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Returning to Yuma: Regeneración and futures of autonomy

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

Amrah Naomi Salomón Johnson

Committee in Charge:

Professor K. Wayne Yang, Chair
Professor Gloria Chacon
Professor Dayo Gore
Professor Curtis Marez
Professor Luis Martin-Cabrera

2019

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Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

DEDICATION

a los muertos incomudos, los difuentes
al futuro, rebelde
y el presente, más

a mi abuelo
que me dío sus cuentos
y me enseñó como escuchar

a mi hijo
quien va a recibir los mios

EPIGRAPH

vamos hacia la vida. Ayer fue el cielo el objetivo de los pueblos: ahora es la tierra...
los revolucionarios vamos adelante. El abismo no nos detiene:
el agua es más bella despeñándose.
Si morimos, moriremos como soles: despidiendo luz.

Ricardo Flores Magón, San Francisco, CA. julio,1907.

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This project began in liberated Zapatista territory in the highlands of Chiapas in 2007 when I began to work deeply on the question of how to form substantial relationships of solidarity between Chicanx folks and Indigenous autonomous communities in resistance. Angelo Moreno and I tucked into a San Cristobal bookstore to avoid the rain one afternoon and he suggested that if I really wanted to understand the history of zapatismo and how a multi-ethnic coalition could create a revolution for autonomy and contest the violences of the U.S.-Mexico border that I should read Ricardo Flores Magón. I am thankful for the time and patience of my zapatista compas for teaching me and many others how to caminar preguntando. I am grateful for my maestros and cohort from Mexico Solidarity Network, and the folks at CIDECI, Promedios, el Congreso Nacional Indigena, Batsilk'op, Paty, Edith, Heather, y Las Gomitas, Gustavo Esteva, Ed McCaughan, John Gibler, Diego Flores Magón and La Casa del Hijo de Ahuizote.

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VITA

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Book Review. Who Speaks for Hispanics? Hispanic Interest Groups in Washington by Deirdre Martinez. Black Politics in a Time of Transition. National Political Science Review, Vol. 13, 2011. Ed. Michael Mitchell and David Coven. p. 149-152.

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major: Ethnic Studies

Studies: Gender and Women's Studies, Indigenous Studies, Chicano/a and Latinx/Latin American Studies, American Studies

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Returning to Yuma: Regeneración and futures of autonomy

by

Amrah Naomi Salomón Johnson

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor K. Wayne Yang, Chair

This dissertation positions together cartographies of containment such as the archive, the border, transcolonial zones, and transfigured colonial carceral institutions alongside geographies of excessive fluidity such as the cuerpo-agua, difuentes, descendant spatial excess, and abolitionist autonomies to illustrate different practices of mapping relations through violence and through felt narratives of survivance and resistance. The project models a felt methodology that fleshes the archive through theoretical memoir, critical native and women of color feminist geography, and multi-directional eco-memory to theorize descendant spatial excess to the colonial archive. In doing so the project examines the colonial carcerality of the U.S.-Mexico border and theorizes anti-colonial abolitionist autonomy. Colonial carcerality is defined as the

making space bounded, extractable, accumulatable alongside marking bodies for death, dispossession, and disappearance through the nexus of extraction, genocide, slavery, war, racialization, partition, and gendering regimes of domination. Colonial carceral geographies are most evident in transcolonial zones such as the Yuma Crossing, a point on the lower Colorado River in Yuma, Arizona, that are occupied by both Spanish and U.S. colonialisms that transfigure each other's institutions and practices of extraction, representation, carcerality, and memory in ways that reinforce both colonial projects. The mutual transfigurations of Spanish and Anglo colonialisms limit and erase indigeneity and reproduce anti-blackness, as is illustrated through the dispossession and detribalization of O'odham and Yaqui laborers in Yuma in the early 1900s. Radical Mexican accompliceship is examined through analyzing how the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), whose leadership was once incarcerated in the Yuma Territorial Prison, developed a nuanced critique of colonialism and carceral statecraft that led to a politic of *regeneración*, anti-colonial abolitionist autonomy, during the 1910 Mexican revolution. Indigenous regeneration theorized in English is put into conversation with Mexican anarchist *regeneración* to imagine a cartographic unbounding of colonial carceral geographies through acts of abolition (burning the mission) and regeneration (re-storying and restoring relationships between native women's and women of colors' bodies and liberated geographies). Cuerpo-agua geographies and epistemologies are centered in this process.

Poem: My body is an archive

Pioneer days. rock candy. hand-churned ice cream. gunslinger and soiled dove photo booth pictures in sepia. crinkle balloon skin. fire cracker. 1954, Dolores Redondo Figueroa, nearly one hundred years old, told the local newspaper her memories, her father's businesses that established Main Street across the river from the U.S. military Fort Yuma. Hacienda. Butcher shop. Vegetable market. Bakery. Dairy. California dream seekers would see his markets before crossing the cotton wood forests that feathered the hips of the thirty-foot-deep Colorado river in leafy embrace. Miners who scraped sacred mountains with cyanide hydro cannon dynamite drill metal and chemical chewing stone to metal would find Redondo's shelves full. *There was the flour mill, storage bin, wine press, a blacksmith and forge, and a cane mill to grind the sugar cane. Molasses and candy were made from the sugar cane and these were shipped out by steamboat along with the hay, grains, and pink beans. We used to go there and eat oranges, apricots, pears, figs, peaches, pomegranates, dates, and grapes.* paid in glimmering coin, yellow mountain dust. José María used it to buy the region's first piano for his daughters. *She spent many happy hours at the old hacienda.*

There were vineyards of grapes, orchards of apricots, pears, peaches, and pomegranates, vast fields of wheat, barley, beans, and corn and pasture lands with cattle, sheep, goats, and fine horses. There were hundreds of Yaqui Indians, singing in the fields as they worked. In the photo she sits in an enormous leather armchair, adorned with fine lace doilies. Feet and hands demurely crossed. *Miles of canals and ditches there carried Gila River water to the fields of alfalfa, wheat, barley, oats, corn, peanuts, melons, vegetables, and sugar cane.* The

ancient grand piano still sits behind her. *Mrs. Figueroa Recalls Deeds of Her Father: Modern farming began on the Gila River.* This is the official story. *What once was known generally as the birthplace of modern Arizona's agricultural empire now is but a memory.* Anonymous leaf unpublished manuscript entombed in library basement. Redondo's one hundred families of indian slaves. At least fifty men, their women, kids, others. *The rancho was a village.* porcelain saints embedded slave quarters. *San Ysidro is the patron saint of the farmer and an appropriate name for Yuma's largest hacienda.* stamp of Spanish custom. haciendado, settler, immigrant, pioneer. *the almost feudal estate covered more than 2000 acres*.

Five generations later we confuse even ourselves. indian, slave, pioneer. One line. xerox faded green-gray. *Witnesses have documented how they remember listening to the slaves singing in the fields as they worked.* someday their descendants will proclaim themselves the pioneers. join the army. buy American. red, white, blue. sing.

The crease of my mouth is buried in the small of a paragraph, my scalp is an incorrect biography, unnamed, unpublished, the arch of my foot is an embarrassing omission. better left. unsaid. *While most settlers viewed the deserts, mountains, and valleys of the Lower Colorado River as a wasteland, Redondo saw opportunities.* hacienda san ysidro was in hia c'ed o'odham territory, on the gila river between quechan and pii-pash to the west and tohono o'odham to the east. hia c'ed, tohono, akimel. words describe place, sand dune, desert, river. places we are. not places to be from. ash on the tongue. settlers often confused them. ashless wandering. called us all pimas, river people. pia mach, i don't know. *The*

original Redondo hacienda at Ocuca was in the midst of a vast area inhabited by the Pima Indians. ocuca, near trincheras, near altar, more tohono or hia c'ed than akimel. a stream is not a river. But there are in mexico some pimas high in the mountains who fled conquest. where the purest ñeok is spoken. the fastest runners. *The hacienda was often visited by a native on horseback.* Our enemies at the time would have apaches. or spanish. or anglos. or our own people, surviving. *Tied behind him would be two or three infant Indian girls, unwashed, unclothed, and hungry. These were bartered to the hacienda for cattle.* Silver, gold, copper passed hands. Or maybe just a crisp melon, snap of grapes, sugar corn, denim pants. the ones who stole us, conquistador, would move down old o'odham roads, sacred running routes, salt trails, paths of the macaw, shell, cacao traders. the old caborca trail. magdelena. altar. sinoyta. ajo. gila River. to the hia c'ed, dune of sand where rivers meet, gila city, dome, laguna, potholes, picacho, arizona city/yuma, sentinel, gila bend, sacaton, phoenix. a freeway has buried it now in bikers, RVs, ATVs, and confederate flags. recreated the nile, ganges, orient in uncomfortable shapes sticking through the puzzle frames like the wrong pieces. medjool lips, palm tree, bougainvillea curls, eucalypsis lung, bird of paradise crown split open.

It should also be notes that José María Redondo's life is not an Indian story. There are no accounts of bloody encounters nor abuse of native inhabitants. little girls traded for a plate of ribs cooked like in louisiana. *There are also no accounts of malicious words or violent acts directed towards native inhabitants.* they remember us singing. *Jose hired indians and he respected the first people.* i remember the first time i knew. when i caught a hole in the whiskey afternoon checker match between my grandfather and his brother, trying to

remember something about their great-grandmother. i tugged at the hole. i wished to push it open inside the dark of my navel. got inside it. twisted myself small down. my grandfather turned everything into a novela. they fell in love. a zorro movie. i worked my finger nails into the holes in his reluctance to speak of terrible things. i asked his brother for the truth. what do you think? he asked back. of course she was a slave! why do ask such stupid things? *Even though authors have described José María as the Last Conquistador, he cannot be depicted as a warrior on a horse with a sword and armor, a destroyer of Native culture or people. His normal attire was usually that of the latest European tailored, three-piece suit, white shirt, tie and hat.* The word *hacienda* in spanish means plantation. *It was the Gadsden Purchase which brought him to Yuma.* hacienda in the U.S. is for khaki and white cotton, a bored housewife watching the home improvement channel. the shopping network. a cute succulent in a white ceramic tray. drift wood and macrémé. A taquería maybe, or a spa. *Indians used to live on Main Street. José M. Redondo was the one who first asked to have the prison established.*

My uncle Bill is in his nineties now. *More than 100 Yaqui Indian families were brought from Sonora to help level, plant, and cultivate the lands, and to build the once-vast hacienda.* We meet in the small of the library, historical section. The descendants of pioneers get to live forever in the spinning playback of friendly librarians' hungry cassette tapes. They dutifully ask questions. Wild west, gold rush. What was it like? *Adobes were made by the thousands, a great dwelling house, enclosed patio, carriage house, harness house, stables, and all around was the protecting wall.* We sit with scraps, green-gray, faded. Dust clogs the nostril and tonight we will empty black clots into wadded tissues. between the line of Dolores's

memories there is a thread of blood. us. *Nearby, but not within the wall, were the homes of the Yaqui workers.* Pascua Yaqui nation gained federal recognition in 1978 but most Yuma descendants are to this day, undocumented. My uncle Bill is in his nineties. The rest of his life will be spent documenting, recognizing, enrolling the descendants of property inventories, numbers on a page. finger print inside the mission brick. count heads, ears, severed feet. locks of hair sewn into collars for winter jackets. folded bounty receipts. soft testicle skin change purse. saddle horn from a woman's vagina. faded government issued bank notes. indian head nickels. factions of a person sliding down the ledger book of empire, one forth, one sixteenth, one. these things can be found. but nowhere is the record. the wax cylinder imprint. the song someone remembered. we. the singing.[1]

[1] archival sources / text in italics: *Mrs. Figueroa Recalls Deeds of Her Father: Modern farming began on the Gila River*. Yuma Sun. José María Redondo Family Collection, 1860-2011. Box: Folder: Yuma County Library District, Special Collections, AHS - Rio Colorado Division. Yuma, Arizona.; Dolores Redondo oral history. José María Redondo Family Collection, 1860-2011. Box: Folder: Yuma County Library District, Special Collections, AHS - Rio Colorado Division. Yuma, Arizona.; Elias, John. 1991. "Tales from Pimería Alta." *Voices from the Pimería Alta.* Pimería Alta Historical Society. Nogales, Arizona.; Unpublished article by Mary Redondo Lorona. José María Redondo Family Collection, 1860-2011. Box: Folder: Yuma County Library District, Special Collections, AHS - Rio Colorado Division. Yuma, Arizona.; Jose Maria Redondo booklet compiled by Redondo family descendants. José María Redondo Family Collection, 1860-2011. Box: Folder: Yuma County Library District, Special Collections, AHS - Rio Colorado Division. Yuma, Arizona.

Introduction: Mapping regeneración, returning to Yuma

In the U.S. colonial imaginary Indigenous peoples have been theorized in relation to land and Blackness has been theorized in relation to the body under chattel slavery, with white settlers theorized as the extractive oppressors taking land from Natives and labor/bodies from slaves at the top of a colonial relations triad[2]. Along these lines, non-Black and non-Indigenous people of color are either collapsed into a category of approximation to Blackness and Indigeneity or a category of ascension to whiteness and settler status, if they are visible within the binaries of the colonial system at all. This theoretical abstraction is useful for understanding how systems of power function broadly, however it tends to obscure and distort specific local histories which are often more complex. For example, the history of Indigenous peoples, particularly in transcolonial zones such as the Southwest and border regions, disrupts the simplicity of this diagram in three critical ways. First is that the experience of being enslaved by White colonizers was not exclusive to captured Africans, and much of the experience of Indigenous peoples across the span of U.S. colonialism has included enslavement by European settlers (French, Spanish, Anglo-American, etc.). In fact, the enslavement of Indigenous peoples continued long after the emancipation proclamation, particularly on the West Coast and in the Southwest, through open forms of slavery that included debt peonage, indenture, Indian boarding schools, convict leasing, Indian pass laws, and application of slavery influenced vagrancy laws as well as open slave markets complete with barracoons, natal alienation, social death, and many similar aspects to chattel slavery as it was practiced against Black people[3]. Enforcing the abolition of Indigenous

[2] Wilderson III, Frank B. *Red, white & black: Cinema and the structure of US antagonisms*. Duke University Press, 2010.

