhood represents a threat to settler claims of sovereignty, the settler state must reposition Indigenous peoples with a new settler-state identity where Indigenous (im)migrants can no longer claim Indigeneity but are repositioned as illegal.

The colonial project is relentless and seeks to restructure colonial relationships in what Glen Coulthard states "A settler-colonial relationship is one characterized by a particular form of domination; that is, it is a relationship where power—in this case, interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power—has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority" (Coulthard, 2014). A process that is rooted in the historical and contemporary processes of settler colonialism where the settler positions themselves as the savior and the Indigenous person

becomes the threat. The nation-state building project then uses violence to reproduce colonial systems of ethnic genocide and support nationalistic identities like Latinidad. At the same time, these new nationalistic identities work towards destroying the Indigenous personhood by demanding assimilation into a racialized capitalistic system where Indigenous peoples lay at the very bottom of its racial hierarchy. For example, Maritza an Indigenous organizer (Nahua Guerrerense and Quechua), highlights the precarity of being read Mexican in the US:

> "In the US the different ways that Mexicans have been racialized and othered gets put on to basically any migrant that comes from Latin America. And that is visibly othering. Right. And so I think, like in Orange County, there was a really big fear of like, just what it meant to be read as a Mexican. And for me, that really underlying logic of being read as a Mexican was that you weren't from here. And then that in itself was even more complicated. Because in Mexico, most of these Indigenous and Afro Indigenous communities are not considered part of the Mexican project, either. And so there was already like those two layers of feeling othered in the US because you're Mexican, but then in Mexico, you're also basically the scum of the earth… Because, you know, Guerrero has been painted as this whole place that is not civilized because of the different Indigenous communities".

The multiple layers of othering that Indigenous peoples in diaspora experience is intentionally design to strip their Indigeneity. Maritza touches upon the multilayers of othering that Indigenous peoples in diaspora experience in being read as Mexican and the undermining of their Indigeneity through the spectrum of Latinidad. In countries like Honduras, Guatemala, Salvador, and Mexico where the settler may not look white from the US gaze, white supremacist ideologies manifest itself through the nationalistic discourses of settler nationalism through Latinidad and mestizaje (Arenas Bianchi et al., 2004; Casaús Arzú, 2010; Graham, 1990; Speed, 2017; Stepan, 1991). Discourses of nationalism often position Indigenous peoples as only existing in the past as part of the settler-state claims are dependent on their Indigenous heritage which undermines the

sovereignty of contemporary Indigenous peoples. Because the existence of Indigenous peoples threatens the hereditary claims of nationalistic settler-states, they employ criminalization to imprison Indigenous peoples and reposition them as threat to settler societies (Barker, 2021; Ross, 1998; Ybarra, 2017). This then necessitates the securitization of borders which restrict Indigenous movement to contain Indigeneity through a settler-native dyad limiting Indigenous futurities to a dead or dying state which recreates settler-colonial processes of genocide.

Transnational borders including the one Southwest of the United States are sites that uphold white supremacy by creating discourses around illegal immigration. Zapotec organizer Odilia Romero and co-founder/executive director of *Comunidades Indigenas en Liderazgo* (CIELO); highlights the difficulties that Indigenous peoples experience at borders specifically how "A lot of these institutions don't know about our existence as indigenous people, and a lot of the Spanish-English interpreters don't know about our existence or they have a certain racism or prejudice against indigenous people so they don't pay attention to our needs. That has been seen for the last 30 years here in the U.S., no matter where we go." [5] Romero highlights how a lack of language translations, immigration enforcement officers' racism, and general lack of awareness of Indigenous language and culture poses a challenge for adequate medical care and treatment for indigenous migrants. As Indigenous peoples traverse transnational borders their positionality as Indigenous peoples often times are undermined not only through a general lack of awareness of their existence, but also through discourses that position Mexican, Honduran, Salvadoran, Guatemalan national identifies over their Indigenous positionalities. As Frantz Fanon once argued that the settler doesn't just seeks the assimilation of the native but the spiritual violation, psychological wounding, and the destruction of collectivism by accepting

[5] Odilia Romero is an Indigenous Zapotec organizer and activist in Los Angeles who works in defending the rights of Indigenous (im)migrant. Their work with CIELO as an interpreter seeks to help Indigenous asylum seekers of their rights and better health services. (capitalandmain.com)

Individualism through their proximity to whiteness (Fanon, 1963). Assimilation or in the case of Indigenous peoples in diaspora being read through settler national identities becomes an emphasis in the ways that Indigenous peoples in diaspora are made invisible in the US. This invisibility also extends as Indigenous peoples in diaspora attempt to integrate into communities in the US. For example, one Eagle and the Condor Liberation Front member stated their family's difficulty in being read as Indigenous in Los Angeles:

> "Even if they don't know if you're indigenous or not, they, they don't care, they're going to racialize you as an *Indio*, right, like just that word, that's, that's the word that they use, to make you feel like you're less than. And I think that that was really hard on my mom when she migrated. Like, because she, she had experienced only a little bit of that in Mexico, because she was mainly just around her own people really. But then coming here and seeing just like, how other Mexicans treated her as less than, so different, and she was so confused. And so I think that that really hurt her. And why she probably didn't talk about it too much growing up that she was Indigenous from a specific *pueblo,* with specific customs and traditions."

The psychological wounding that Indigenous peoples in diaspora experience comes from the undermining of their Indigenous identities but also one that develops from the persecution they experience as they integrate into non-Indigenous communities. *Indio* is then used as a derogatory word within Latinidad that works to racialize Indigeneity as part of a racial hierarchy where Indigenous peoples lay at the very bottom and whiteness at the top. The precarity that comes from their positionality as migrants and anti-Indigenous sentiment forces Indigenous peoples in diaspora to seek other Indigenous peoples where they can feel accepted and practice their Indigenous custom and commitments.

Indigenous peoples in diaspora refuse the power coupling created by the settler/Native dyad by decentralizing themselves and focusing on their nonhuman kinships. Nonhuman kinships are how some Indigenous peoples define their relationships to other forms of existence like land, rivers, oceans, lakes, animals, and plants (Whyte, 2018). Kyle Whyte is very much in conversation with Dian Million's conceptions of kinships through urban Indigenism, as "urban peoples displaced into the cities by many colonial acts of spiritual war, travesty, law, and

policies, also fought for these river ways of life just as surely as if we had been in our own homelands" (Million, 2023). The decentralizing of self and a move towards a mor4e collective identity based on nonhuman kinships requires an acceptance that our existence is interconnected to many worlds around us. It destabilizes the individual where no life is neither more or less significant to another. In this sense the interconnectedness between human and nonhuman worlds that multiple Indigenous cosmologies bring to light cannot be grasped by a sociality that only assumes human intentionality. As such the centralizing of nonhuman worlds and cosmologies where rivers tell stories and call upon us are incommensurable against the rigid hierarchy created by the settler dichotomy between the human and nonhuman (Méndez, 2018). What does it mean to believe in the intentionality of other worlds? Can a river call upon us? Ask for our friendship and relationality? And how do we know what these nonhuman worlds are clamoring for? To the settler these questions are unsettling it haunts them and reminds them that their 'humanity' is no different than that of a tree, an elk, a bean, or Black and Native peoples. To those who recognize and believe in kinship this repositioning is required for Indigenous futurities to continue to survive and the further we push to recognize the sentient understanding of nonhuman worlds allows for a deep interconnectedness between our realities. The lack of interconnectdeness then limits our ability to develop meaningful kinships of understanding that oftentimes leads to a lack of recognition of positionalities that leads to violence.