[3] Reséndez, Andrés. *The other slavery: The uncovered story of Indian enslavement in America*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016.; Madley, Benjamin. 2019. "California's First Mass Incarceration System." *Pacific Historical Review* 88 (1). University of California Press: 14–47. doi:10.1525/phr.2019.88.1.14.

slavery was a major issue fueling the Mexican revolution of 1910 and the issue held a particular relevance to those in the U.S. who became sympathetic to the revolution[4]. To say that Native bodies and Indianness are not a site of colonial extraction and appropriation is historically inaccurate, however it is important to note that the ways that this extraction and appropriation has occurred is markedly different to how settler colonialism has engaged Blackness and Black people. A second issue with the colonial triad model is the dislocation of blackness from land and geography. The simplification of slavery as an extraction of labor limits the analysis of chattel slavery as a process of commodifying the body and producing Blackness as a category of fungibility[5] just as it produces a forgetting that enslaved Africans were once Indigenous peoples and that the descendants of the enslaved have been violently de-Indigenized in the production of Blackness as a racial category[6]. The natal alienation of chattel slavery was two-fold: a removal from the family (severing of kinship ties) and a removal from the homeland, culture, and previous identities (severing of African Indigeneity). The expansive ways that the ontology of Blackness has been theorized as an embodied experience of spatiality to consider geographies of Blackness as sites of struggle, freedom, fugitivity, and creativity[7]. Black feminist thought has contributed to concepts such as eco-womanism that critically analyze the relationships between Black folks and land in the Americas as a relationship of generative place-making that sits within the possibilities of fugitivity and abolition[8]. To consider Blackness as a cartography not just of

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[4] Turner, John Kenneth. *Barbarous Mexico*. CH Kerr, 1910.
[5] King, Tiffany Jeannette. "In the clearing: Black female bodies, space and settler colonial landscapes." PhD diss., 2013.
[6] Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's baby, papa's maybe: An American grammar book." *diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 65-81.
[7] McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle*. U of Minnesota Press, 2006.
[8] Harris, Melanie L. "Introduction: Ecowomanism: Earth Honoring Faiths." Worldviews 20 (2016) 1–3. doi: 10.1163/15685357-02001001; Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose your mother: A journey along the Atlantic slave route*. Macmillan, 2008.; Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2017. "Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence." In *The Futures of Black Radicalism*, 225–40. Verso.

the body but also of place and space causes us to consider how colonialism has also functioned through an extraction of Black land and space, not just of labor and bodies, through the construction of Blackness as ungeographic[9]. Another concern with the triad model of how settler colonialism and white supremacy operate is that in thinking through just enslavement/dispossession and genocide/dispossession we miss other structural violences embedded and imbricated in the colonial system such as heteropatriarchy and orientalism[10]. Expanded concepts of the colonial triad that consider how orientalism/war and the disciplining of gender and sexuality have emerged in ways that allow for analysis to consider the racialized experiences of oppression under colonialism for other brown peoples who are not Black or Indigenous such as Asians or Latinx people. But considering the experience of Indigenous peoples in the transcolonial context between Spanish and Anglo colonialism illustrates how even this expanded concept of triad is needed to understand how regimes of gender and sexual violence and Orientalism/war have also been applied to Indigenous peoples[11]. A question then emerges of what is the ontological position of Indigenous peoples, if it is gendered, sexualized, embodied, land-related, invisibilized/disappeared, appropriated/accumulated, and orientalized as the historical record and the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples and their descendants suggest that it is, then our concept of Indigeneity must push past the limited thinking of Indigeneity as reduced to a correlation with land that is disconnected from embodied geographic and affective theory.

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[9] McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle*. U of Minnesota Press, 2006.
[10] Smith, Andrea. "Three pillars of white supremacy." *Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology. In Incite! Women of Color Against Violence* (2006): 66-73.
[11] Salaita, Steven. *The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan*. Syracuse University Press, 2006.; Byrd, Jodi A. *The transit of empire: Indigenous critiques of colonialism*. U of Minnesota Press, 2011.

In this project I seek to move towards a poetics of the descendant position that can account for the complexity of the embodied and affective experience of Indigenous descendants whose people have experienced both genocide and land dispossession and enslavement, often through gendered violence, orientalism, and archival disappearance. The introduction poem speaks to the challenge of thinking through the poetics of these narratives and the labor of survival required by descendants to maintain a sense of being and place under the pressures of genocidal erasure and appropriation. In developing a new poetics of Indigeneity that resists reduction to land-accumulation-disappearance (genocide) and recenters the epistemologies of Indigenous cultures I am first concerned with the fact that body and land are not distinct in many Indigenous epistemologies, but rather constitute a set of complex relations to each other and within each other and that the analytic of land itself is not a direct translation but more often a short-hand signal to these larger sets of relationships that also include water, sky, cosmos, ancestors, future generations, and other living and non-living beings. I begin this discussion with an overview of literature that establishes the expansiveness of Indigenous embodiment beyond the material body and into relation with land and water. From that starting place I then return to my story of being an Indigenous descendant researcher in Yuma through personal experience, felt methodologies, ecological memory and futurism as I think through my own relationship to this place through the stories of my elders. Within that context I theorize the institutions of colonial carcerality as they overlap and transfigure each other within transcolonial sites such as the U.S.-Mexico border and Yuma, Arizona.

The final part of the project considers then what the politics of return are for detribalized Indigenous descendants such as myself who do not have federally recognized citizenship but who continue to embody, practice, and manifest our traditional relationships with land, water,

ancestors, and community. This is also a process of thinking through the non-binary position of brownness and Mexicanness against the limitations of the colonial triad model I describe above. I critique the Indigenismo of mainstream Chicanx/Latinx culture and the Anglo settler fantasy of the long-lost Native relative as theoretical and practical dead-ends for regenerating relations that limit the autonomous futurity of Indigenous peoples and instead consider how other descendants in my position can move towards radical accompliceship to abolitionist anti-colonialism. Within this narrative I consider the politics of autonomy and *regeneración* as theorized by the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) during the 1910 Mexican revolution as a point of departure for imagining a praxis for potential accomplices to decolonization and abolition, and consider how the politics of autonomy and fugitivity provide strategies of border resistance. I think through these questions as a descendant of a river people whose river has been dammed and dried up by colonial carcerality to imagine river liberation and the re-memory of riverbeds as a genealogical framework of *regeneración*. I conclude with a return to the question of poetics to think through the re-storying of rivers as related to the liberation of formerly enslaved and disappeared/dispossessed bodies.

Chapter Key: A Project Map

This project begins with a poem as a gesture towards the task of developing a poetics for writing and thinking about Indigenous enslavement. Within Indigenous Studies and Indigenous literature in English there is a robust, over century long tradition of considering the poetics of genocide as Indigenous writers explore how to tell stories about mass death as survivors and descendants of survivors of ongoing genocide. There has not on the other hand been a robust poetic tradition of how we as Indigenous descendants talk about enslavement, apart from

gestures to account for those Indigenous nations who adopted the practice of anti-black chattel slavery and some brief moments by writers such as in the memoirs of Deborah Miranda and Leslie Marmon Silko who consider the impacts of the historical trauma of enslavement on their families or the musical *Something Inside is Broken* by Jack Kohler that dramatized the experience of enslavement during the gold rush for California Indians. Developing a poetics on enslavement is an emerging topic for Indigenous writers, one that is developing through Indigenous language revitalization, such as in the case of Kohler's work, and within the genres of memoir and testimony. As a poet and descendant of a community that experienced enslavement, genocide, and dispossession I am interested in how we can talk about the historical interconnectedness of these experiences, how they live on in the body, and how our bodies can exist unbounded in a free future space. This poem is an attempt to create a language for that experience. It is based on archival work as a descendant and conversations with my tío Bill Mendoza (Yaqui, Akimel O'odham, Tohono O'odham) and his work in trying to document and seek reparations, typically in the form of tribal recognition and enrollment, for our ancestors' community in Yuma. The poem is a map that explores the poetics of enslavement, dispossession, unrecognition, and genocide and guides the overall narrative structure of this project.

Chapter one is a literature review considering native feminist and women of color theorizations of the body and land as sites of the production of knowledge that moves through the analytics of embodied knowledge and land-based epistemologies towards a theorization of the cuerpo-agua, the body of water (and bodies like water), as sites of critical knowledge production and futurity. The cuerpo-agua is similar to land as an analytic within Indigenous thought as representing an untranslatable set of relations between bodies and beings, human and non-human. Also, because water has power, is life, and is fluid, the cuerpo-agua marks a

distinction from the groundness of land-based epistemologies and instead is how I theorize the movement, unboundness, and excess of Indigenous feminist and women of color feminist theorizations of the erotic through the concept of water as life. I consider how waters are unmade by systems of violence and re-membered by narrative practices of multi-directional ecomemory that describe the ways that water remembers itself and its previous paths and forms as a metaphor for the survivance and futuristic returns of descendants.

Chapter two delves deeper into narrative practices and narratives as critical forms of evidence and epistemology through looking at the work of descendants in the archive. In this chapter I discuss my own work in the archives as a descendant of an Indigenous laborer community from Yuma as an example of a felt methodology of fleshing the archive. I argue that descendants are unruly bodies in the archive whose survivance and potential futurities constitute a form of spatial excess that moves beyond and is often not legible to the violent containment strategies of the colonial archive, much like water has the capacity to overflow a cup. The colonial archive here is understood as a technology of disciplining temporality as it narrates the disciplining of bodies under colonial occupation. The collection and containment practices of colonial documentation function in the present as forms of entombment where the materials of the past become constructs of dead time because they are dispossessed from their subjects in order to construct the imaginary of colonial institutions such as the state. Instead of arguing for a counter narrative to the colonial archive, I argue that the alternative and additional knowledges of the past that descendants may have access to, such as family stories and family archives, forms an additional truth to the truth of archival narratives. Thus, even lies and fictions of the archive function as forms of truth because these narratives and discourses do material work. The excessive and uncontained narratives of unruly bodies also do material work, albeit of a different

nature, and can be held together with disciplined narratives to create a multiplicity of routes to different truths like in the Akira Kurosawa film *Rashomon*. While colonial archival containment strategies can narrate the past in order to produce regimes of death, descendant narratives and descendant spatial excess within and alongside the archive can disrupt the temporal death logics of colonialism through our survivance and how we use the past of our ancestors as a pathway towards futurity. Towards this rethinking of the past-future paradigm I offer the concept of the difuente (difunto + fuente, or ancestor + spring) as an acknowledgement of the cuerpo-agua of our ancestors' experiences that gives us life and allows us to perform speculative histories and speculative futures.

Chapters three and four serve as an example of holding multiple narratives together, not necessarily as oppositions but as different angles of analysis. Chapter three considers the ways that colonial mappings, what I am identifying as cartographies, function through the process of transfiguration as well as some examples of how Mexican revolutionaries attempted to resist these transfigurations on the U.S.-Mexico border. Whereas, chapter four considers the ways that descendant narratives, what I am calling geographies, function through connecting and maintaining regenerative relationalities that colonial carceral cartographies attempt to sever.

In chapter three I look at the site of the Yuma Crossing as a transcolonial zone that is mapped by two routes of colonial carceral technologies (Spanish and Anglo) that collide on the U.S.-Mexico border. I theorize transfiguration, the process through which competing colonial regimes transfigure each other's technologies, by examining material examples in Yuma of how colonialism and the carceral state are co-constituted through the ways that these institutions transfigure each other's technologies and infrastructures. What transfiguration offers as an analytic is a way to see how the systems that popular histories tell us were / are separate or that

function in opposition or hierarchy such as genocide, slavery, orientalism/war, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, and ableism, are actually all co-formed and relate through transfiguring. By focusing on the transfigurations of the Yuma Territorial Penitentiary I illustrate two kinds of criminality discourses that animate the border: that of the criminal who resists exploitation and colonial violence and that of the person of color criminalized for their survival strategies to colonial violence. Centering the criminal to colonialism, not the criminal for colonialism, allows for a consideration of the praxis of resistance beyond the nation-state, through the example of the Partido Liberal Mexicano and their idea of regeneración as abolitionist autonomy.

In chapter four I present a different practice of mapping and unmapping through looking at the geography work of descendant memory in the narrative practice of family stories and the poetics of multidirectional ecomemory, to see how we remember rivers and the rivers remember us. This chapter is an example of the narrative methods explored in chapters one and two to tell the history of my community of Indigenous laborers from Yuma as I know it through my grandfather's stories. I position these stories of Indigeneous survivance alongside the history of colonial extraction of the Colorado and Gila rivers and the dispossession of our ancestral community through the transfiguration of racial caste from Indian to Mexican. In this descendant story-work I present alternative practices of recognition (land recognition, community recognition) that are in excess and beyond archival / colonial recognition practices of Indigeneity. I also unpack what it means to be a Mexican Indian through a critique of Indigenismo as a form of colonial appropriation. In this chapter I argue that examining transcolonial transfigurations of identity is critical for understanding both O'odham issues broadly and our Yuma descendant community specifically through an Indigenous analysis of the

border as a palimpsest of colonialisms occupying our historical homelands and disciplining our peoples into a binary of colonial identifications (American, Mexican) in an attempt to partition and dispossess our peoples through different strategies of whitening (blancamiento) – cultural, linguistic, through archival documentation/blood quantum – that undermines Indigenous relational practices that incorporate difference and mixed identities in inclusive (and, not or) ways. To show this tension I examine colonial archival narratives of our family that move towards whiteness against family stories and family archival collections that move towards Indigenous survivance as a way that cartographies of whitening and geographies of survivance can sit alongside one another within the experience of one family. Moving across these multiple maps and cutting waterways through them has been a fugitive practice of Indigenous peoples caught in the transcolonial zone.

This dissertation ends with a coda, or gesture, towards alternative practices of community memory that unwork colonial carceral cartographies. It is a way of thinking about the relationship of fire to water, of lava to the sea, to consider what must be abolished so that new islands of autonomy could regenerate.

Chapter 1: Bodies as knowledge, bodies as place

Land as an Analytic: Native and Native feminist conceptions of body and space

Throughout his career Powhatan-Delaware writer Jack D. Forbes often posed the question, particularly in Native gatherings, "where do our bodies end?"[12]. Forbes argued that the body was a living system dependent upon pieces that to the Western framework exist outside the body but to the Indigenous framework are extensions and critical relationships of the body. Forbes was concerned with how the Occidental mapping of the body that considered a human as an individual isolated structure, divorced from land and geography, did the work of colonialism through conceiving of selves without a connection to land, air, water, ancestors, and historical territory. In interrogating how European culture legitimated exploitation, colonialism, and oppression Forbes found that the Western conception of the self as distinct from others, land, and creation created a framework through which acts of violence against peoples and lands were externalized beyond the self and justified through a notion that these actions bore no repercussions upon the perpetrator of such violences, as they were against distinct, disconnected others. In rethinking this separation of self from the surrounding world through an Indigenous epistemology that understands the human being / self as one aspect of a larger whole that includes people, land, place, the elements, other beings, and creation- these acts of violence against supposed others became acts of self-inflicted harm or as Forbes termed it, cannibalism. This violence can be understood as cannibalism because as Forbes explained, according to Indigenous epistemology there are no false borders, as the body does not end at the skin.

[12] Forbes, Jack D. "Where Do Our Bodies End?" *Wind Speaker: Canada's National Aboriginal News Source.* Vol. 19, Issue 10, 2002. Page 5. Web 5 December 2015. http://www.ammsa.com/publications/windspeaker/where-do-our-bodies-end

Indigenous sovereignty thus emerges from a defense of this open system that unites Indigenous peoples with their lands and creation.

> I can lose my hands, and still live. I can lose my legs and still live. I can lose my eyes and still live. I can lose my hair, eyebrows, nose, arms, and many other things and still live. But if I lose the air I die. If I lose the sun I die. If I lose the earth I die. If I lose the water I die. If I lose the plants and animals I die. All of these things are more a part of me, more essential to my every breath, than is my so-called body. What is my real body?[13]

Understanding the body as all of creation restructures our understanding of colonial violence as not simply aggression against the other, but rather at its deepest root, aggression against the self and all of creation through which everything that is connected to the self depends. This critique of colonialism as cannibalistic violence that would destroy the world deeply informed Forbes's political work towards decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty. Forbes's rethinking of the body through Indigenous epistemology presents a framework through which to understand native feminist geographies that connect Indigenous women's' defense of their bodies to larger struggles for sovereignty, autonomy, and decolonization[14]. This geographic connection between the body and the spatiality of creation informs a multi-directional ecomemory as the narratives of the body are told and thought in relation to the narratives of land, bodies of water, and ecological networks. I discuss ecomemory as a narrative methodology of discussing the connection between dispossession and extraction later in this chapter.

Native feminists have critically built upon the theoretical connection of the body to space based in Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in order to unsettle colonialism and remap

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[13] Forbes, Jack D. "Where Do Our Bodies End?" *Wind Speaker: Canada's National Aboriginal News Source.* Vol. 19, Issue 10, 2002. Page 5. Web 5 December 2015. http://www.ammsa.com/publications/windspeaker/where-do-our-bodies-end

[14] I discuss the ways I am using these terms and their relationships to each other in the next section.

geographies of Indigenous autonomy that connect the dismantling of racism, oppressive heteropatriarchy, and defense of Indigenous lands, cultures, and resources into a native feminist praxis. Native feminist Mishuana Goeman explains that, "engaging both historic attachments to particular geographies and imperial histories that undermine such attachments, Native conceptions of space defy a dominant, Cartesian model of imperial subjectivity in which consciousness emerges out of itself ("I think; therefore, I am"), and in abstraction from the particularities of history and geography,"[15]. By reaffirming native conceptions of space against Western Cartesian models, native feminists remap the body and land connections that are necessary for building Indigenous political practices of autonomy and sovereignty in resistance to colonialism. Goeman argues that native feminist spatial practices seek to "remap our social and political lives according to cultural values and contemporary needs,"[16]. This temporal positioning of remapping as a circular practice of engaging with past/present/future realities that transcends stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as stuck in static traditionalism and moves beyond the limited and colonially influenced categorization, documentation, and recovery practices of interacting with Indigenous cultural work to open up space for Native feminists to engage in radically future-orientated work that can include a critique of oppressive hetero-patriarchy as integral to decolonial practice. Goeman affirms this spatial-temporal dynamic in Native women's literature, which "has at its roots a counter to colonial imaginings—particularly in its ability to not only oppose colonial narrations that naturalize space through power and language, but to (re)invent new stories and branch into the past, present, and future,"[17]. In this process Native women's literature examines Cartesian oppositions such as body/place, man/woman,

[15] Goeman, Mishuana. "(Re)mapping Indigenous presence on the land in Native women's literature." *American Quarterly.* Volume 60, Number 2, June 2008, pp. 295-302. John Hopkins University Press. (Article).
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

home/nation, public/private, human/nature to reorder the world through larger connections and fluidities that remap dynamic movement and exchanges across temporal and spatial zones to produce more generative conceptions and ways of being in opposition to the necropolitics of coloniality that work towards dismantling and unmapping white supremacist hetero-patriarchy through the reclaiming of native women's bodies and Indigenous territories.

Another way of articulating this connection between Indigenous women's bodies and sovereignty is explained by Mohawk midwife Katsi Cook's theorization of woman as first environment. Drawing from the wisdom in her language, Cook explains, “In the Mohawk language, one word for midwife is iewirokwas. This word describes that "she's pulling the baby out of the Earth," out of the water, or a dark wet place. It is full of ecological context. We know from our traditional teachings that the waters of the earth and the waters of our bodies are the same water,”[18]. Considering how a woman's body and the waters of the Great Lakes are both responsive to the pulling of the moon and hence connected generated a theoretical context from which to engage in political action against environmental racism for Mohawk women. Cook explained that this awareness of the connection between the water in a woman's body and the water in the Great Lakes Basin upon which the Mohawk nation relies, prompted women on her reservation to question the safety of breastfeeding in an area that was inundated with toxic industrial waste. The cartography of U.S.-Canadian settler colonialism had marked the natural area around the Great Lakes Basin as disposable; a resource that once exploited would become a depository for the toxic waste industrialization. In this process of making the clean water reserves of the Great Lakes a dumping ground, the bodies of Indigenous women living in the

[18] Cook, Katsi. “Cook: Women are the First Environment.” *Indian Country Today Media Network.* 23 Dec. 2003. Web. 4 December 2014. http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2003/12/23/cook-women-are-first-environment-89746

area and surviving off of the land and water of the region were also marked as devalued and disposable. In reflecting upon how the impacts of the build-up of toxins within the Great Lakes Basin and in Indigenous women's bodies would impact the survival of future generations of Akwesasne, Cook affirmed the reality of the borderless body that Forbes also theorized:

> Women are the first environment. We are privileged to be the doorway to life. At the breast of women, the generations are nourished and sustained. From the bodies of women flow the relationships of those generations both to society and to the natural world. In this way is the earth our mother, the old people said. In this way, we as women are earth. Science tells us that our nursing infants are at the top of the food chain. Industrial chemicals like PCBs, DDT and HCBs dumped into the waters and soil move up through the food chain, through plants, fish, wildlife, and into the bodies of human beings who eat them. These contaminants resist being broken down by the body, which stores them in our fat cells. The only known way to excrete large amounts of them is through pregnancy, where they cross the placenta, and during lactation, where they are moved out of storage in our fat cells and show up in our breast milk. In this way, each succeeding generation inherits a body burden of toxic contaminants from their mothers. In this way, we, as women, are the landfill[19].

This borderless body of woman-environment centers native feminist political work such as reclaiming midwifery, resisting toxic exposure, and challenging violence against Indigenous women as a crucial aspect of the work of defending Indigenous territories and sovereignty. Woman as first environment is a different mapping than the colonial cartography of the feminized nation-state to be ruled by white men or the violently sexualized notion of woman as frontier to be conquered/virgin land to be violently settled. Andrea Smith argues that these colonial articulations of land as rapable woman is a cartographic violence to mark both Native women and Indigenous territories as "inherently violable" and accessible to white supremacist heteropatriarchal colonialism[20]. She explains,

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide.* Cambridge: South End Press, 2005. Print.

> the connection between the colonization of Native people's bodies- particularly Native women's bodies- and Native lands is not simply metaphorical. Many feminist theorists have argued that there is a connection between patriarchy's disregard for nature, women, and Indigenous peoples. The colonial/patriarchal mind that seeks to control the sexuality of women and Indigenous peoples also seeks to control nature[21].

This colonial geography of violable, disposable, and controllable spaces differs from the remapping of woman as first environment that Indigenous midwives assert. In the colonial geography of violable, usable, and disposable bodies the ultimate outcome is extraction, exhaustion, and death. This is how enslavement intersects with genocide as the disposability and fungibility of the Black body under chattel slavery is also a form of genocide. In addition, the way that chattel slavery functioned through natal alienation both of human kinship and land kinship marked the practice of slave-making as a form of anti-Indigenous genocide through the destruction of the ties between Indigenous Africans and their lands, as well as between each other. The simplistic triad analyses of settler colonial studies [22]sometimes limit our ability to discuss the geographic connections between slavery, anti-blackness, and genocide in ways that limit both our analysis of the impacts of colonialism on Black people as well as the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples of the Americas who were also displaced, enslaved, and prevented from maintaining kinship ties through enslavement, the forced removal of children, and other colonial technologies.

There is no positive futurity[23] to colonial mappings of power onto land and body as eventually the space will be exhausted to the point that the parasitical colonizer will need to find

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Wolfe, Patrick. "Land, labor, and difference: Elementary structures of race." *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 866-905.

[23] In this sense I am distinguishing a positive futurity that is additive and additional, that lends itself towards the regeneration of life and eco-system diversity from a subtractive, extractive, or apocalyptic futurity that depletes resources to the extent to which the individual components of diverse eco-systems die-off, and difference, and capacities to regenerate difference, becomes more and more reduced and limited. I draw this framework from the anglophone theorization of Indigenous regeneration, (see the work of Leeanne Simpson and work on Indigenous

new territories to invade and new bodies to accumulate and extract from in order to survive and reproduce itself. However, Indigenous women's remapping of woman-environment or body-land/creation positions Indigenous futurity as contingent upon the sustainable regeneration of Indigenous peoples in respectful reciprocity with their environment. In this regenerative futurity alternative ways of relating to the world such as justice and dignity emerge as counter practices to the violences of colonialism.

Theorizing from this positionality of relatedness is one of the distinctly generative aspects of Native feminisms. As Francesca Gargallo Celentani remarks in her overview of Native feminism in Latin America, *Feminismos desde Abya Yala*, Native feminists draw on the alternative logics of their own cultures to present an epistemological counter-basis to Western logics of domination and thus Native feminist engagements with larger political movements or ideologies such as feminism or revolution need to be understood from that grounding:

> Por lo tanto, pensar la buena vida, la autonomia, el reconocimiento y la justicia por y para las mujeres desde otros cimientos, implica estar dispuestas a criticar la idea de liberación como acceso a la economia capitalista (anque sea de soporte del individuo femenino) y el cuestionamiento del *cómo* nos acercamos, hablamos y escuchamos a las mujeres que provienen de la culturas ajenas a los compromisos metafísicos de Occidente[24].

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land management in California, such as the book *Tending the Wild* by M. Kat Anderson.) By focusing on nurturing an increased capacity for more difference as a strategy for regenerative power, this theorization of generative futurity is not necessarily heteropatriarchal, (as most theories of reproduction are,) but is expansive enough to engage queer futurisms. In further chapters I consider this Indigenous theorization of regeneration in conversation with the political theory of regeneración proposed by the Magonistas that centers on regeneration as the futurity of anti-colonial abolition.

[24] Translation: Therefore, to think of the good life, autonomy, recognition and justice for and by the women of other foundations, implies to be willing to criticize the idea of liberation as access to the capitalist economy (even though it can be of support to individual females) and to question *how* we come together, talk to and listen to women who come from cultures outside of the metaphysical positions of the West. Gargallo Celentani, Francesca. *Feminismos desde Abya Yala: Ideas y proposiciones de las mujeres de 607 pueblos en nuestra América.* Editorial Corte y Confección, Cuidad de México. 2014

Gargallo Celentani thus cautions against collapsing Native feminisms into Western analytics and argues for a theoretical engagement with vocabulary and concepts that emerge from Indigenous cultures on their own terms. She argues for the need to stretch towards conversations where Indigenous feminists can express themselves in their own languages without having to lose their conceptualizations in the violent process of cutting things down into what can translate into a Western concept. Thus, Native feminisms may call for entirely different political concepts than Western theory, even while they may engage with and build on Western theory.

Regenerating Social Relationships Beyond Colonialism

This inseparability of Indigenous feminism and Indigenous people's issues can be seen explicitly in the context of the Idle No More movement. In a conversation with journalist Naomi Klein, Mississauga Nishnaabeg writer Leanne Simpson explained that part of the logic behind the Idle No More movement was to regenerate decolonial relationships among Indigenous peoples as part of building a resistance movement to the relationships of extraction and assimilation that are promoted by colonial state policy and capitalism[25]. Simpson noted that, "the alternative is deep reciprocity. It's respect, it's relationship, it's responsibility, and it's local"[26]. In the context of relatedness, Indigenous feminism and Indigenous resistance to colonialism focused on what Simpson terms regeneration.

> Winona [LaDuke] took a concept that's very fundamental to Anishinaabeg society, called *mino bimaadiziwin*. It often gets translated as "the good life," but the deeper kind of cultural, conceptual meaning is something that she really brought into my mind, and she translated it as "continuous rebirth." So, the purpose of life then is this continuous rebirth, it's to promote more life[27].