In this paragraph I hope to reflect on the violence that sometimes overtakes Indigenous communities when community leaders abuse their power and enact sexual violence and other violence's upon the community. This reflection will provide a glimpse into the harm that abusers do when they refuse to take accountability for their actions. This violence is not just damaging to

the victims but severely damages collective organizing as community members loose trust in one another and are left trying to gather broken pieces.

On February 2022, allegations of sexual assault and fraud were levied against three key members within this organization that will go unnamed. These three individuals held position of leadership within the organization and used their social media presence as a tool to prey on community members. Following the aftermath of the allegations and the lack of accountability to the victims, I've decided to exclude my conversations with members of this organization along with any contribution they have made to this project out of respect to the victims. Although no official charges have/were brought against the members, following the accusation several key members targeted the victims' claims, attempting to isolate them from supporters and undermine their truths. Moreso, these individuals declined to be held accountable to the victims and the Indigenous organizing community in Los Angeles as a whole.[6] Their actions compel me to critique their lack of relationality, responsibility, and reciprocity that they once claimed as they disappeared in the middle of the night. The victims deserve better, and I tell this story here because their experiences should be recognized. Although I won't be going into details I hope to use this to highlight the gender violence, sexual abuse, and manipulation that happens in organizing spaces.

As I reflect on the gender and sexual violence that women in my community experienced at the hand of these abuser. Collective organizing must prioritize the desires of Indigenous women, queer, 2spirit, trans, children, and nonhumans beings for us to actively deconstruct heteropatriarchy. I believe that the decentering of the individual not only works to

[6] For examples of abolitionist accountability processes, see Kaba, M and Hassan (2019)

critique capitalism as a gendered and sexual violent structure, but also works in allowing us to imagine alternative worlds of understandings outside capitalist structures of domination. My proximity to this organization and the abusers who took advantage of my community is something that has left me in a way shell shocked. Like many other community members, I am unsure of myself, unsure of the people around me, unsure on my ability to discern peoples character, and most all whether I had seen anything and chose to look away. When sexual abuse happens within our own communities, how can we not question whether we saw anything? There is a sense of lost, a sense of distrust, and a sense of meaningless that washes over the work and relationships that came from that engagement. I also want to be clear that these abusers have been exposed as being deceptive of their positionally as Indigenous peoples. Their tribal affiliation have come in to question as several community members have denied knowing them or refute their claims to their community. The dishonesty and blatant disregard for Indigenous women proves how individuals can embody the heteropatriarchal state blatant disregards for the value of Indigenous women lives and of their bodies.

The silence from the sweeping that happens when community don't decry the actions of abusers within the community affords them the ability to continue to prey on victims. Part of the reason why I chose not to use conversations from this organization was because of the fallout that ensued after the victims came forward to tell their truths. Like too often is the case the stories of these young Indigenous women survivors was ignored, and their truth called into question by some community members in favor of defending their abusers. People in the community accused the victims of outright lying, of being promiscuous, of manipulating the circumstances for social gain, and many more salacious accusations that purposely attacked their credibility to undermine their truth. As in most cases abusers have more capital than the

victims; and in this situation these two individuals used their popularity on social media as the catalyst to abuse the victims. Their social media popularity afforded them the opportunity to deny allegations, understate the accounts of the victims, and to have enough time to plan their escape from their commitments and relationality without accepting responsibility.

As an Indigenous organizer this experience has allowed to reflect on Mariame Kaba's book *Fumbling Towards Repair* a workbook that highlights the different ways community member can be held accountable for sexual abuse. As leaders within Indigenous organizing movements we can't afford to be wrong. As Native men, when we fail to be accountable, we not only harm ourselves, but we harm our community especially when we carry a burden of leadership. We got to do our best to keep ourselves righteous and to decentralize ourselves through our relationality to women, children, queer, trans, 2spirit and our nonhuman relatives.

We must be able to call out and demand more from each other. There is no righteousness in silence. When talking about collective organizing we must recognize that there is always the potential of harm and violence because of the uneven power dynamics created through race, class, and gender. There is a whole lot of romanticization of what desire work and care work looks like, and how grassroot organizing can help transform the academy. But what happens when the violence that comes out of that work is damaging for everyone involved. How do we pick up the pieces from that? My proximity to the people involved has made me explore my place in all of this, especially as an Indigenous person who strives for a futurity that allows for the existence of multiple worlds within one. Sexual abuse is not uncommon, it's not the first time or the last time that we'll see it within organizing spaces. What is my role in this? I realized that this project did not intentional engage with the gendered and sexual issues that

Indigenous women experience. My questions very rarely explored the gendered and sexual experiences of women, queer, trans, and 2spirit people. What else did I not see? Did I choose not to see? What role do I play in this work? It is an ever-present issue that severely undermines not only Indigenous sovereignties but our ability to seek alternative futurities which foreground the liberation of those most vulnerable. Although, this reflection does not do the real issue of sexual abuse within Indigenous communities; I write this small reflection as part of a greater commitment by me to make sure I intentional engage with the gender and sexual issues of my fellow relatives.

Chapter 2: Migration as a Form of Refusal

In regard to the Indigenous (im)migrant who resorts to transnational migration survival becomes their primary way of refusal. In engaging with Audra Simpsons conceptualization of 'refusal', which Simpson argues produces and maintains alternative structures of thought, politics and traditions away from and in critical relationship to settler-states (Simpson, 2017). I hope to argue on how mobility is directly tied to a politic of refusal denying death and genocide and refusing to disappear or acquiesce to state legitimacy and power. In a brief conversation I had with a young Wixárika organizer in Los Angeles from Jalisco, they conceptualized this refusal based on their interpretation of mobility through the lessons they learned from the river. "The river guides us, it shows us where to go, and most of all it teaches us how to survive by following it wherever it goes. As such when it became difficult for us to survive back home my family chose to migrate up North to Los Angeles". They emphasized the land and rivers, thereby calling attention to the river's own power to move, shift, churn, bend, wend, connect, and, in so many other ways, shape and alter the course of boundaries of borders. This conceptualization is key in understanding why Indigenous peoples in diaspora choose mobility as not just a form of survival but an ontological way of being through migration, and a political rejection of settler colonial conceptualization of Indigenous land relationships. Migration then is one of the many ways that Indigenous peoples in diaspora reclaim sovereignty over their own bodies.

Indigenous traditions of mobility are not only about Indigenous history; they are forms of resistance, moments of sovereignty over one's existence in which mobility becomes the tool for survival. Narratives around migration overemphasize the victimization of people who are victimized as displaced peoples, whose autonomy are rarely recognized in their decision to mobilize in response to violence. Mobility then is a conceptualization of Indigenous sovereignty

and self-determination in which Indigenous peoples in diaspora reclaim themselves in confrontation with settler-colonial violence. Consider settler colonialism in the US, Canada, and Latin America contexts, these are structures of domination used to exploit and restrict Indigenous peoples and other racialized populations. As with other forms of colonialism, settler colonialism is not just tied to the domination of land but of peoples through violent processes of imperialism, capitalist exploitation, and chattel slavery, and others that are designed to create the othering of subordinated peoples (Whyte et al., 2019). Settler colonialism in the US, Canada, and Latin America are invested in these structures of domination that arranges institutions to undermine Indigenous motion, mobility, and adaptation. In response to the limitations of mobility Indigenous peoples in diaspora then challenge these structures through mobility exposing themselves to overlapping forms of violence which attempts to restrict their movements for survival. They then rely on their kinships and the lessons they've learned through relationality to disengage with state as a form of refusal. The recentering of mobility as a response to violence brings forward a reconceptualization of how Indigenous peoples have historically resisted settler regimes by invoking their relationality to land as part of their survival. By this I argue that Indigenous ontologies of kinships highlight how land and rivers works with us to resist settler violence and through mobility the land and rivers help us refute settler violence through survival.

Mishuana Goeman expands on Indigenous relationality by interpreting how Indigenous communities develop and renew kinship relationships as the U.S. relocated many Indigenous families to large urban areas (Goeman 2009). As an example from her excerpt she writes that "Seneca scholar Faye Lone suggests, it is important to look at our social, political, and certainly cultural relationships in a 'frame-work that allows relatedness to a flexible spatial community, one that allows for strong, mobile, symbolic identity that underlies, and perhaps even belies,

external influences" (Goeman, 2009). Goeman call for a frame-work that allows for interrelatedness, flexibility, and one that is mobile that can underlie external influences highlights how nonhuman kinships allows for the persistence of Indigeneity even after forced migration and violent dispossession. This persistence of Indigeneity is key in understanding how our kinships and land are carried within us as we move across different borders. Moreso, her addition on generational knowledge that is passed on from one generation to the next highlights how Indigenous ontologies of survival including those around mobility continue to persist even after migration:

> Goeman writes "often, it was necessary for women to practice gendered relations outside the cultural forms learned from their mothers, aunties and grandmothers. These practices of relating to each other were not 'outdated' in the city, but instead the elements of these practices have persisted and continue to be vital in the ways that Indigenous peoples in diasporas navigate urban cities… in fact, the propensity for sharing where one is from and learning to live with each other comes from thousands of years of experience living on this continent together—it is as instinctive as breathing (Goeman, 2009).

By escaping genocide Indigenous peoples in diaspora living in urban cities not only enact on refusal but reject the politics of recognition as oftentimes they're denied asylum and choose to disengage with the settler-state apparatus. The securitization of borders allows for the repositioning and miscasting of the Indigenous (im)migrant with a new racialized identity undermining Indigenous people's sovereignty and erasing the Indigenous personhood from existing within the settler-state. As such this process of repositioning Indigenous (im)migrants as part of Latinidad serves to reproduce discourse of othering which supports white supremacy by rejecting Indigenous claims and attaching a new settler identity.

Borders manifest the will of white supremacy by policing and defining who can or cannot make claims to Indigenous sovereignty restricting Indigeneity within the confinement of reservations. And yet Indigenous people exist outside settler confines of understanding and borders; they exist everywhere as all settler borders lay on Indigenous lands. Then the

Indigenous (im)migrant never ceases to exist nor do their reclamation efforts to reconnect to their land, rivers, lakes, and oceans. As part of their efforts to survive and reclaim their own lands the Indigenous (im)migrant employs mobility, choosing to cross the settler borders to oppose settler attempts of Indigenous genocide. Mobility as a form of refusal has long been employed by Indigenous peoples everywhere. Choosing to survive and transform Indigenous existence is an innately political act; Indigenous existence is material and metaphysical in nature as such it cannot be torn away by the settler. The Indigenous (im)migrant employs survival as a form of refusal by denying settler claims to Indigenous life and themselves. Although they are displaced and dispossessed, the decision to migrate and to continue living demands the settler state address their existence through border securitization. The settler state enforces border securitization to employ a punitive carceral system to confine Indigenous existence behind prison cells. Yet this criminalizing element does not stop Indigenous resistance as they continue to work toward decolonization and reclamation through their relational understanding of community and spiritual existence. Through this Indigenous presence the Indigenous (im)migrant demands the attention of the settler state as their horrific acts of violence haunts them as they recognize the falsehood of their claims to Indigenous territories. Therefore, neither borders or carcerality can deny Indigenous existence nor the relationships that Indigenous (im)migrants have to their ancestral spirits, land, water, and sky. We must oppose any notion that the Indigenous (im)migrant south of the U.S. border should be referenced as Latino/a/x/es or any other pan-ethic term in which Indigenous peoples are considered part of a singular homogenized racial identity. As Indigenous peoples like all peoples have complex relationships which demands the attention and respect it deserves.

Discussion around sovereignty and mobility must also focus on Native and Indigenous efforts to survive and reclaim their own land, by reshaping their Indigenous imagination, resistance, and remembrance of their land continuously making reclamation efforts through survivance (Vizenor, 1994). Through this forward-looking approach, Indigenous peoples continue to claim the recuperation of their Indigenous land countering the colonial settler claims to their Indigenous and Native territories even behind prison bars or colonial border. Vizenor's conceptualization of survivance is intimately bound to the intentional expressions of care that are deeply rooted in Indigenous people's commitment to their relations, decentralizing human and nonhuman binaries and emphasizing the significance of relationships. As such refusal is an expression of survival, a rejection of accepting their severed relations and towards a future-oriented on the understanding their Indigenous sovereignty outside the colonial settler state power coupling. Part of this power relationship between Native peoples and the settler-state is formed through the racialization and criminalization of Native peoples through settler colonial structures which are supported by racial capitalism. This "alchemy of settler statecraft" prioritizes the privatization and securitization of Native lands in order to uphold white supremacist logics through colonial logics which justifies the dispossession and murder of Indigenous peoples (Byrd, 2018). Furthermore, Borders are expression of domination through the securitization of borders and the exclusion of racialized immigrants is the continual colonization and dominance over racialized peoples based on race, class, gender, and sexuality (Walia, 2021). Yet, these structures of settler colonialism and racial capitalism use indebtedness, surveillance, and security to control dispossession of peoples, and the annexation of Native lands for cheap profit.

As this new generation of Indigenous diaspora continues to grow due to the violence of dispossession and other settler colonial structure, like neoliberalism and globalization, we must come to terms with reality that many of them will be incarcerated within settler state prisons. Central America especially has become significantly more militarized and has adapted the carceral systems of the U.S. racial capitalist structures. This violence is then reproduced at settler-state borders as Native peoples are re-criminalized through the securitization of borders. As stated previously this continual criminalization by white and non-white settler states is significant because it serves to undermine the Indigeneity of dispossessed Natives stripping them of their claims as Indigenous people through the discourse of illegal immigration. As such illegality is used to devalue Indigenous claims to sovereignty and materialistic attachments to place hood. As Cedric Robinson once challenged us to understand the Black Radical Tradition through metaphysically and ontologically as African cultures are "critical mixes and admixtures of language and thought, of cosmology and metaphysics, of habits, beliefs, and morality" (Robinson, 1983). I argue that we must also understand Indigeneity through a similar understanding in order to comprehend the positionality of dispossessed Indigenous (im)migrant efforts to land reclamation.

What would it be, then, to think and work from a spiritual understanding of relationality to address Indigenous and Native placemaking in urban geographies. This demands that we challenge ourselves through our metaphysical attachments and spiritual understanding which connects us to the rivers, caves, streams, seas, and lands of our ancestors. As Mishuana Goeman highlights in her piece "Ongoing Storms and Struggles Gendered Violence and Resource Exploitation" 'the map inside ourselves' is the spiritual compass which helps point us back to our home as we move across time and space (Goeman, 2017). This map inside ourselves forces us to

view grounded normativity not just as our continual attachments to the material but our attachments to the metaphysical as we travel and move over different lands. To be an Indigenous (im)migrant dispossessed from your ancestral lands does not mean to lose your Indigeneity as an Indigenous person. It means that the struggle and resistance continues even after we're separated by settler state borders. It is the refusal to accept land as settled that defines Indigenous sovereignty, a mode of refusal which Indigenous (im)migrants call upon to step away from the unequal differential power coupling of settler colonialism which continuously connects them to the struggles of their people even across settler borders.