[25] Klein, Naomi. "Dancing the World Into Being: A conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson." Yes Magazine. 5 March 2013. Web 10 December 2014. http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

Indigenous activists linked the disappearances and violence against Indigenous women to the extractive environmental destruction of Tar Sands mining and natural gas fracking. Woman, environment, and Indigenous nation were articulated as a wholeness that the movement galvanized around defending. Similarly, over the last twenty years the Mayan Zapatista movement has launched an international discourse on Indigenous women's rights as inseparable from the context of challenging neoliberalism, state violence, and Indigenous genocide in Chiapas, Mexico. In South America Indigenous feminists have articulated a framework of feminismo comunitario as part of the practice of autonomy where women must be acknowledged and incorporated into the workings of the movement, the assembly, and the community through the construction of gender equality[28]. Lorena Cabnal describes the *territorio cuerpo* as:

> el lugar personal de cada una que detalla la unidad de la integridad física con la pertenencia de sí: un cuerpo que es tan propio de una mujer como el territorio es constituyente de la identidad indígena. Asimismo, desde una espiritualidad que implica unidad con todos y cada uno de los elementos de la vida[29].

To shift Indigenous movements and political thought from the position of great male chiefs and hetero-patriarchal activist organizers to the position of the territorio cuerpo refocuses attention on the connections, interactions, exchanges, and fluidities that hold relationships of being together. Attending to these interstitial relationships between bodies requires a politics of regeneration and relationality that disassembles colonial spatial-temporal ontologies in radically life-promoting ways, in this sense Indigenous feminism unsettles the necropolitics of coloniality.

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[28] Gargallo Celentani, Francesca. *Feminismos desde Abya Yala: Ideas y proposiciones de las mujeres de 607 pueblos en nuestra América.* Editorial Corte y Confección, Cuidad de México. 2014

[29] Ibid.; translation: each individual's personal location that combines the whole of one's physical integrity with the affiliations of that body: a body that belongs to a woman as much as land constitutes indigenous identity. Also, from a spirituality that implicates connection to all relations and to each one of the elements of life.

In this context, the regeneration of Indigenous nations through practices of decolonization, autonomy, and sovereignty depend upon creating alternative social relations to colonialism and capitalism that include the fluid relatedness of body-land and people-place. Here I consider decolonization as the material repatriation of land and life to Indigenous communities alongside an end to the logics, structures, practices, ontologies, epistemologies, economics, and relations of colonialism and the expansive regeneration of Indigenous ways of life[30]. I use the term autonomy to refer to the ways that Indigenous collective autonomy is both practiced and theorized within Latin America as a separation and fugitivity from colonialism, where the delinking of land and life from capitalism and the state and the regeneration of Indigenous political, social, and epistemological systems is critical[31]. This differs from the ways that sovereignty is often practiced and theorized within Anglophone Indigenous Studies and vernacularly within Indigenous communities in Anglo colonial contexts as the form of legal limited sovereignty that tribal nations utilize through recognition by the colonial state and engagement with capitalist development that sometimes is conflated with the concept of nation building.[32] This state-centric capitalist idea of sovereignty differs from more expansive theorizations of Indigenous sovereignty such as Michelle Raheja's concept of visual sovereignty or how Indigenous studies theorists have differentiated Indigenous practices of sovereignty based

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[30] Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization is not a metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education & society* 1, no. 1 (2012).; Simpson, Leanne. *Dancing on our turtle's back: Stories of Nishnaabeg re-creation, resurgence and a new emergence*. Arbeiter Ring Pub., 2011.

[31] Holloway, John. "Change the world without taking power." *Capital & Class* 29, no. 1 (2005): 39-42.; Vodovnik, Žiga, ed. *Ya Basta!: Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising*. AK PressDistribution, 2004.; Esteva, Gustavo, and Madhu Suri Prakash. *Grassroots postmodernism: Remaking the soil of cultures*. Zed Books Ltd., 2014.; Aguirre Rojas, Carlos Antonio. "Mandar obedeciendo." *Las lecciones políticas del neozapatismo mexicano* 2 (2008).; Zibechi, Raúl. "Autonomías y emancipaciones." *América Latina en movimiento* (2007): 21-63.

[32] Newcomb, Steven "Christian Discovery and Indian Sovereignty". Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine. June 2005. Accessed June 13, 2019. https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/christian-discovery-and-indian-sovereignty; Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of genocide research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409.; Jorgensen, Miriam, ed. *Rebuilding native nations: Strategies for governance and development*. University of Arizona Press, 2007.

on Indigenous political thought and epistemologies from the white-possessive forms of sovereignty structured through colonialism.[33] In discussing the alternatives to colonialism and capitalism that can and are engaged by Indigenous communities in practice of decolonization and regeneration and formerly enslaved and racialized communities in resistance to colonialism I prefer to use the term autonomy, and gesture towards the resistance and fugitive autonomies of Black and Indigenous peoples within Latin America since 1492 as a way of speaking about anti-colonial politics that are apart from the state and capitalism rather than to use the term sovereignty, which may be theorized and practiced in a similar way but often is conflated, especially within Indigenous communities, as referring to the political and economic systems structured through colonial state recognition. The apartness and away-from-ness of autonomy was built through fugitive resistance practices, such as the formation of free communities like Yanga in Veracruz or Zapatista communities in Chiapas[34]. This fugitive resistance and regeneration of a new free space apart from colonialism and capitalism is what is most generative to me about autonomy as it can be brought into conversation with a feminist *territorio cuerpo* consciousness.

Cuerpo-Agua, women's water geographies

In 2007 I traveled to Venezuela for the World Social Forum of the Americas as part of two collectives of activism I was engaged in at the time, as a former sweatshop worker turned college student with a transnational labor organization and with PODER, a pan-Latinx grassroots

[33] Raheja, Michelle H. *Reservation reelism: Redfacing, visual sovereignty, and representations of Native Americans in film*. U of Nebraska Press, 2011.; Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. *The white possessive: Property, power, and indigenous sovereignty*. U of Minnesota Press, 2015.
[34] Todd Jr., John. "Looking for African Roots, Yanga, Veracruz" JohnToddJr.com Accessed June 13, 2019. http://www.johntoddjr.com/86%20Yanga/yanga01.htm; Ramírez, Gloria Muñoz, Laura Carlsen, and Alejandro Reyes Arias. *The fire and the word: A history of the Zapatista movement*. City Lights Publishers, 2008.

barrio organization from San Francisco that I was a member of where we were working on constructing forms of collectivity and autonomy within the context of a rapidly gentrifying neoliberal city occupying Indigenous Ohlone land. The trip marked a shift in my own politics from labor organizing towards autonomous organizing, as I decided to focus my energies towards the work in PODER, in part because of how PODER attended to building relationships with the Ohlone and urban Indigenous community in recognition of settler colonialism as a structuring logic of gentrification and how as a membership-led grassroots organization we focused on building autonomy and dignity through resistance and regeneration instead of fragmenting political issues like police violence, labor exploitation, environmental justice, or poverty into separate struggles. Visiting communities in Venezuela, such as coastal fugitive slave villages and urban projects who had removed the police from their neighborhoods, who were building their own autonomies within and despite the Bolivarian revolution was a turning point in my own political journey. On the trip I purchased too many little souvenirs, as a person who had never imagined themselves to ever be able to travel abroad would. In a store that sold Indigenous and Afro-Latin artesania I found a delicate ceramic figure of a pregnant brown woman holding a pot of water over her head. Once home I placed her on my writing desk where she presides over the creative work of writing and thinking with her jar of water in her hands above her full womb.

The image of the water bearer doesn't just remind me of my own transition towards a politics of autonomy but also reminds me of the relationship between women and their child-bearing potential through a representation of their interior waters, their moon guided tides, and primordial prenatal seas. This is evident in Katsi Cook's situating of woman-as-first environment focuses on the connection between Mohawk women's birth waters and the Great Lakes. While

she eventually moves to a land, or actually a complex land-water-air-cosmos notion of the body, Cook is able to maintain the expansiveness of her concept of woman-environment in a manner similar to Forbes's borderless body through complicating the analytic of land with those of air and water. In much Indigenous political thought all elements are needed for life and to constitute the body, so the separation of elemental analytics for translation into Western frameworks is limiting and forms an epistemological violence to which I do not seek to reproduce. So, while I speak of different elements, it should be kept in mind that what I am trying to get towards is the unity, interaction, and relationship between all elements. Cook's expansive theorization of native feminist geographies pushes us to consider where the theorizing of the water-body is happening and what is generated when we include other elements like water and air in our geographies of body. My project is about an ancestral relationship the people of my community of origin have had with the intersection of the Gila and Colorado rivers in Yuma, Arizona. We are river people and survive through eco-memory of river ways despite the destruction and death of the river systems from which our history is intertwined.

But theories of decolonization tend to center on land not water, by using the term land as a shorthand for all relations between Indigenous peoples and other beings and the environment, including water. In this way land is thought to include water and water is part of Indigenous thinking, but the use of the term land moves us towards terrestrial metaphors. For example, Dene writer Glen Coulthard has argued for a land-based analytic of grounded normativity as a decolonial theory and praxis as an alternative to the limitations of the politics of recognition and negotiation with the colonial nation-state[35]. Basing his work on the ways that Indigenous

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[35] Coulthard, Glen. Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition. University of Minnesota Press. 2014.

scholars have utilized their land-based epistemologies as critical decolonial frameworks, Coulthard argues,

> the primary experience of dispossession is what also tends to fuel the most common modes of Indigenous resistance to and criticism of the colonial relationship itself: that is, Indigenous struggles against capitalist imperialism are best understood as struggles orientated around the question of *land*- struggles not only for land, but also deeply informed by what the land as a mode of reciprocal relationship (which is itself informed by place-based practices and associated form of knowledge) ought to teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, non-dominating and non-exploitative way. The ethical framework provided by these place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge is what I call 'grounded normativity'[36].

Coulthard's work advocates for political projects towards decolonization that emerge from this framework of grounded normativity. The framework seeks to center land-as-relation through an epistemological process of normalization. To normalize Indigenous relations to land at the theoretical, social, political, and material level creates a decolonization goal and process for Indigenous peoples. The return to Indigenous ways of knowing via land-based relations informs much decolonial thought. It is within the Pacific and Oceania however that we see what could be considered a water-based complement to Coulthard's framework. Pacific Island and Oceania Indigenous scholars and activists have moved towards an ocean-based relationality to inform their work in ways that differ from land-based epistemologies in dynamic ways.

Tongan writer Epeli Hau'ofa has considered decolonial strategies through a combined approach of centering of Indigenous Oceania genealogical practices and geographies of sea navigation. Hau'ofa describes the effects of concentrating of the oppressive geographies of western orientated elites and colonization as a process of producing an internalized fatalism that prevents Indigenous communities from developing decolonial solutions and self-determination,

[36] Ibid.

"to make people believe they have no choice but to depend,"[37]. In resisting colonial fatalism Hau'ofa turns to the relationship example of sea and island to present a relationship possibility beyond dependence to the occupier. Through framing the Pacific Islands as small and disconnected to the colonial mainland, colonial discourse maps a geography of Island dependence. However, Hau'ofa notes that many of these islands are indeed growing through the production of volcanic activity. He discusses how the force of Pele manifested as volcanic creation challenges the idea of islands as shrinking dependencies and points to their creative capacities for self-sustainability and regeneration. He then considers how viewing the ocean as navigation path instead of empty wasteland provides the radical possibility of seeing the island world of Oceania as vast and as expansive as the living sea rather than internalizing the fatalistic limitations of a continent-based perspective that sees islands as too small for self-determination.

Hau'ofa argues for a return towards an ocean-centric cosmology and world-view. He describes this new Oceania-identity as grounded in vastness like the sea, seeing diversity as necessary for survival, "Oceania refers to a world of people connected to each other,"[38]. Hau'ofa argues for a return to Indigenous identities as ocean peoples in a similar method to Coulthard's framework of grounded normativity to direct a decolonial politics. Hau'ofa's view recognizes the sea's effects on shaping culture, (the sea as an active / alive body in relationship with its people). An Oceania-based identity or method of weaving kinship he claims is centered in the common, shared, and uncontainable reality of the sea as water in motion that prevents a possessive ownership or territoriality that can provoke competition or exclusion and allow islands to foster a community without oppression of land, sea, or people. Ultimately, he argues that taking on defense of the ocean itself is a political issue through which an oceanic decolonial

[37] Hau'ofa, Epeli. *We Are the Ocean.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006. Print.
[38] Ibid.

political alliance can emerge. He contends that through the work of defending the ecology of ocean and islands, people can create new systems of relating that reflect an "Oceania" politic – and as means through environmental justice to connect in a more liberating and dignified way to continental peoples who are defending land, forests, water ways, and skies.

What is theoretically generative in Hau'ofa's argument is the consideration of the location of the sea-sky-island. The borderless expanse of the sky to sea situates both island and sea navigator through a star-location within moving water. From this position of movement, codependence, and humility towards the elements it is hard to imagine colonial constructs such as private property or land ownership. Water flows beyond containers as it is also in the wind, clouds, atmosphere, and constitutes our own bodies. For this reason, I argue that similar to how land can be used as a theoretical analytic, water is also suited to an Indigenous feminist analysis for its limitlessness, uncontainability, and its direct relation to the workings of the body. To consider the body-water, I will examine how writers have discussed the elements of the human-water relationship- ocean crossings and cloud-ocean rain formation to develop some ideas on how water as an analytic can complement and complicate the body-land framework.

Ocean Crossings

The context of the voyage often determines the relationship between traveler and the sea. Suvendrini Perera's article "Oceanic corpo-geographies, refugee bodies and the making and unmaking of waters," describes this issue in the context of the boat voyages of refugees to Australia. Central to Perera's theorizing of the ocean voyage is Deborah Bird Rose's term "water business, a term [Rose] arrived at through many years of working with Australian Aboriginal communities, as a set of practices for 'finding ways to protect and defend the fullness of water in

itself and in its relations with other things, and thus engage with water's living presence,"[39]. This conception of "the fullness of water itself" includes all forms of water, not just the sea, and also alludes to the relationship between land, sky, body, life, and water, as these separations are not neat. Perera's study of refuge relationships with water focuses on the ways that water is mapped and managed by colonial relationships and the attempts at unmapping and surviving despite these violences by the refugees. He explains the differences:

> The responsibilities enjoined by water business are those of fostering water's 'life-affirming and life-supporting' relations through engaging with its living presence. Its antithesis, in Rose's words, is the death-work of 'unmaking water'. To unmake water is to 'impair water's living presence and at the same time work at killing the human capacity to understand water in its living complexity' (Rose, 2007: 12). The 'deeply death-oriented work' of unmaking water is 'mystified often by being performed under banners that seem to signal life: production, y economic advantage, national security etc., etc.' (Rose, 2007: 12)[40].