Chapter 3: How Land & Rivers Travel

Part of this project is also dedicated to the ways that Indigenous peoples in diaspora remember the lands and kinships left behind and how they carry those lands within themselves. I start this chapter by highlighting several discussions between myself and ECLF members on the different ways we understand kinships. Like previously discussed kinships in the sense of our daily interactions and commitments to the relationships that we intentionally engage with is a significant component in understanding how to engage with nonhuman worlds. In thinking with this ECLF Maritza, an Indigenous organizer in Los Angeles, whose parents are Nahua Guerrerense and Quechua highlights how her parents came to Los Angeles, and how they still yearn for the lands they came from: "my parents migrated here (Los Angeles) largely because both in Peru and Mexico during that time in the 1980s and 90s, there was just a lot of economic turmoil, a lot of violence, that was being done there. And a lot of people lost their jobs working the land." She expands on her mother's yearning specifically "where she comes from, which is really like, beautiful, green and mountainous with fields of *milpas* compared to LA, which at the time was really industrializing, it was just a very big culture shock for my mom, who hadn't been really outside her community ever". For Indigenous peoples in diaspora like Maritza and her mother the knowledge and relationships they carry with them represents their ontological relationality to land. Specifically, through their desire to continue to connect to the lands and peoples left behind. This yearning signifies not only a desire for past but also a continuation that focuses on a futurity that signifies how these relational commitments continue even after displacement. The continuation of these relationships across settler barriers highlights how Indigenous peoples in diaspora carry these relationships within themselves wherever they go and how they come to understand themselves as Indigenous peoples displaced from their territories.

It is important to understand this conceptualization of kinship is based on understanding that human beings are able to have relationships with other beings including land, rivers, plants, and fauna. A relationality to the worlds around us is not new to Indigenous scholarship, yet much of the conceptualization of Native land-based relationships is often done so from a North American perspective, and one focused on direct access to land and rivers. Although calls for transnational Indigeneity are not new, a refusal to operate outside the structures of settler prospectus is an epistemic disobedience that transcends geopolitical borders that leads to the creation and materialization of new worlds that coexist in relationality. As Emil Kemé explains how "racism, xenophobia, heteronormative politics, and class oppressions maintain their force and continue to define our experiences globally." (Kemé, 2016, 56) Recognizing these oppressive dimensions of hegemonic narratives lead many Indigenous activists and intellectuals to deny them refusing to engage state and avoiding the settlers' gaze. For those who become the target of the state the constant tensions and confrontations are daily reminders that Indigenous peoples and our relations will never be accepted by settler societies. Instead, Indigenous organizers' calls for self-determination are rooted in their experience as Indigenous peoples who continue to experience violence even as they flee from it. Indigenous liberation entails not only the dismantling of today's capitalist structures but also the challenging of white supremacy as system that uphold heteropatriarchal predatory extractivism. The challenge of structures allows us to imagine different Indigenous futurities where the rights of Indigenous women, men, queer, trans, and nonhumans are respected and treated with dignity (Kene, 2016, 57). Indigenous futurities then entails a recognition of the human and nonhuman through the acceptance of differences, care, and respect as sovereign beings. As such, conceptualization of land-based relationality requires us to understand that relationships and bonds aren't things that are easily broken. Instead these

bonds of kinship continue to exist even after separation and Indigenous peoples in diaspora continue to honor through remembrance as my father honors his relationship to the maize.

For many participants who either migrated to the U.S. at a very young age or were born to (im)migrant parents, this relationality has been inherited through familial bonds of kinship and passed down from one generation to another. This inherited form of relationality to land that is taught through Indigenous ontologies and daily acts of reciprocal bonds of care is practiced through knowledge passed down from parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, neighbors, and other bonds of kinships. Alain's relationship to the land comes from his care and interaction with the small garden his mother planted so many years ago in the front yard of a duplex they rent. The garden is broken into three strips of land that are each less than 10 feet long of beans and tomatoes, and corn rows which grow along a side of the driveway. Each bean sprout represents a different relationship that he nurtures with care as each bean is an individual and requires specific care. This inherited relationality is transferred through intentional forms of care not only with the land but also with family as well. Alain shared this story, "Because even when learning these things, my parents would be like, when you plant this crop, you could also plant this crop with this crop, because they help one another and share nutrients and support each other. So I was like, you should be out here planting with me too. But they weren't sometimes, and the silence returned." At this point Alain helps us not only understand how intergenerational knowledge is passed down but also the real trauma that comes from displaced Indigenous peoples. This silence not only represents the intergenerational trauma for Indigenous peoples in diaspora but also the shame they often carry within themselves. For Alain, the silence at times was overbearing. It was always present and made it difficult to talk about their migration journey. It was his relationship with the beans that first allowed his parents to open up to him and

transform their garden as a place of healing for them. While his mother and aunt planted the garden, it wasn't until he showed an enthusiasm to learn that his parents finally began to join him in caring for their garden together. Alain describes this moment "But once they start seeing you do certain things, they start opening up about our traditions and relations to the land it trade breaks away from that wall, you know, it breaks away that border that's always been present." These moments of care for Alain, allowed him to not only form a relationship to the beans but also his family. For Indigenous migrants who moved to Los Angeles at a young age this inherited relationality comes first by learning and then seeking permissions; a desire to continue to find a connection to the lands that were left behind.

Ary also first learned to care for the land from her family and walked me through this process of seeking permission and relationality. She explains, "So I've had to ask both my blood family, which is my mom, my grandparents, uncles, and aunts, like, what would that look like, here? It's been hard, you know, because first, you have to ask for their permission to be able to, you know, cultivate and harvest, period, because that's a big step for someone, especially a woman sometimes". For her this process not only highlights her commitment to her family but also her community in Nayarit. This process of permission is part of the ways in which she seeks guidance and commits to understanding her ancestral relationality to her community back in Jalisco. The seeking of permission is a rite of passage that also has transformed her gendered experience as an Indigenous Wixárika woman seeking relationality to her community. As in her community in Nayarit Wixárika women do not typically engage in agriculture practices but do engage in gardening as such her relationality to new lands have allowed her to find new meaning and relationality through stepping outside of cultural and gender norms. Yet the seeking of permission does not end with her familial ties but also extends to her new expanded community.

As Indigenous peoples in diaspora seek new relationships to new lands they find and create new communities built on mutual understandings and commitments to other Native communities. For Ary, her new commitments required her to seek permission from Tongva community members as she sought guidance on her evolving relations to the lands of the Gabrielinos. She explains her positionality as a visiting outside Native but also expands on her relationality to her relationship to animals and hunting, “But so I had to deal with being a visitor on traditional Tongva land, but then also had to deal with, well, how can we hunt in an area? That's not traditional to me? And how do I build that relationship? So I don't know, I guess I don't really have an answer yet. Because it's something I'm still exploring”. This acknowledgement of her positionality as a visitor or outsider even as a Native person herself is essential for Indigenous peoples in diaspora. Not only does she question her own positionality but also what it means to be in good relations to the land and its peoples. The intentionality behind this questioning highlights the type of relationships that Indigenous migrants bring with them as they try to create new communities in new lands. She later expands on this questioning, “like, how can we do something in a mutualistic way, that's not extractive to the communities here, who maybe still don't have access to land in that way, or to hunt or practice traditional agriculture. And me being a visitor and practicing that here. It's something I'm still navigating and it's super complex.” The complexity of these relationships are part of the entanglement that Indigenous communities often have to unpack as they negotiate new relationships to new peoples. Although oftentimes Indigenous (im)migrants tend to move in clusters many first generation and 1.5 Indigenous (im)migrants rarely have preestablished communities as their positionalities as Indigenous peoples positions them as outsiders within predominately Latin communities in Los Angeles. Instead, Indigenous

migrants tend to move independently or through familial ties to new places where they create whole new communities.

Indigenous communities in diaspora typically tend to be diverse and made up of a variety of different Indigenous group that come together and create new communities in urban cities. Their precarity as an undocumented migrant community, or mixed status (which is family dynamic where some members have legal status while others lack legal documentation) becomes an emphasis of their common experience. So, for Indigenous peoples in diaspora their Indigeneity also overlaps with their experience as undocumented or mixed status migrants. For example, ECLF members highlights how different Indigenous communities came together in Orange County, California: “And so most of our community was comprised of these different folks that spoke different Indigenous languages, different Indigenous communities, but we still had such similarities. Especially around being undocumented, like I think that brings us together in even stronger networks that I noticed, because we had to survive in this world, on this side of the border. And that really made my community really, really tight and supportive. And so I think that layer, sometimes even brought us together more than, than people, you know, being scared to still practice their indigenous traditions out loud, and proudly”. They expand on the significance of communal relationality by saying “So we did grow up, going to each other's homes, sharing foods from our Pueblo, and sharing our ancestral stories. And so we did have a sense of community” For Indigenous peoples in diasporas their engagement through foods, plants, and storytelling becomes part of their commitments to their new communities and the lands they reside on. Furthermore, an emphasis is put on acknowledging their differences through their migration journeys and the recognition that they come from all walks of life.

This acknowledgement and recognition of difference is central in understanding how different Indigenous communities in Los Angeles engage with one another. An intertribal element that focuses on the sharing of ontological understandings of ceremonies and practice that emphasizes intertribal relations to and nonhuman kinships. For Maritza their intertribal relationships with the Tongva and the sharing of ceremony has informed their relationships with the Bear. They explain how ECLF was invited to a Bear ceremony in Long Beach, California a city within the limits of LA county where they partook in this specific ceremony and practice:

> ECLF was invited to a bear ceremony a few years ago, which was a Tongva ceremony that was held at Long Beach. And honestly, it was one of my favorite experiences ever. Because it reminded me how distant I sometimes feel, from animals in an urban space, and how they were also removed in this process of settler colonialism. And to be part of this bear ceremony, like it really taught me to listen to animals, and to listen to the teachings that they have. And for specifically, this bear ceremony, I felt really called to understand what bears can teach you, and how to like let go and process a lot of emotions. And it's a ceremony about that, it's about letting go and, you know, the bear dancers carry a lot of that medicine for you. And so, yeah, I was just thinking about how in urban spaces, it's really about intertribal gatherings and creating and sharing new relationships that I would never have thought I would have. So like, now I feel like I have a really a new relationship to bears, but also just like a deep respect for the Tongva worldview.

The sharing of ceremony is one of the many strategies that Indigenous communities employ in finding understanding between different communities. For Indigenous peoples in diaspora, this sharing is part of the intentional commitments that acknowledges the prior relationships between the land and Indigenous peoples. By first acknowledging their positionality as outsiders and uninvited guests on Tongva territory and then seeking relationships with local communities, Maritza sought to learn what it means to have relationship to the land through the lens of the Tongva. The sharing of knowledge through ceremony becomes essential in finding understanding between worlds that are different but have common ontological understandings of what it means to be kin. It is when the land becomes stripped by development when meaning of these sacred connections is lost to people. Ceremony then becomes essential in maintaining those attachments through daily communion with spirits (land, animals, plants and

rivers) and where knowledge is passed down from one generation to the next. (Million, 2014). In similar to the ways that Maritza understood their relationality to the Bear by emphasizing the lessons learned from the Bear ceremony where they acknowledge the bear as the holder of Indigenous knowledge which was passed down to them through the sharing of ceremony.

Kinship building requires learning how to listen to the unspoken, to learn from nonhuman beings as kin, as a way to demonstrates one's commitment to the relationship. In regards to the *Paayme Paxaayt* (LA river) which is encased within the concrete listening to the water spirits entails acknowledging that the land continues to exists even if its entombed within concrete. Its transformation into one of the largest concrete rivers and with climate-induced drought has led the LA river to be a dry and desolate place, a far cry from its once great presence as the teacher and provider to the Tongva. Yet, those who maintain their relationship to the river can hear the roaring waters of Paayme Paxaayt, the running waters are engraved within us. For Maritza, the act of listening is how they acknowledge its presence and maintain their relationality to a river that's been encased within concrete and all but dried up. "And so, the river listening to the river here, even if it's fucking paved over, like, I feel like I'm learning so much. Just listen to trying to listen to that, to that river. And those histories and those stories like, and not wanting to reproduce colonial relationships, because I don't think that's who we are as Indigenous people like, and so, yeah, I feel really called right now to, to continue to listen to the rivers even if they're paved it". This remembrance through the act of listening is how Indigenous peoples in diaspora come to understand the needs and desires of new lands. This kinship building is how they come to reconcile the lands and people left behind at the same time as they emphasize relationships with new lands and people, they call home.

Chapter 4: Concrete Jungles and Nonhuman Worlds

In the summer of 2021, I began having conversations with community members and friends some of who form part of an Indigenous diasporic organization in Los Angeles. The first of which is an organization called The Eagle and the Condor Liberation Front (ECLF), whom I've had a relationship as an active member since the summer of 2018. ECLF is an autonomous political organization that was founded by Indigenous students at UCLA. The organization's initial roots came from a collective desire for more Indigenous politics based on anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, and anti-racism that foreground Indigenous issues from the global south. Its name derives from the Eagle and the Condor prophecy which is foretold by several Indigenous communities across several Nations, the Quechua, the Hopi, the Shuar, the Maya, and among others, call for the reunification of people from Abia Yala (also known as the Americas) that will become necessary for life to continue to exist on Earth. It refers to a time when the Earth teeters on the brink of destruction, and the prophecy speaks of a chance for balance to be restored by combining the best elements from seemingly irreconcilable worlds. This prophecy for reunification has become a call for Indigenous collective organizing and reflective of the type of collaborative work that demands understanding between Indigenous peoples from all walks of life. I joined this organization in 2018 as a first-year transfer student out of community college. As an Indigenous Lenca in diaspora I was attracted by their diverse membership of Wixárika, Purepecha, Zapotec, Lenca, Nahua Pipil, and Quechua collective. The collective was able to organize around political education and Indigenous ontologies that highlighted our kinships to land and one another. Although the organization's roots lay at the University of California Los Angeles, their desire for more political involvement and inspired by Zapatismo organizing led them to break away from its initial conception as a student organization. As one member put it

“Eagle Condor liberation front came to be because of political differences with MECHA, and so we decided to create something different where we could really be clear about our Indigenous politic, and our relationships to land and other pueblos. And so that's what really starts this organization and where we wanted to continue doing the work with reconnecting to land, embracing who we are, and connecting with other pueblos, around Indigenous politics of life. As Indigenous organizers, ECLF members have organized in joint struggle to bring together a global analysis of Indigeneity through political education, gardening, comparte (collective art projects), and creating relationships with local communities —including those with the Tongva from San Gabrielino. This has allowed us to create broad collectives with a variety of Indigenous communities that are both local and transnational to bring forth our vision of the Eagle and the Condor prophesy into contemporary times. Through an emphasis on difference, we acknowledge each other’s unique positionalities and histories while at the same time remaking political allegiances to one another through our nonhuman kinships to land, air, rivers, and oceans.