Anti-immigrant policy that militarizes the ocean and creates life-threatening situations at sea for potential refugees is seen by Perera as an example of unmaking waters. In this aspect, the unmaking of water is akin to the processes of partition, occupation, and separation that unmake land in situations of war, colonialism, and bordering. What Perera, building on Rose's work, reminds us is that relationships to place are marked by the manifestations of power, in particular for peoples who have had their ability to live in place as well as their ability to move through places impacted by violence, it must be recognized that relationships to place will be layered with the complexities of the markings of this violence. Therefore, to construct alternative relationships to place, or to restore Indigenous relationships to place, will require the unmapping, resisting, and healing through of these violent markings that have created scared and haunted

[39] Perera, Suvendrini. "Oceanic Corpo-graphies, refuge bodies and the making and unmaking of waters." Feminist Review. 103. 2013.
[40] Ibid.

landscapes of death and violence. Perera argues that in these situations, the survival and political advocacy strategies of refugees despite these violent attempts at border fortification against their escapes and arrivals unmap the death work of the state and reconfigure the ocean as a place of refugee agency, hope, and desire. These actions are markedly different than the colonial ocean narratives of exploration, casting away, piracy, and heroic image of the white sailing adventurer where the individual liberal subject's power is produced through voyage.

Relationships to power influence and at times dominate the production of relationships to place. Hence, refugee relations to the ocean may be closer to the experiences of other unwilling voyagers, the exiled and enslaved, who encounter the politics of the ocean from a place of subjection. These other experiences of being cast away speak to the dispossession and displacement of colonialism that refugees also encounter, albeit very differently as the enslaved did[41]. In addition, refugee waiting for sea arrival is not similar to white women's waiting for sea arrival of the white male who enacts his colonial and gendered power on the sea, nor is it like white women's romanticism of sea escape tourism where wealthy white people can play at sea near pristine beaches depopulated of Indigenous peoples apart from servants. Because the escape to sea is not play but rather a life and death question of survival, refugee waiting at sea (often while ships are detained or when ships break apart ejecting survivors into the waves to wait if help arrives,) is a condition of the death work of unmaking waters. By the colonial nation-state of Australia making the ocean a borderland, refugees must navigate the ocean as a border transgression. They must find a way to remake the waters and map a relationship between life and water in order to arrive at their destination without encountering death, violence, and detention. Some of this remaking of water includes not just voyage, but also reappropriating the

[41] Ibid.

technologies of colonial seafaring such as the message in a bottle and creating networks of support communities who will anticipate and guide safe arrivals[42].

Indigenous relationships to ocean travel may include similar aspects of remaking water and navigating unmade waters. Pacific Studies scholar Susan Y. Najita notes that most postcolonial theory involving ocean transit focuses on the movements between the colony and the metropole and thus is dominated by colonial logics through the centering of the metropole[43]. Colonial domination thus unmakes Indigenous relationships to water by writing over the map of Indigenous relations in order to enforce a new mapping of sea through colonial interests. By shifting to examine Indigenous transits between Indigenous lands, the map of the ocean and the relationship of colonized peoples to the ocean changes from a domination-centered cartography to one of agency, relation, and Indigenous historical perspectives. Revisiting pre-colonial Indigenous navigations, as well as those that happened despite and in resistance to colonialism can remap the ocean as a space of Indigenous agency, movement, and relationship building rather than as a space marked by colonial displacements and violences. It also opens the possibility for Indigenous peoples to reconstruct a globality and internationalism that does not center the colonizer, but rather seeks to consider what alternative contacts to each other Indigenous peoples can create beyond or in resistance to colonialism. For example, the 1996 film *Bridging Cultures: Hawai'iloa to Alaska,* follows the process of restoration of traditional relations between native Hawaiian peoples and the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian nations who through the search for methods to recreate traditional boats learned of their peoples' historic connections to each other through sea navigation and the travel of driftwoods across ocean

[42] Ibid.
[43] Najita, Susan Y. "Introduction." Decolonizing Cutures in the Pacific. New York: Routledge. 2006. Print.

currents[44]. The restoration of these relationships of Indigenous peoples to each other is framed in the film as not just a traditional reclamation project, but also as a decolonizing process as they no longer depend upon the colonizer as an intermediary shaping their relations to each other, (aside from utilizing the colonial language of English as a common language, which could be argued is still a limitation).

This ingenuity is developed by ocean transgressing refugees and Indigenous peoples is a different relationship to the ocean than can be described by the term reciprocity that usually employed to describe land-based relationships. Theorizing space requires a wrestling with the cartographies of colonialism and power that have marked, altered, and limited Indigenous, refugee, and enslaved relationships with water, land, the body, and other beings. But beyond colonial cartographies bodies such as water cannot simply be assumed to be a passive or reciprocal participants in navigational relationships. Aside from the treacherous conditions created by colonialism and domination on the water, the ocean itself, with its own great power, unpredictability, and tendency to storm, makes thinking through earth-people relations more complex.

Indigenous Border Theory: O'odham water wisdom

In her poem, *Ocean Power*, Tohono O'odham poet Ofelia Zepeda describes an encounter two O'odham detainees have with the ocean as they are deported across the colonial nation-state borders that divide their Indigenous lands[45]. The poem begins with the sense of fear produced in the Indigenous migrants by both the deportation process and the different route their expulsion takes that brings them too close to the ocean. The first lines of the poem, "words cannot speak

[44] Film: *Bridging Cultures: Hawai'iloa to Alaska. 1996.*
[45] Zepeda, Ofelia. Ocean Power: Poems from the desert. University of Arizona Press. 1995.

your power, words cannot speak your beauty," hint at the tensions in the piece between O'odham traditions that inform how one should prepare to meet the ocean, the horror of deportation, and the particular violence of this deportation that takes the O'odham across an unfamiliar route (the familiar route described in the poem retraces O'odham migrations through O'odham lands despite the colonial borders, insinuating that despite the deportations that O'odham peoples will continue to traverse traditional routes across their own lands and transgress colonial borders,) and into a location (to the ocean) that would require a ceremonial preparation that the men have not been afforded an opportunity for[46]. Zepeda has revised the poem in different publications to emphasize different aspects of this journey. In the version in a 2013 anthology created with San Diego State University, Zepeda pares the poem down to emphasize the violence of the deportation. The last stanza that describes the spiritual and epistemological violence of removing the men from U.S. occupied territory via an ocean route through the repetition of the line "we are not ready" and a description of the preparations they would have made if they had planned a trip to the ocean themselves:

> We do not have cornmeal, feathers, nor do we have songs and prayers ready.
> We have not thought what gift we will ask from the ocean.
> Should we ask to be song chasers
> Should we ask to be rainmakers
> Should we ask to be good runners
> or should we ask to be heartbreakers.
> No, we are not ready to be here at this ocean[47].

By juxtaposing the proper ways to make this journey according to O'odham practices, Zepeda challenges the notion of deporting Indigenous peoples across partitions of their own lands. In this challenge to deportation and settler colonialism, the ocean figures a symbol of the

[46] Ibid.
[47] Zepeda, Ofelia. Water lives in words: An anthology. San Diego State University. 2013.

continuity of Indigenous relations to place. Yet, the ocean is not a passive figure and its potential for reciprocity is not something taken for granted. Rather, the ocean also represents the violences of unmaking waters through the construction of borders while it also is acknowledged to have its own power beyond words, a power that Indigenous peoples have their own relationships to that exceed the relations of colonialism. In another of Zepeda's poems, *Under the Sea*, she focuses on creating what she has termed in interviews as an "instructional poem," to play with the idea of Indigenous writing as a record of the past, while also playing with the oral form of Indigenous knowledge transmission where instructional information is key.[48] In this poem, Zepeda describes the steps one must take and reverence one must show to properly encounter the ocean. The temperamental power of the ocean is acknowledged through lines such as, "If you leave the ocean water/make sure you are grateful for being safe," and "If you are so inclined you may not discuss this with anyone/ except the power of the ocean,"[49]. In Zepeda's writings the sea requires offerings and gratitude and has a little too much of its own agency for reciprocity to be assumed. What the ocean as figured in Zepeda's poetry suggests is a different form of relationality that repositions the human as smaller than and dependent upon nature's forces, not quite so equal. Even when waters are not unmade by state violence, encountering expansive waters itself is still a risky act. This imagining of the ocean as an embodiment of complex agency is something that Zepeda then links to womanness. In her poem *Moon Games*, Zepeda describes a family camping trip to the beach. She describes how the "moon and the ocean play their games. / They rush at one another," while the family sleeps. The relationship between the forces of the moon and the forces of the ocean are described as familiar to the mother and daughter;

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[48] Zepeda notes for instance how certain songs and stories are only to be shared at certain times of year, reaffirming the important of the instructional in the oral form while in her written poetry often using humor and sarcastic realism to challenge the notion of Indigenous poetry as only functioning to record traditional practices.

[49] Zepeda, Ofelia. Ocean Power: Poems from the desert. University of Arizona Press. 1995.

bodies move in comfortable rhythm with the movements of oceans and moons.
movements of unimaginable quantities of water,
water just outside the flap of our tent
and waters thousands of miles away.
ocean waters newly formed, waters thousands of years old.
and lunar pulls that have traveled around a universe unfathomable[50].

The mother and daughter are described as comfortable with and inseparable from the relationship between the moon and the ocean. While the husband is uncomfortable and disturbed by the sounds of the ocean's power. He is deafened by the noise, restless, and unable to sleep near the sea. He gets up to look at it, "to see what was wrong," with the ocean expressing its power, its sensual movements. In this subtle poem Zepeda articulates the problem of heteropatriarchy as a discomfort with the voicing of women's physical and erotic voice and power.

To build from Zepeda's work, women's bodies can be articulated to theorizations of the ocean, of waters in motion, lakes and rivers. As Katsi Cook argued, the relationships constructed with waterways impact women's bodies. The waters of the ocean can be made through Indigenous and migrant resistances and decolonization, but they can also be unmade through the violences domination and colonialism. These violences can also unmake the agencies of women and silence the works and actions of Indigenous women and women of color. Native feminist and women of color feminist work can remap relations of the body as expansive and powerful as oceans. To think through the *cuerpo-agua* articulates women's power because the ocean is figured as moving, in action, and full of erotic life-creative agency. This also resonates with an O'odham worldview where the ocean is considered one of the most spiritually powerful elements. To consider theorizing the sexualized subaltern body in relation to the ocean is to

[50] Zepeda, Ofelia. Water lives in words: An anthology. San Diego State University. 2013.

consider its unlimited capacity and depth, and also to consider how non-colonial relations with the ocean require an appreciation of female power. *Cuerpo-agua* poetics, similar to the condensation processes of ocean waters to rain, create a generative context to think through the relationship of the Indigenous descendant body to riverbed and to the river stories we carry as water power that can remap and remember anti-colonial relationships to waterways that, like our own bodies, have been accumulated and extracted by whiteness and settler colonialism.

Toward a Poetics of Futurity: the Rain Cloud and the Creative Body

Water can be generative analytic for Indigenous feminist and women of color feminist knowledge production because of its power and uncontainable regeneration. In her poem Cloud, Chicana poet Sandra Cisneros considers the statement by Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh that, "If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper,"[51]. She imagines the cloud then as the generative condensation of creativity from which the writer draws to develop their work and as a form of resistance to injustice. The poem describes the endless regeneration of water as it changes forms, from ocean to cloud to tears to rain to the water inside many organisms, inanimate objects, and pieces of things. The poem concludes with the reaction of cloud to wind, where the wind punched cloud glides across and over the fences of a prison, carrying in its waters the prisoners' dreams of escape. Cisneros's meditation on the cloud considers the liberatory potential of writing as well as the circular nature of life and knowledge production. In Zepeda's work the cloud functions as a connector between the ocean and the desert, bringing the water from the sea into the desert through the form of rainfall. Zepeda's many poems on clouds describe the importance of water to the desert and of the cloud in being

[51] Cisneros, Sandra. Loose Woman: Poems. Vintage. 1995.

the generative place where rain is formed. This generative place is imagined as female in Zepeda's work as she also considers the cloud as a metaphor for women's creative potential. In her poem *Pulling Down the Clouds*, a bilingual O'odham and English piece, the male witness is protagonist to the impending rainfall brought by women who he imagines are pulling down the clouds from the sky to harvest the rain[52]. In this poem one can consider the work of women as creative agents in bringing forth life and work from the erotic heaviness of the building cloud.