This project comes from a series of conversations that I had with members from ECLF and an Indigenous artist and organizer named Spirit Hawk, who I met over the summer 2021 organizing in Los Angeles. These conversations revolved around the kinships we create to nonhuman worlds and how we carry land within us. This question came as we were having conversations about self-determination and working towards creating camaraderie and coalition between diverse groups of Indigenous peoples. It began with a handful of informal questions around how Indigenous peoples in diaspora understand their nonhuman kinships and the lesson they learn from those relationships. I want to be explicit that many of my participants are neither exclusively Indigenous peoples in diaspora or/and Urban Natives. Instead, they are Indigenous peoples in which their positionalities are oftentimes entangled and may consider themselves any

sort combinations of overlapping Indigenous positionalities. For example, I interviewed an Indigenous Quechua queer woman who understood themselves as an Indigenous (im)migrant and urban native; while another participant was a Kiowa/Yaki man who also identified as an urban Native, but acknowledge their own diasporic journey through a more localized lens. In total this project engages deeply with dialogues with seven individuals who have affiliations with the Quechua, Kiowa, Yaki, Nahua, and Wixárika peoples. Four of them identified as Indigenous migrants in diaspora and urban natives, two were US citizens who identified as Indigenous peoples in diaspora and urban natives, and the lastly a participant who as an urban Northern Native. These informal interviews were conducted remotely over Zoom and telephone due to Covid-19 restrictions and protocols. It is important to highlight this diversity because Indigenous peoples are not homogenous and have complex relationships with each other and the worlds around them. Even in organizing spaces whose desire often calls for overlapping coalition with similar wants and goals, building this diversity is key in understanding how Indigenous ontologies and kinships become a focal point in challenging settler imaginaries of Indigeneity. Settler imaginaries comes from Edward Said conceptions of imaginative geographies where Imaginative geographies are representational techniques, ways of othering spaces and places through the use of specific images, codes, and conventions that both reflect and enable power relations (Said, 1977). The imaginative geographies serve to create false narratives of power in which urban cities are spaces dominated by white supremacy through settler imaginaries of modernity. Through these narrowing imaginaries' Indigenous mobility is restricted to non-existing in urban landscapes and so Indigenous peoples transform urban cities reconceptualizing their relationality to people and land by foregrounding land as pedagogy. I am thinking as land as pedagogy in the ways that land becomes a teacher and lessons. Land as pedagogy as a teacher

emphasizes Indigenous relationality through the daily interactions that Indigenous people have with land. This emphasizes an understanding of relational learning with and from land, trees, plants, rivers, lakes, oceans, animals and among many other beings (Simpson, 2017). This sort of alternative understandings to settler land relationships is dependent on a refusal of settler politics of relationality.

When I first began my interview process, I began with a very loose structure of questions around self-determination and land relations within urban cities. The two main questions in mind where "How did their nonhuman kinships inform their Indigeneity?" and "How did they come to make relationships to new lands?" I didn't want to dictate the conversations so instead I gave them a copy of my guided questions and allowed them to choose whether or not they wanted to engage with them. This allowed us to have a free-flowing conversation and talk about their desires, what they valued, and most importantly allowed us to have a conversation as coproducers. By my second interview it became clear that for us to talk about our kinships to land, we had to talk about our relationship to the concrete. For urban jungles like Los Angeles, the concrete is inescapable. You see it, feel it, and smell the concrete. We are encased in it just as much as the land is encased under it. But most of all it surrounds us and is a constant reminder of settler dominance over Indigenous territories. My conceptualization of kinship with the concrete jungle was co-produced in my first interview, when another ECLF member highlighted their relationship to the concrete and graffiti. Brian conceptualizes graffiti as part of his community's cultural expression of resistance, in which Native aesthetics help transform the concrete into community places of belonging. As such in all subsequent interviews, I began asking "what do we learn from the concrete?" The idea of transforming urban spaces without first addressing how we engage with a world encased in concrete would be ignoring our daily interactions with it.

Alain, whose family is originally from El Salvador and identify as Pipil reminded me that although the concrete was limiting it also allowed him to cherish what little land he had access to. The limitations and accessibility of land within urban concrete jungles makes the transforming of space a necessity. He explained that “the land is still there, it's still alive, living and breathing, just under us as it's always been”. These conversations made us realize that the concrete is very much a part of our relationships to the lands and rivers we now call home.

What does it mean to be an Indigenous person in diaspora? This question is key in understanding why self-determination, sovereignty, and refusal is important to collective Indigenous organizing. Indigenous peoples in diaspora reimagine and transform their relationships to land. For those in diaspora this relationship is seen both in the way they continue their relationships to the lands they left behind, create new kinships to new lands, and remember the lands they now call home. This multifaceted relationship to lands between the past, present, and future highlights why kinship to nonhuman worlds becomes an emphasis for Indigenous peoples in diasporas. It is a relationship that is founded on the context of acknowledging the past, present, and future by maintaining their commitments to the worlds around them. This notion of land as pedagogy requires that we first understand that the worlds around us are intimately connected to us. The intentionality of these relationships foregrounds a return to uplift the wants and desires of not just our own communities but also of our nonhuman kin who in turn teach and guide us. As Dian Million puts it “For the Indigenous, it is our relations with this living land that makes us who we are, and those relations however they appear encased in concrete are alive and change and recognize each other in our serious intent to free our places, our hearts and our minds of concrete wherever we are” (Million, 2014). The reclamation of land as pedagogy highlights both the context in which Indigenous ontologies of kinships foreground Indigenous relationships,

but also how these relationships work to nurture generations of Indigenous peoples that have the skills, knowledge and values to rebuild their communities according to their own values and cultures (Simpson, 2017).

As such these relational commitments do not just highlight Indigenous peoples desire to engage with land but also the intentionality behind their relationships. To them the land reciprocates their relationship by teaching them through their daily interactions, spiritual ceremonies, and dreams. In what Dian Million calls a (RE)Indigenizing of space by continuing the spiritual connection to the land prior to any settler as "Indigenous spirit reconnects any lands we are on, even, and especially when these lands appear to be encased in concrete. To remind, we already (RE)Indigenize these places by pointing out their considerable and continuing relations to spirits and Indigenous presence prior to any settler" (Million, 2023). In Los Angeles, these daily acts of reclamation can be seen in how people interact with limited spaces. Home gardens which oftentimes are constructed by transforming concrete into spaces of care by manipulating small, cramped spaces into sustainable biomes of interconnectedness. For example, many participants do not have access to green spaces, and/or are tenants without the ability to grow and care for plants. The lack of access becomes the backdrop of the concrete jungles that make up the majority of their lived situations.

Yet, many of my participants have found ways to maintain their commitments to land by transforming limited spaces or lack of spaces into green spaces. These commitments, which are informed from their relationships back home, continue as they form new bonds to the plants they grow in new lands as they connect and build relations to new communities. For example, the caring of seeds which eventually become sprouts, and later provide nutrition for their family highlights one aspect of the relations between the seed and caregiver. Alain describes his relationship to the bean as an engagement between sentient beings as: "different types of beans

exist, and the way they sprout is never the same, they grow in multitudes of ways, but you can only understand this after spending everyday with them. For example, some of the beans I grew, they grew little flowers, and these flowers were orange, and then eventually those flowers would turn into the sack of the beans. So you just learned things like that". Alain's understanding that beans themselves can grow in 'multitudes of ways' comes from his daily interactions with them and the care he puts into their relationship. After the first, second, or third time he acknowledges how you come to understand that each bean requires a specific relationship and differs from one another. To him his kinship to the beans comes from generations of interaction and knowledge that was passed down through his aunt and mother. In analyzing Alain's relationship to the bean, it's not whether one can have a reciprocal relationship with a bean, but instead how does the bean respond to the intent care that Alain has shown it.

How then can concrete which is often thought as part of the settler imaginary become Indigenous spaces of healing? As Dian Million argues that concrete is both a word that is material and metaphorical- a word "that readily conveys the essential capitalist form in architecture, where it is meant to convey PERMAnence, when nothing is permanent, where there is only and always change. The infrastructure of capitalism as the colonialisms that it is makes us believe in its dominance through permanence and enclosure, through the seemingly unbreakable patterns that appear to enclose spirit that is affective matter" (Million, 2023). This transformation of the concrete to Indigenous spaces of healing is rooted in the reality that urban cities embody settler futurities of modernity. The continual existence of the Tongva and Kizh tribes whose lands span from the Los Angeles Basin to the Southern Channel Islands highlights how Indigenous futurities are reliant on Indigenous survival. The myths of the extinction of Indigenous peoples within cities foregrounds a need to highlight how contemporary Indians

organize against settler imaginaries of domination and push Indigenous futurities forward. In the case of Los Angeles its colonial history and transformation into an urban concrete jungle is rooted in settler imaginaries that positions Indigenous peoples as only existing in the past and not recognizing their contemporary existence by foregoing their rights as Indigenous peoples in favor for settler imaginaries.

The concrete jungle is the physical embodiment of white supremacy which foregrounds settler futurity as an everlasting existence, but like concrete white supremacy is not everlasting. For generations, Indigenous peoples have resisted settler imaginaries through their daily interactions with land creating cracks within the concrete jungles of Los Angeles. These cracks may often appear but not limited to community gardens, street-art and graffiti, dance performances, cooking on the side-walks, protesting on the street, and taking over commercialized public spaces for community needs. For many of my participants who migrated and settled in Los Angeles their new communities are diverse predominately black and brown. The over policing and violence that these communities' experiences leads to the temporal nature of microsites of resistance as temporary. The temporary nature of street-art, graffiti (which sometimes only last for a few days), or street vendors who are overpoliced, and community gardens (South-Central Gardens) that have been historically targeted by private interests highlights why transformation and resistance can be temporary. The violence they experience is an everyday experience for communities that are constantly barraged as not having a permanence within urban cities.

Microsites of resistance which Zoe Todd argues are 'active cites of engagement' between different beings who paradoxically actively participate in fueling and resisting colonial incursion; and so concrete jungles are microsites of resistance that push and pull at colonial

structures (Todd, 2018). In acknowledging this, Indigenous peoples in diaspora build work with the concrete work together to chip away at settler imaginaries of white supremacy in urban cities. The chipping away of these settler imaginaries serves to challenge our notions of urban Indigenism pushing against conceptualization of land relationships. Paying attention to the temporal nature of these microsites also highlights how easily concrete can be manipulated and transformed into something different. The understanding of permanence or the lack of it is important in challenging settler imaginaries. It speaks to the fallacy that urban cities are permanent structures of settler rule and gives meaning to microsites of resistance through urban Native existence. These microsites may seem insignificant but instead build upon one another and continue to push Native existence even within land encased in concrete. These 'cracks' are expressions of resistance that occur whenever/wherever community members are able to chip away at settler imaginaries. In thinking with Zoe Todd's conceptualization of 'refraction' which are human/nonhuman relations micro-sites of resistance and refraction of colonial imperatives that become an integral part as we think through our responsibilities to one another and also considering our obligations to our nonhuman relatives.

In the same way that Todd highlights 'refractions' as microsites of resistance, I use 'cracks' to emphasize how Indigenous peoples in diaspora create temporal moments of resistance. These temporal moments have prolonging effects in urban landscapes; they permeate the concrete and becomes part of its history. The cracking of concrete works not just as a metaphorical embodiment of the transformation of space, but also how Indigenous peoples in diaspora manipulate and adapt the concrete to re-Indigenize spaces. The transforming of urban spaces into spaces of healing is a process that is rooted in Indigenous ontologies of kinships. It is through this relationality that Indigenous peoples in diaspora find meaning in their kinships

including those to the concrete. The cracking of the concrete, like refractions, highlights the significance of pluralities and how worlds, even those that may seem divided are interconnected to one another. The cracking of concrete serves as a reminder that Indigenous ontologies are inherently in opposition to land that is divided, fractured, and segregated like urban dwellings often are. Los Angeles like all cities are also sites dominated by white supremacy, its history drenched in violence against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and ongoing gentrification that disproportionately displaces low-income communities of color. Yet the concrete, although designed to uphold settler imaginaries, is not solely an agent for the state. Although inherently limiting, concrete is part of the daily lives and interactions for Indigenous peoples living in urban dwelling. Rough, coarse, and difficult to manipulate concrete is overbearing and surrounds urban Native communities. Most of all for those living in these concrete jungles the concrete makes up a significant part of their daily interactions with the spaces around them.

Yet concrete is not permanent, instead it is easily breakable and adjustable. We see and feel its weakness: community members engage with the concrete to create new sites of resistance that not only challenge our conceptions of public space but how they can serve community needs. The transformation of concrete outside its intended nature as a physical barrier which uplifts white supremacy highlight how even settler structures can be (RE)Indigenized through our reconceptualization of Indigenous ontologies of kinships. The cracking of concrete is both a metaphor but also the physical resistance that Indigenous peoples do when their daily interactions with land erodes away the concrete and exposes our relationality to land. Insurgent Indigenizing of spaces happens when Indigenous peoples continue to build upon their relationships to land by finding moments that allow the chipping away of the concrete.

Participants shared that they challenge settler imaginaries when they center their relationships to land by finding ways to continue their commitments to the land. For Ary a Wixárika woman from Nayarit, the concrete challenged her own relationship to the land as it made it difficult to continue her commitment to farming. Ary described this process by finding alternative ways to continue her commitment to farming "I come from a family of farmers. Having that history with our traditional lands, the land understands us and knows us, because my family had been doing that for a long time. I really had to understand, well, what does farming look like for me, and how do I keep these traditional practices that I learned from my family and how do I have mutual relationship in an environment that's not traditional to me." For Ary, this questioning of how she could continue her relationship to land and animals drove her to find alternative forms of kinmaking within Los Angeles. She expands on this "I had to develop relationship with the land here. Because first, there's not a lot of the same foods. In my communities (Nayarit), we eat a lot of like *armadillo*, *cocodrillo*, racoon, which I wouldn't eat *mapuche* here, and different things like that. But I had to figure out what that relationship would look like in this environment." This questioning is fundamental in exploring how relationships can transform to provide new relational understanding of intimacies to new places.

To have a relationality, is to have an intimate knowledge of said partnership. In this aspect Mishoena Goeman gives us language to rethink intimacy is to appraise how we have been and how we live and how we might imagine lives that make more sense for Indigenous migrants (Goeman, 2013). In seeking new ties recent immigrants, many of whom are Indigenous, both challenge settler imaginaries and build transformative alliances to new people and beings in new lands. The transforming of concrete into spaces of healing requires this sort of transformative imaginaries of how Indigenous peoples in diaspora continue to maintain their relationships to

land, even when that land is encased in concrete. For Indigenous peoples in diaspora the transforming of concrete and urban cities in Los Angeles requires that they become intimate with concrete. Although the concrete is a physical barrier it doesn't prevent Urban Natives from creating relationships to the land. Instead, they have moments of resistance which creates cracks within the concrete. This understanding of land as pedagogy is passed down through Indigenous ontologies from one generation to the next. These actions highlight how Indigenous peoples transform the concrete into spaces of healing which foreground the community's collective needs over the individuals.