The relationship between the cloud, rain, and women as a way to consider the creative potential of the human and to articulate a location within the web of relations of creation itself is a common O'odham theme. Akimel O'odham writer Anna Moore Shaw reframes a common southwest Indigenous parable of the story of the ancient pottery shard to discuss both the complicated transference of tradition and women's relationship to the creative[53]. In Shaw's version of the story called *A Potshard Speaks*, the tie between the ancient ones, the huhugam (Hohokom) and the Akimel O'odham (Pima) is explained through the shattered remnant of a huhugam pottery shard who asks the sand to make the pottery shard whole again after having been broken and discarded. The sand chooses to cover the shard, and when the time is ready for the shard to become a part of the world again many centuries later, the sandstorm leads the rain to reveal the shard so that a young Akimel O'odham woman can find it and bring its designs back into contemporary O'odham art. In this story to protagonist is the pottery shard who performs the desire necessary to transmit culture and tradition, as a fragment, to new generations. The power of the fragment is that it can fit within the new designs without limiting the contemporary artist to a position of needing to reproduce a static and unchanged cultural tradition. This O'odham story reminds me as well of the story that my friend Kumeyaay

[52] Zepeda, Ofelia. Ocean Power: Poems from the desert. University of Arizona Press. 1995
[53] Shaw, Anna Moore. Pima Indian Legends. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. 1968.

language revitalizationist Stan Rodriguez uses to begin his public presentations on Kumeyaay history and language work[54]. Rodriguez retells an abbreviated version of the Kumeyaay version of the pottery shard story to explain the violence of colonization upon his people. Kumeyaay culture he says, was once a beautiful clay pot that colonization has taken and smashed to the ground. Each branch of the Kumeyaay peoples now can only possess a broken shard from that original intricate and enormous vessel. Stan explains that the work of language recovery is to bring theses broken shards together, to be inspired by what is left and to use those fragments to create something new. I wonder as to the dimensions and extensions of the Kumeyaay story of the potshard that are not shared with non-native audiences. In Shaw's version of the O'odham potshard story she explains that while this is similarly typically told as the story of cultural transmission in O'odham cosmovision this is also one version of the story of the relationship between the sandstorm and the rain. In Shaw's take on oral tradition, the potshard story serves to explain why the sandstorm and rain like to walk together as a complex dualism of destruction and creativity who cannot do their work without each other, (there are other traditional versions of this story, so it is interesting that she chooses here to connect the two stories in her book). In my reading of Shaw's work, I am struck by how the young contemporary woman artist is the member of the community to which this power flows and that this narrative choice is also an important comment on women's creative potential and role in the revitalization of culture against the forces of both heteropatriarchal traditionalism and colonization. Shaw's larger work on gender norms can be read as reinforcing heteropatriarchal norms if one is not attentive to subtle choices such as this in her very nuanced retellings of traditional O'odham stories. However, that

[54] Film: KPBS Presents First People- Kumeyaay. Aired: 05/20/14. https://video.kpbs.org/video/kpbs-presents-first-people/

Shaw chose to write prolifically and engage the genre of creative literature in the 1950s and 1960s at a time when Indigenous women in the rural Southwest faced enormous barriers to education and publication should caution us against assuming she accepted the heteropatriarchal limitations put on Indigenous women's voices.

To frame Native feminist and women of color feminist work as the creative work of bringing down the cloud or to make use of what the rain allows recalls Leeanne Simpson's notions of Indigenous resurgence and regeneration[55]. The cloud also moves between water-air-land in a dynamic way that gets towards the expansiveness of the sexed subaltern's creative capacity for knowledge production from the experiential place of body, perhaps as the body of the water bearer. Through all of the ways that women of color and Indigenous women's knowledge production is imagined through a geography of place, I have sought to locate a series of analytics that can be considered in order to explain the intersectional work of decolonization that these women do – challenging domination within and upon their own communities, challenging the marginalization of differently embodied experiences, and challenging the violences done to the environments in which they live and move through. It is perhaps a task not unlike attempting to pull a cloud from the sky or trying to walk a long way balancing a jar of water on one's head made with the inspiration of what broken shards from the past we have found. That this work has been rendered illegible speaks to its power.

Eco-Memory: Re-storying Rivers, Returning Descendants

[55] Klein, Naomi. "Dancing the World Into Being: A conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson." Yes Magazine. 5 March 2013. Web 10 December 2014. http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson

Rivers remember their routes, their places. The accumulation and movement of water over an area marks the land, cuts it, creates an indentation where even after a dam has been constructed, wells and pipelines have stolen the water to other areas, or a climate has changed and dried away the river, the bed will still fill when it rains. Old washes flood in flashes through rain storms, remembering their histories, their journeys, their origins and destinations. The generative power of the ocean transforms to cloud, which then transforms again to rain. Fallen rain will gather in familiar places and form again the memory of a river, a stream, an ancient lake, the bottom of what was once a primordial sea bed. This is the way that water thinks through regeneration. Plants too remember. One morning my partner and I decided to climb Vi:kam Do'ag, a sacred mountain that once rested alongside the Gila River and visit ancestors. My partner's family are descendants of the old village here that is thousands of years old. The Gila River no longer runs through the San Lucy district of Tohono O'odham Nation. It has been diverted for use by white farmers and agricultural corporations like the massive dairies that poison the air with noxious methane for miles and miles around the reservation. But from the height of the mountain top we could see distinctly the cut of the old river bed, nearly a quarter mile wide, and the vast network of ancient canals our people built centuries ago for a more sustainable farming system. These canals still exist on the north side of the river where the land has yet to be bulldozed and flattened by farmers. There is no above ground water in the canals, but their shapes provide a track way for rain and underground currents to accumulate, to remember themselves as a stream once created by our *huhugam* to serve the dual purpose of taming the devastating potential of the river's temperament in flood times and irrigating the fields of the people through a complex bio system that incorporated fish, shellfish, insects, birds, beavers, and a wide variety of other animals with complimentary wild and cultivated plants who

learned to evolve through relating with one another, as a strategically placed mesquite tree restores nitrogen to a corn field. We saw the canals first by their inhabitants, green cottonwood and mesquite trees, arrow weed and other native plants that need more water than their higher terrain neighbors like the saguaro and chaparral. These thirstier plants like cottonwood find the water and remember where the water used to be. They show us their memory and resourcefulness through their greenery, marking tracks of greenness across the faded sepia tones of the desert. Water and plants remember their origins in ways that cannot be fully controlled and limited by settler colonialism. Like the rain that remembers where it used to be a river, Indigenous descendants remember where we used to be a people, long after our removal, dispersion, and assimilation. We know where we came from. We remember the lands that we belong to, changed as we both may be.

Friend and ecological poet Kyce Bello once told me that our work as poets is to re-story the rivers that have been devastated in our lives. She meant this as a metaphor for the work of poetry in a generative sense but also literally as it relates to poetics of environmental justice, that as poets we can tell the narratives of land and waterways that may inspire their physical renewal and that this form of narrative recovery is a form of ecological activism and accountability to the land we live in relationship with. But I think the water remembers, the plants also tell stories, as does the fossil record and land itself. As poets, our work is not simply an act of recovery but more like the work of geologists who translate the meaning between layers of soils, to share the language of the land with those who cannot read it. In the field of environmental humanities, the concept ecomemory speaks to the ability of the land to narrate itself beyond the human-centricism of the Anthropocene. In film, ecocriticism, and literary studies ecomemory is often thought of as simply the ecological memories of people or as nostalgia for place and

environment[56]. Whereas in ecology, ecomemory is more complex. Valentin Schaefer describes ecological ecomemory as consisting of “the species of an area and the ecological processes that will determine the trajectory of the ecosystem into the future. Also included are fire history and management practices of Indigenous peoples,”[57]. Ecomemory is connected to futurism and includes Indigenous peoples as a reciprocal part of the fundamental structure of a networked ecosystem, which differs from mainstream ideas of settler land conservation that position the human as outside of a pristine natural environment and considers human-environment interaction as mainly extractive and harmful. Ecomemory is critical to the survival and futurism of Indigenous peoples as it is to the restoration of native ecosystems. Schaefer notes that, “after a community or ecosystem is lost, it may leave behind an ecological memory. The site history, soil properties, spores, seeds, stem fragments, mycorrhizae, species, populations, and other remnants may influence the composition of the replacement community or ecosystem to varying degrees. The remnants may also hold the site to a trajectory that has implications for ecological restoration,”[58]. Within this context ecomemory relates to the resilience of an ecosystem and its loss or reduction can facilitate the spread of invasive or settler species. Thinking through colonialism in terms of plant-life is useful in several ways. On the one hand, ecological memory reminds us that beneath the concrete of cities there is still an Indigenous land base with the capacity for regeneration. And on the other hand, ecological memory reminds us that many settler strategies to contemporary problems, such as the mass planting of Australian eucalyptus

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[56] Malcolm Quantrill, The Environmental Memory: Man and Architecture in the Landscape o f Ideas (New York: Schocken,1986), xxi. 13; Murray, Robin L., and Joseph K. Heumann. "Environmental Nostalgia in Eco-Disaster Movies of the Early 1970s." *CEA Critic* 67, no. 2 (2005): 15-28.; Singha, Sukla. "From the Mnemonic to the Literary: Exploring Memory in Select Works of Robin S. Ngangom and Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih." (2016).; Musser, Charles. "Trauma, truth and the environmental documentary." In *Eco-trauma cinema*, pp. 60-85. Routledge, 2014.
[57] Schaefer, Valentin. "Alien invasions, ecological restoration in cities and the loss of ecological memory." *Restoration Ecology* 17, no. 2 (2009): 171-176.
[58] Ibid.

trees in California in the mid twentieth century to reduce erosion after the clear-cutting of the state's native forests and the suppression of Indigenous fire management techniques not only devasted native habitats and their capacities to regenerate, but also created the current conditions of fire tornados and extreme flooding that mark the arrival of industrial climate change. But the land, underneath the barren soils poisoned by eucalyptus oils and turned to loose sands that water tends to slide across instead of penetrate, still remembers fire. The rise of sequoia seedlings after a wildfire is a testament to this memory, as is the ongoing survivance of California Indigenous peoples who are not just recovering land-based traditions such as basketry but reinventing new ways of being Indigenous within the contemporary urban life and transformed landscapes of cities like San Diego, Los Angeles, and Oakland. Ecomemory grounds the futurism to which both native plants and Indigenous peoples do more than merely persist, but also adapt, thrive, and resurge.

Memory studies theorist Rosanne Kennedy argues that a way of capturing the imbricated relationships and intertwined histories between Indigenous peoples and the environment is the concept of multi-directional ecomemory which considers the relationship between genocide and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the extinction of native species as joint results from colonialism and capitalist extraction[59]. Kennedy considers how memory need not be competitive (positioning one group's memory of injustice as more important than another's) but rather that it's possible to hold multiple dynamic memories together to both ground solidarities and resistances to complex structures of violence. Thinking through both the legacies and ongoing practices of settler colonialism and anti-blackness together is another example of multi-

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[59] Kennedy, Rosanne. "Multidirectional eco-memory in an era of extinction". The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities. ed. Ursula K. Heise , Jon Christensen and Michelle Niemann (Abingdon: Routledge, 12 Jan 2017), accessed 14 Jun 2019 , Routledge Handbooks Online.

directional memory, as is thinking through the complex relations that enslaved, refugee, migrant, and Indigenous peoples have had with land in the border region.

I use the methodology of multidirectional ecomemory to consider the relationships between Indigenous descendants to place and rivers, specifically the history of our O'odham and Yaqui community in Yuma, Arizona. Drawing on women of color and Indigenous feminist understandings of land and the body as well as water and the creative through a cuerpo-agua poetics to begin to re-story the Indigeneity of this community that has been dispossessed through the transcolonial context of the U.S.-Mexico border and the capitalist development of the border region through extractive agricultural, mining, transportation, military, and urban projects and to think through the possibilities for Indigenous regeneration for a community of descendants that have been dispersed, mixed, assimilated into first Spanish then Anglo colonial societies, and currently lack federal recognition. Multidirectional ecomemory also structures my analysis of the spacial temporalities of constructing colonial and carceral geographies in the transcolonial zone of the U.S.-Mexico border as I consider the methods of transfiguration used to extract, contain, and control land, people, and water. This process of transfiguration informs my examination of the material processes of detribalization and the politics of regeneración as a strategy of radical accompliceship to fugitivity, autonomy, and decolonial abolitionist futures.

Chapter 2: Felt methodologies: an Indigenous descendant in the archive

Descendant interruptions: Felt theory and fleshing the archive

I began my research into the history of the Partido Liberal Mexicano's (PLM) activities in Yuma, Arizona as a descendant of a long-term Yuma residing family. I grew up in Northern California. I may have visited Yuma only a handful of times before moving to San Diego for grad school and deciding that I wanted to research this location of the PLM organizing. The spatial distance created distance in the family relations, and for this I had a side interest in conducting research in Yuma as a way to get to know my relatives there. The family reunions I've attended in Yuma can be overwhelming, with hundreds of descendants related through our O'odham elders taking over entire city parks. There are too many of us to rent a building. When you are from a small town, cousins are everywhere, and everyone is some kind of a cousin, yet I still imagined my family time and research time to be separate endeavors. But this division was complicated by what I found in the archive.

At the Yuma historical society archives in the basement of the public library I looked for documents related to the PLM. I'd marked a few items down from the electronic finding guide that I was interested in. But a finding guide rarely tells you what materials an archive actually has nor how critically analyzing these items, and the choices made into their collection and sorting, illustrates the workings of colonial power or could reveal in a "reading against the grain" the agency of the oppressed, [60]. Archival research is speculation, hypothesis, educated guess-

[60] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2010); Aaron Glass, "A Cannibal in the Archive: Performance, Materiality, and (in)Visibility in Unpublished Edward Curtis Photographs of the Kwakwacombining Minus Sign Belowkacombining Minus Sign below'wakw Hamat'sa," *Visual Anthropology Review* 25, no. 2 (2009): 128–49, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-7458.2009.01038.x; Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England (Indigenous Americas)*, First (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota, 2010).

work, and a little bit of prayer and magic. Sometimes you see a listing for a document, say a government ledger book, and anticipate learning about life at this Indian boarding school the ledger was supposed to be a record of and find its pages mostly empty, or torn out and missing. So, you learn nothing, and drive home speculating upon whether the page thief was a descendent confronting their historical trauma or a greedy researcher not willing to share sources. This was my experience looking at early Yuma records at the National Archives in Riverside, California. Or you see a listing for the personal papers of an activist and find instead that this collection is the research notes of someone else who wanted to write about the activist and most of the letters, which you hoped were the activist's personal letters, are actually letters from the researcher to other people asking if anyone knows whatever happened to the activist's personal papers. This was my experience with the Job Harriman files at the Huntington Library, (Harriman was a lawyer for the PLM during their Los Angeles and Arizona trials). As a descendant in the archive I often did not find what I was looking for. The document I was searching for was not there. But also, this meant that sometimes the story I wanted to tell from the archive was impossible. In my particular case, I found myself wanting to tell a story about my ancestors that could re-member and return us back to our tribal community and back to our land, to undo the borders across our bodies and territories. Tribal citizenship is dependent upon colonial archives because Indigenous descent is determined by paperwork that can prove connection to a person on the base roll census of a tribal nation, or in the case of non-recognized tribal communities, descendants must be able to produce sufficient documentation to prove historical continuity and cohesiveness as an Indigenous community. These two criteria can be impossibilities with the colonial archive, particularly for mixed-race people, when the objective of colonial officials was often to undercount and disregard as many Indigenous peoples as possible in order to produce narratives

of extinction, assimilation, and empty land ripe for occupation. This longing for missing information produces a critical melancholia of desire that seeks to write what Saidiya Hartman calls a "romance that exceeds the fictions of history,"[61]. This hunger to produce stories that heal, provide closure, narrate resistance, humanize, restore dignity, solve puzzles, answer impossible questions, and provide a usable past from which we can "imagine a free state," i.e. birth an abolitionist and anticolonial future from the violence of the now, is a particular wound carried by the descendant in the archive for which there is no redress other than narrative and poetics. It is an impossible debt, beyond reparation[62].