Conclusion:

On the cover of this thesis, I provided a photograph taken by one of my participants Alain who took the picture as they were drove by a neighborhood garden of *milpas* growing on a small piece of land next to a car wash. In this picture we see how the milpas have created cracks within the urban jungle of South-Central Los Angles, and how the land works with the community in reshaping the land. The cracking of the concrete is not just figurative but also a tangible strategy that Indigenous peoples in diaspora employ to connect to lands in urban cities. These strategies are founded through the lessons they learn from their relational understandings of kinships to the lands, rivers, flora, fauna, and communities they come from. Dian Million's conceptualization of (RE)Indigenizing urban spaces provides language to the transformation that urban cities can go through when spaces of care foreground Indigenous commitments to land. The erosion of white supremacy within urban spaces happens when Indigenous peoples work in tandem with their nonhuman kinships even those that are encased within the concrete.

The violence and displacement they experience then informs how they carry their relationships to land within themselves. A refocusing on their intentional commitments to kinship serves to establish relationality to the nonhuman worlds they left behinds, but also to the new worlds they now call home. In countries like Honduras, Guatemala, Salvador, Mexico, and others where the settler may not look white, white supremacist ideologies manifest themselves within nationalistic discourses of settler nationalism through Latinidad and mestizaje (Arenas Bianchi et al., 2004; Casaús Arzú, 2010; Graham, 1990; Speed, 2017; Stepan, 1991).

The framing of "border security" positions the border as a victim whose inalienable rights are violated by the "illegal" (im)migrant who trespasses on settler sovereigty thus justifying the relentless militarization of borders. The militarization of all types of borders including those that

exist with the urban context, and transnational borders like those in the Southwest United States are sites where Indingenous peoples are policed and criminilized by settler law. The global migration crisis is more accurately a crisis of displacement and immobility. The emphasis on "displacement" forces us to interrogate the root causes of conquest, capitalism, and climate change that are the real culprits and drivers of displacement. And the emphasis on "immobility" highlights the reality that settler-colonialism is most apt at restricting the mobility of people through criminilization. The resctriction of actual free movement, and of geographic imagineraires assures that certain people are entrapt within violent structures of imprisonment. In the same sense that border are spaces of exclusion, they also serve as spaces which restric movement preventing mobility and body sovereigty for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, the poor, and subordinated peoples at a local and global scales. Urban cities then operate as sites of containment and social domination through settler-imagineries that uphold borders as geographic imagineries of white supremacy through modernity.

Yet, Indingenous peoples in diaspora challenge white supremacy by rejecting the settler rules of law by crossing a multitude of borders. As such borders are not static and migration proves their porous nature as Indigenous peoples in diaspora cross all types of borders and acknowledge their relationality to the lands around them even those encased within the concrete. And so although urban cities are designed to inherently restrict the movement of those that are deemed undesirable; the recentering of Indigeneity through their commitment to nonhuman kinships allows for mobility to become an ephasis for self-determination and sovereigty for Indingenous peoples in diaspora and racialized peoples who oppose settler regimes of white supremacy.

For this reason Indingenous peoples in diaspora employ mobility and migration as a tool of refusal and sovereignty over their own bodies. Although, conversations around Indingenous disspossesion and migration are typically focused on the violence that Indingenous peoples experience. Recentering on mobility as a valid strategy for survival highlights how migration allows Indingenous peoples to retake autonomy over their own bodies as part of their reclamation for soveriegnty. Indigenous peoples in diaspora then use migration and the crossing of multitude of borders to directly challenge white supremacy by rejecting borders and the settlers rule of law.

Displacement and immobility, not actual free movement, are the reality of racial capitalism and imperialism that restricts not just movement but geographic imaginearies of certain peoples. In this sense, borders are carceral systems that establish white supremacy through the criminilzing of Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, the Poor, and sobordinated peoples at local and the global scales. Urban cities then operate as sites of containment and social control through settler-imagineries that uphold borders through geographic imagineries of modernity. Through mobility then Indingenous peoples in diaspora push against white supremacy when they refuse to engage with the state and exists within, around, over, and under the settler state apparatuses that seek to destroy Indigeneity within urban cities.

Borders are not static and it is their porous nature that Indingenous peoples in diaspora recognize as they cross borders and acknowledge their relationality to lands around them even those encased within the concrete. Although urban cities are designed to inherently restrict the movement of the those deemed undesirable: the recentering of Indigeneity through their commitment to nonhuman kinships allows for mobility to become an ephasis of self-

determination for Black, Indigenous, and racialized poor and oppressed peoples to exists within settler regimes of white supremacy.

Land as pedagogy then highlights how Indigenous peoples in diaspora continue to learn from the land and find alternative forms of relationality to new lands and peoples. In the same way that ECLF members found their relationality through their commitments through gardening; the land also engages reciprocates their relationality by working with Indigenous peoples against white supremacy through the transformation of urban concrete jungles. Indigenous peoples and their communities do not stay static, they evolve and transform in relation to the desires of their nonhuman kinships. Since land is everlasting Indigenous existence is always present and continues to persist even when Indigenous peoples are pushed by migration. Their relationships follows them wherever they go.

Whether these connections are visible but also not visible, they exist within an ephemeral spectrum constantly reappearing and disappearing, constantly haunting the settler state and pushing forth Indigenous presence in urban cities. Indigenous peoples, although pushed to the margins choose when and where they enact sovereignty over their bodies through mobility making themselves felt across all types of borders and making themselves visible. They engage in insurgent rebellions through their daily acts of care with the land and at times work openly and discreetly avoiding the settlers gaze and transforming urban landscapes. This transformation is healing both the Indigenous peoples in diaspora and the lands that they now call home. They form new kinships to these new land from the intentional commitments they once had to their homelands, learning to work with the new land, and adapting their relationship to fit the desires of new lands. The challenging of settler imaginaries works to push Indigenous futurities through storytelling and the sharing of Indigenous ontologies of care.

Microsites of resistance are significant in challenging settler imaginaries in urban cities. The cracking of the concrete, as previously argued, does similar work as refractions, a concept that Zoe Todd uses to highlights the significance of pluralities and how multiworlds are interconnected through kinships. The cracking of the concrete serves as a reminder that Indigenous peoples are inherently positioned in opposition to settler rule and borders. pushed to spectrum of invisibility by white supremacy. The cracking of the concrete are microsites of resistance where Indigenous peoples in diaspora commit to their responsibilities to the land by engaging with it even when encased in cement. The transforming of urban spaces into spaces of healing is a process that is rooted in Indigenous ontologies that through relationality transform urban landscapes. The cracking of concrete as both a metaphor but also the praxis of physical resistance that Indigenous peoples in diaspora do when their daily interactions with land erodes away the concrete and exposes their relationality to land. This can be seen when *milpas* appear in peripheries small strips of land in open spaces, in the street art that they create, and how they collect seeds and plant from their balconies. In reconceptualizing what it means to carry land within oneself Indigenous peoples in diaspora reject settler claims to their Indigeneity and reclaim their relationality to the land through their nonhuman kinships.

Lastly, I'd like to end this thesis with words of Melissa Cardoza who reminds us that *"No hay libertad politica donde no hay libertad sexual"* [There is no political freedom where there is no sexual freedom]. A chant which Melissa makes clear the significance of the liberation of the worlds around us, where each struggle for liberation is dependent on the other, and where our existence is centered on the acknowledgement of difference. A chant that demands a collective acknowledgement of the type of intentionally commitments we have to one another. Kinmaking is a process of constant renegotiations of our commitments

to one another where we must actively and intentionally care for our kin. In this regard we must continue to work towards dismantling hierarchal and patriarchal structures of domination in order to give way to futurities that includes the liberation of multiple worlds where human and nonhuman beings can exist. As per the chants of COPINH and of all those who continue to fight for justice. -"Berta no murió, se multiplicó!"

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