Instead of documents that could fulfill the criteria for enrollment and recognition for my family I encountered the story of fictions about my own direct ancestors and community that produced our dispossession. These fictions could be countered and complicated with other forms of evidence, oral histories and personal archives, the documents held in private collection by relatives. However, in examining what other narratives and evidences I had access to as a descendant sometimes what I found instead was a further production of fiction, of a fiction layered upon a fiction that internalized the logics of genocide, enslavement, and dispossession rather than challenging it. I learned quickly to hold my assumptions at the door of the archive, to not get my hopes up that anything would be learned, clarified, gained, or understood by the way a government, a library, a city, or any other colonial institution gathered and accumulated things it wanted to remember. I learned to cultivate suspicion. To imagine. To speculate. To read between the lines. To ask my ancestors for guidance, and more often than not, protection. The affective experience of the archive to descendants is a second violence in the encounter with the

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[61] Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in two acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.
[62] Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in two acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.; Mbembe, Achille. "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits." *Refiguring the Archive*, 2011, 19–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_2.

documentation of violences upon our ancestors, thus the archive informs our historical trauma as it produces wounds in the now.

Unexplainable things happen in the archive when you are a descendant. Your relatives randomly show up to the library while you are there and tell you stories that exceed the narrative produced from colonial documents. You sit silently in cold rooms with other descendants, wordlessly bonding over the ache in your chests as you read unspeakable things about your people. Or you go to another archive and find that every paper in every box tells a secret of your family, a secret that opens wounds. A secret that would forever redefine the way you see yourself, your family, and your most intimate relationships. A secret that needed to find its way to you. Now. Here. At this moment in your life. And all you can do is go sit in your car shaking, smudge and pray. This has been the archive for me, as a descendant.

The positionality of the descendant to the archive is disruptive and excessive, we are not supposed to exist, and archives often have no protocol for dealing with us. I was often reluctant to disclose myself as a descendant to archivists and historical gatekeepers. I sought mission records of my family from Immaculate Conception Church in Yuma and from the archdiocese in San Diego, in both cases I received exceptionally rude and hostile responses that the church's policy is not to provide archival access to Indigenous descendants. Having seen some of the church's records in other collections, I know these records contain narratives of violence that the church does not want to be held accountable for. In other archives my position as a descendant became difficult because I was viewed as a source from which information could be extracted, I was asked to help arrange and catalogue disorganized collections, to provide explanatory details to documents, to translate and decipher materials written in archaic Spanish cursive script. In other archives I became a threat, I was surveilled and repeatedly scolded for how I handled

documents to the point where it became difficult and uncomfortable to finish my research. It was rare that I was welcomed into the archival space as a researcher and allowed to just conduct my research, (a notable exception to this was the Yuma Historical Society, where I enjoyed a collaborative and dignified experience).

I argue that the descendant of colonial violence in the encounter with the archive is a positionality formed by an unimaginable, impossible spatial excess. In the words of Audre Lorde, we move into spaces in which "we were never meant to survive," and seek "a now that can breed / futures / like bread in our children's mouths / so their dreams will not reflect / the death of ours,"[63]. In this chapter I consider how the descendant in the archive produces a spatial excess that unsettles the archive as tomb, as construct of death through the statecraft of the colonizer[64] and through the act of survival and a critical encounter with narratives of our ancestors transforms the archive into womb, into a place that can breed futures of land and freedom through calls to action in the now[65]. This is not an argument for the production of counter narratives, but rather a complication of the idea that narratives exist in binaries of power from above and power from below. I draw instead on Indigenous narrative practices to consider the idea of a polyphonic and fluid narrative epistemology[66] that moves within the relationship of the storyteller to the story receiver[67] as way of producing excessive knowledge beyond colonial

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[63] Lorde, Audre. *A litany for survival*. Blackwells Press, 1981.
[64] Stoler, Ann Laura. "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form." *Refiguring the Archive*, 2011, 83–102. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_7.; Mbembe, Achille. "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits." *Refiguring the Archive*, 2011, 19–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_2.; Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in two acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.
[65] Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in two acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.; Nuttall, Sarah. "Literature and the archive: The biography of texts." In *Refiguring the Archive*, pp. 283-300. Springer, Dordrecht, 2002.
[66] Hamilton, Carolyn. "'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving." *Refiguring the Archive*, 2011, 209–28. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_13.
[67] Wilson, Shawn. 2008. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.; "Chapter 15: Offering our stories: resistance narratives and the marketing of justice." Research Justice: Methodologies for Social Change. Ed. Andrew Jolivette. Bristol, UK: Policy Press. 2015.

binaries. Towards this work I construct a felt methodology of fleshing the archive through descendant spatial excess.

Esselen and Chumash poet and scholar Deborah Miranda calls the work that Indigenous descendants do in the colonial archives fleshing the archive, and has described this process as the methodology for her groundbreaking text *Bad Indians: A tribal memoir* [68]. Miranda argues that Indigenous descendants flesh the archive in part because our bodies themselves have constituted the archives, in the material sense of how colonial archives and museums are formed through collections of the body parts and remains of Indigenous peoples, and through our physical connection to these ancestors who have been captured, desecrated, collected, owned, made property, and studied by the archive [69].

This interruption can be visualized through the performances of Payómkawichum, Ipi, and Mexican-American artist James Luna, as he staged his own body for exhibition, challenging the temporal distancing between the violences of museum and archival collections of the past and the now[70]. By reproducing the collection and display of Indigenous bodies in the present Luna invokes the material presence of the descendant, of the still living Indigenous person, in relation to the colonial collection of the past and the ways that colonial collection and documentation practices still mark the flesh of the living by inscribing Indigenous peoples as objects, as death, as past. That Luna's physical presence in the museum calls the museum into question as an institution of genocide is the power of the spatial excess of the descendant. His body is unruly in its non-death, in its living, in its existence in spaces it is not meant to be alive in. Luna's performance work can be seen as fleshing the archive as he interrupts the space of

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[68] Miranda, Deborah A. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Berkeley: Heyday Press. 2013.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Caldwell, Ellen C. "How Luiseno Indian Artist James Luna Resists Cultural Appropriation." JSTOR Daily. December 25, 2015. https://daily.jstor.org/native-disruptions-with-artist-james-luna/

collection that is meant to function as a tomb with a living body, presenting a challenge to the archive/museum's power to dispossess through documentation, collection, and exhibition. Achilles Mbembe argues that the archive is not data but a material and imaginary status of death constructed through a determination of what is worthy of possession by the institution and can be constructed into a narrative[71]. Through possession of materials the archive constructs a temporal disruption between the past as dead time and the now as living time, the materials of the past become constructs of dead time because they are dispossessed from their creator and given through the archive to the institution in order to construct its own imaginary. Mbmebe argues that archives are born from the desire to reassemble traces of death and "thwart their dispersal" in ways that develop particular narratives of the past which the dead themselves may be hostile to. He states that the disciplining logic of the archive in relation to the dead is that "the dead should be formally prohibited from stirring up disorder in the present. The best way to ensure that the dead do not stir up disorder is not only to bury them, but also to bury their 'remains', the 'debris',"[72]. For a descendant to encounter the archive is to exceed this temporal violence by fleshing the archive with a now-life connected to the past-death, reconstituting the circularity and multidirectionality of time through alterative narrative possibilities than the story constructed by the archive in its institionalizing discipline. This is the discomfort for the museum-goer produced by Luna's living body in the exhibit, the encounter with that which is living but should be dead, that which was never meant to survive.

As descendants, our own encounters with the archive are both encounters with our ancestors, peoples, languages, lands, and cultures and encounters with how all of that has been

[71] Mbembe, Achille. "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits." *Refiguring the Archive*, 2011, 19–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_2.
[72] Ibid.

desecrated and violated by the existence and manufacturing of the colonial archive itself. It is a dual experience of encountering violence that triggers our historical trauma (death and dispossession) and of encountering that which gives us life, our origins and *difuntos,* (the creative womb of the past). In her poem, *When My Body Is The Archive*, Miranda uses repetition to provide a felt theory of this experience to articulate the particular form of violence that occurs when Indigenous descendants are now dependent upon colonial archives to re-know ourselves as Indigenous peoples because of genocide and cultural loss[73]. She challenges the power of the archive over this re-knowing because our own embodied and felt experiences of being a descendant in encounter with the colonial archive is both a contestation to its power of erasure to suggest that we are still here and a declaration that we still know things that the archive doesn't know and cannot contain or possess.

> When my body is the archive, researchers leave their tracks all over my language, my religion, my inheritance.
> When my body is the archive, my stories belong to someone else.
> When my body is the archive, gatekeepers don't like to share their passwords.
> When my body is the archive, someone else always gets the by-line.
> When my body is the archive, my grandmothers are data proving our inevitable demise.
> When my body is the archive, I am an uncomfortable anomaly, a ghost who has gone from exotic creature to pain in the ass.
> When my body is the archive, you still insist your way is the right way to read me.
> When my body is the archive, nothing is sacred.
> When my body is the archive, secret doors respond only to my fingerprints.
> When my body is the archive, I hear the sound of a million untold stories clamoring for release.
> When my body is the archive, I carry my research with me everywhere I go. [74]

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[73] Miranda, Deborah A. 2017. "When My Body Is The Archive." Bad NDNS. 2017. https://badndns.blogspot.com/2017/05/when-my-body-is-archive.html.; Dian Million, "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 53–76, https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.0.0043.
[74] Miranda, Deborah A. 2017. "When My Body Is The Archive." Bad NDNS. 2017. https://badndns.blogspot.com/2017/05/when-my-body-is-archive.html.

The poem progresses towards two conclusions. First, the archive is made flesh and becomes personified by the author and the other Indigenous peoples around her, “the archive sits down beside you on the plane to that Indigenous Symposium in Frankfurt.” And second, the violence of the colonial interpretation of the archive against the interpretations of Indigenous descendants escalates into a confrontation between what is felt/known and what is theorized/possessed, “the archive was never inanimate / the archive was never dead / the archive / was never / yours.” The narratives we carry, our stories, oral histories, and the emotions, senses, and feelings that infuse them with a deeper sense of knowing, a knowing through memory, culture, our bodies, and experiences are more than just counter to or complimentary of the colonial archive and western historical understandings of our past and our peoples. These felt descendant knowledges are more than, in excess, beyond, and thus in many ways illegible to the archive and colonial western ways of knowing.

I have at times been tempted to correct the archive when I have found it in error of my stories. But as a story carrier, I became more interested in learning a different version of the stories I knew. I wanted to open myself to hold them all together, to feel and think through what their togetherness would mean and what it could say as more restorative and generative *difunto/fuente, difuente* to my own futurity than a battle between my (our) version of what happened and the archive’s. Difunto, ancestor in Spanish, is often also used as source, to refer to those from where I descend. Fuente is a spring, the literal word for source. In my pocha Spanglish I sometimes confuse and compound the two words, *difuente*. It is not a correct word but a pochismo to articulate my bordered experience. Difuente is the best way I have to describe these stories create me, uncreate me, move through me, both as descent and source; as a form of

profundidad, depth, that is dark matter to the fixity of the archive. The space between the stars, between what is on the page and in my body.

The Unruly Bodies of Felt Theory: descendant spatial excess beyond archival recognition

The excessive space of the descendant body is mapped through generative ecologies of meaning, it is located within and moving beyond the space created by the relationship between the living-now and the creative womb of the archive. Mapping these ecologies and relations is a method of fleshing the archive through felt theory to consider the relationships between the unruly bodies [75] of descendants and the constellation culture(s), geographies, and systems of power we have been and still are enmeshed within through story maps to a multitude of possible locations, across the circularity of time-space from the past-death to the now-living to the future-free state[76]. The concept of the unruly body has been developed by queer, Haitian woman of size writer Roxanne Gay to use story, specifically memoir, as a way to talk about "what it means to live in an unruly body in a world that is always trying to control, discipline, and punish women's bodies,"[77]. Gay describes her body-memoir *Hunger*, a memoir told through the story of her relationship to her body, as a way to "take control of the public narrative of my body,"[78]. She theorizes the unruly body as one which defies discipline and conformity, that forms an excessive spatiality through its undisciplinarity and uncontrollability, through the ways it cannot be ruled and defies dominant social rules and expectations. I argue that the embodied position of the

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[75] Gay, Roxanne. "The Body Is Unruly," Medium, 2017, https://medium.com/s/unrulybodies/the-body-is-unruly-15fa352904cf; Gay, Roxanne. *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body* (Harper, 2017).
[76] Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in two acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.; Mbembe, Achille. "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits." *Refiguring the Archive*, 2011, 19–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_2.
[77] Gay, Roxanne. "The Body Is Unruly," Medium, 2017, https://medium.com/s/unrulybodies/the-body-is-unruly-15fa352904cf; Gay, Roxanne. *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body* (Harper, 2017).
[78] Ibid.

descendant vis-a-vi the archive constitutes an unruly body, a spatial-temporal excess in the ways that the descendant's living presence, physical body and embodied felt experience, defies the expectation of the dead past of the archive to be cut off from the living now.

The spatial excess of descendant felt theory, our fleshing the archive, I argue is a method for this work that moves beyond the muddy vagueness of theory made in abstraction as a way of thinking through the ontological experience and provides a grounded method to think through the ontological position through specific genealogies. I am not arguing necessarily for historical specificity and case studies as the solution. Rather, I follow the work of Indigenous feminist Dian Million in arguing that felt theory and narrative are tools emerging from genealogical and embodied narratives can do important cartographic work to articulate a field of relations and to de-articulate formations of power, to call power into question, and to manifest alternative sources of power, in essence to make power, that exceeds binary and essentialist thought[79]. As Million explains,

> The difficulty and the difference between the usual social historian and me might be my unwillingness to distinguish one suffering from another. Even though I know intellectually that the agony of the child in (name community) now is not the same experience as the child raised forty years ago in the confines of (name a residential school), I cannot shake the feeling of déja vu. I feel a desire to feel/link these experiences that is stronger than any knowledge I might have of the value of their historical "specificity." In Native way, these are experiences already related by an archipelago of stories, the ones we tell ourselves outside of academia, [80].

Though Million may not be a direct descendant of the children in the residential boarding schools she studies, she is a descendant of a community effected by the residential school experience and this connection manifests as an affective response to the archive of

[79] Million, Dian. 2009. "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History." *Wicazo Sa Review* 24 (2): 53–76. https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.0.0043.; Smith, Andrea. 2008. "American Studies without America : Native Feminisms and the Nation-State." *American Quarterly* 60 (2): 309–15.
[80] Dian Million, "There Is a River in Me: Theory from Life," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 31–42.

residential school narratives and materials. Million argues that "theory is always practical first, rather than abstract," [81] in the sense that theory emerges from the experiential, observed, narrative, and material, especially in non-western epistemologies. She argues that Indigenous peoples articulate felt experiences that emerge from stories, communities, and their languages as a way of theorizing that questions, interprets, frames, analyzes, and structures ways of understanding power relations and that this can, as in the work of residential school testimonials and in Native women's organizing within their own communities, be a force for systemic change.

The methodological examples I build on of fleshing the archive through felt theory are Deborah A. Miranda's *Bad Indians: A tribal memoir* and Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother: A journey along the Atlantic slave route*[82]. Miranda's *Bad Indians* defies genre through an interweaving of poetry, archival research, mapping and illustrations, family stories, and memoir to tell the story of how the violence of Spanish colonialism and the mission system has impacted California Indians through drawing a narrative genealogy of violence between rape, slavery, and genocide in the missions and the manifestation of domestic violence and rape in the author's own family. Miranda's text creates a demand in the present against the murder and assault of Indigenous women by documenting the historical trauma within Indigenous communities from slavery and genocide, refusing to mark these temporalities as separate and unrelated, as she literally draws historical trauma genealogical charts connecting the colonial violence from Spain and the Catholic church to current issues in Indigenous communities such as child abuse, homelessness, and alcoholism. The text begins with the assertion that, "California is a story.

[81] Ibid.
[82] Miranda, Deborah A. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Berkeley: Heyday Press. 2013.; Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose your mother: A journey along the Atlantic slave route*. Macmillan, 2008.

California is many stories," laying out the construction of the book as an intertextual conversation across locations such as the archive, the body, the family, newspaper accounts, school projects, and public monuments. Miranda's own story of her coming of age and her relationship with her parents and ancestors within this larger narrative of the Spanish colonization of Indigenous California and the construction of memory about the Spanish missions that serves to justify ongoing settler presence and the erasure of California Indigenous peoples. Miranda's combination of archival research and embodied, felt experience told through poetry, family stories, and personal memories that expand on her ancestral connections as a descendant and her lived experiences of violence and trauma rooted in the ongoing process of colonialism unravels settler narratives by creating a mapping of complex genealogies that exceed the spatial-temporal confines of settler logics. Her descendant body and its felt, embodied epistemologies interrupt between analyses of archival materials, especially because as she notes, "I have spent a lifetime being told I am not a real Indian," and that "all you California Indians are extinct,"[83]. By being here, by telling a story about the continuim of Spanish and Anglo / U.S. colonialism of Indigenous California that centers on her life as a descendant now and her relationships with her family and ancestors, Miranda makes the story of colonialization a current process and not a past event in a way that a traditional historical narrative could not. The stakes of undoing colonialism are processed through Miranda's body in the here and now, centering her capacity to survive and her family's capacity as descendants to regenerate their ways and nation. The story she tells is a story that uses the archive to open space for Indigenous futures beyond colonialism. In the last section of the book, "To Make Story Again in the World," Miranda explains that "fourth graders, their parents, their teachers, tourists to the missions, even

[83] Miranda, Deborah A. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Berkeley: Heyday Press. 2013.

historians, often learn and perpetuate only one story about California Indians: conquest, subjugation, defeat, disappearance."[84] The problem with this story she writes is that it is "one-dimensional, flat, and worst of all, untrue."[85] In response to this problem Miranda argues that narratives about the colonial past need to make fractured stories whole through a "multilayered web of community reaching backward in time and forward in dream, questing deeply into the country of unknown memory."[86] She discusses how some of her stories, such as her grandfather's story about his being drawn to a light attop Mt. Diablo, can be interpretted in multiple ways, as an "example of the foolishness of a naive Indigenous man, his failure to comprehend modern technology- industry and capitalism victorious in their exploitation of land and indigenity," or as a metaphor for Indigenous futurity, "that he was being pulled back home to his beginning, to the source of his Indigenous identity."[87] Miranda refuses to juxtapose these interpretations into the oppositional binary of truth and fiction. "There is yet another option, a third way to understand Tom's story. We can look at both simultaneously," she argues, as she analyzes how putting the two stories together as one truth, and reflecting on how both stories are situated in her own embodied memory of listening to her grandfather's stories, complicates them in deeper ways than if each story were analyzed separately or in opposition to each other or without the spatial grounding of her temporal and genealogical relationship to her grandfather and to his ancestors for whom the mountain was a holy place of emergence. This third path of holding multiple versions of a story or multiple stories together through embodied felt theory is one method of how descendants flesh the archive.

[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

Hartman's book "Lose Your Mother: A journey along the atlantic slave route" also presents an embodied felt methodology for engaging histories and geographies of dispossession. Hartman is an African American woman exploring her connection to chattel slavery, her embodied felt experiences in the archives of slavery and in fieldwork in Africa, her family, her genealogy, and her memoir of blackness, a critical analysis of black and African politics and the political / embodied relationships between the geographies and histories of Africa and Black America, and finally, a theoretical musing on the politics of liberation and abolitionist futurity. What Hartman's felt embodied memoir is able to add to her analysis of the slavery archive is the affective experience of "being a stranger" that she describes slavery as creating a natal alienation that makes the slave "stateless", without place, people, or kin. "The domain of the stranger is always an elusive elsewhere. I was born in another country, where I also felt like an alien... I had grown weary of being stateless. Secretly I wanted to belong somewhere or, at least, I wanted a convenient explanation of why I felt like a stranger."[88] This frames her analysis of Black politics, "racial solidarity was expressed in the language of kinship because it both evidenced the wound and attempted to heal it. The slave and the ex-slave wanted what had been severed: kin."[89] Hartman takes a genealogical approach to her analysis of slavery because she describes herself as "a descendant of the enslaved" who is also "the afterlife of slavery", which she theorizes as the state on-going anti-black violence and death that continues today. Her desire in the text to understand slavery is also a desire to understand the afterlife of slavery, the anti-Black violence of now, and to understand herself as a descendant of the enslaved, within the violence of now and the past, imagining a liberated future. Hartman's position as a descendant is a collective position, as she notes that her own direct lineal genealogy cannot be traced due to the violence of

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[88] Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose your mother: A journey along the Atlantic slave route*. Macmillan, 2008.
[89] Ibid.

slavery upon Black kinship. This disconnection from genealogy positions her as a collective subject in relationship potentially with all enslaved, thus the reclaiming of her positionality as a descendant is a powerful felt embodied experience that complicates her approach to the archive as she is not disconnected from the slaves she encounters in the archive, but rather, they are possible kin. The dispossession of body, geography, and genealogy becomes one of the spaces of enslavement that her archival work seeks to understand. Like me, Hartman writes about discovering testimonies of her direct ancestors (her great-grandmother's mother) in an archive while doing her dissertation research[90]. And like me she reads the testimony to the archive as a lie, a fiction, "when asked what she remembered about slavery, she replied, 'not a thing.' I was crushed. I knew this wasn't true. I recognized that a host of good reasons explained my great-great-grandmother's reluctance to talk about slavery with a white interviewer in Dixie in the age of Jim Crow. But her silence stirred my own questions about memory and slavery: What is it we chose to remember about the past and what is it we will to forget?"[91] She asks later in the text in reflection on this experience with the silences and fictions of the archive which deepens her meloncholic longing for kin and story into disappointment, "how does one write about an encounter with nothing?" The questions that emerged from the silences and fictions told by the ancestor in the archive open a space to consider the constructions of slavery memory. It also opens territory to imagine the temporal connection between the past, the present, and the possible future beyond slavery. The bulk of Hartman's text considers the history of slavery, her family stories, her felt embodied memoir of fieldwork in Ghana and archival research, and theorizes the positionality and work of slavery in the past and the present through her critical lens as a descendant. The final chapter however is a futuristic imagining of a world beyond slavery,

[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

beyond even slavery's current violent afterlife. The chapter is a thick, emotional description of Hartman's growing disconnection from her African colleagues on a research road trip to sites of slavery history in Ghana. The disconnection and lack of kinship and comradery she feels with African researchers emerges from the fact that she is an affected descendant of the enslaved and they are not, they feel no ancestral connection to the enslaved and thus do not experience the affect of historical trauma on the tour. Hartman's descendant status and the affect that is generated by this status sets her apart from other researchers, but also gives her an insight into slavery and the impacts of its history that is unreachable, indeed unthinkable, to her companions who crack jokes about slavery and play around with actual shackles used to once confine slaves. Hartman's inability to find a common vocabularly on slavery with her African colleagues causes her disillusionment in Pan-Africanism as a politic based on a regeneration of "fraternity and sorority," between Africa and the diaspora as she saw and experienced more and more the depth of disconnection between the two experiences. Unable to connect to her colleagues she finds instead the archive of the stateless in the clusters of trees that mark sites of destroyed villages and the remanents of a wall that once protected a refuge destination from slave raiders where she learns that "flight was the language of freedom". Through speculative fiction, memoir, ethnography, and archival research Hartman theorizes the journey of flight for the refugee avoiding slavery and imagines a fugitive futurism that connects the past of slavery with a demand to address its afterlife in the present. In thinking through flight and statelessness she distinguishes the desire of fugitivity from the desire of a romanticized past of "kings and queens," "it wasn't the dream of a White House, even if it was in Harlem, but of a free territory. It was a dream of autonomy rather than nationhood. It was a dream of elsewhere, with all its

promises and dangers, where the stateless might, at last, thrive."[92] This autonomy futurity of fugitivity is a space for descendants of the enslaved and for those who have lost their kin. It is a place of home and family regeneration, an otherwise, an elsewhere.

I situate Hartman's text alongside Miranda's for methodological reasons of how both are examples of what I am calling the spatial excess of the descendant in the archive and how both engage a felt methodology of fleshing the archive. But I am also interested in how the geographies of decolonization that Miranda's text builds towards sit in relation to the geographies of abolitionist and fugitive futurity that Hartman's text builds towards. I am curious about how that space of colonization, slavery, and racial violence constructs social-political relationships in the now between Black, Indigeneous, and brown racialized descendants and we all individually and collectively could move in that future free space Hartman and Miranda imagine. What would we need to do to get there, and is there any there there while we are situated as we are and have been in the here now. Is there any here here that can get us to there?

In my experience of fleshing the archive, in doing archival work in Yuma, I came across the limitations of thinking about historical analysis as a tension between a dominant narrative and counter narrative [93] or between a visible narrative / text and a hidden narrative or subtext [94]. What I found of my own family, my own ancestors and people in the archive was much more complicated than that. Million raises a question about how we see the historical oppression of Indigenous peoples within narratives of subjugation, framed by an elusive tension between agency and victimization, [95] I do not want to reduce the story of my ancestors to a dialectic

[92] Ibid.
[93] Gilly, Adolfo. *La Revolución Interrumpida*. Cuidad de Mexico: Ediciones ERA. 2007.
[94] Scott, James C. *Domination and the Hidden Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1992.
[95] Million, Dian. "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History." *Wicazo Sa Review* 24 (2): 53–76. 2009. https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.0.0043.

between agency and victimization, or between resistance and survival. I know them better than that. Rather, what I feel is a responsibility upon me as a descendant is to try to hold more than one version of the story, to know the story in its myriad of different possible retellings better than the archive, to be able to adapt the story as needed, depending on who I am talking to. This is one of the things I learned from elders. The fluidity of stories, even oral histories, is that they are less about facts, and more about relationships, [96]. Stories change as listeners and readers change. Stories change in relation to time and space, even the written story changes the second or third time we read it, as we see more, feel more, know more, think through different details. Million defines a felt analysis, one that includes consideration of the affect, as one "that creates a context for a more complex 'telling'."[97] Being a descendant in the archive, especially given my own problem-filled and uninnocent journey to getting there that I am weaving in and out of this story, has allowed me to disrupt certain lies the archive tells and power relations that the archive constructs, but it also allows me to exceed the binary of this disruption through holding more than one story, through exceeding what can be limited to just a disruption or counter narrative. I am not arguing that I have found some kind of "truth". Rather, what I have found is just more interesting questions.

Once I began to look into our family history and community history I started to look for documents that I suspected would be in the archive. I found two sets of documents, the expected, which are the typical things genealogists turn towards in uncovering a family narrative and

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[96] Wilson, Shawn. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing. 2008.; Miranda, Deborah A. "When My Body Is The Archive." Bad NDNS. 2017. https://badndns.blogspot.com/2017/05/when-my-body-is-archive.html.; Hamilton, Carolyn. "'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving." *Refiguring the Archive*, 2011, 209–28. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_13.

[97] Million, Dian. "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History." *Wicazo Sa Review* 24 (2): 53–76. 2009. https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.0.0043.

looking for evidence of familial relationships like censuses, Indian rolls, birth and death records, church records, and military records. Many of these kinds of documents structured a story of the community's relationships, who was possibly a cousin to who, which people cohabitated together, how people died from causes related to their exploitation as mine workers such as pulmonary diseases. Sometimes there were moments of surprise in these documents, such as when church records revealed that a father thought to be estranged from his son was a witness at his son's wedding, which suggests at a least some kind of ongoing connection or reconciliation. But much of the information was expected, including the ways that Indigenous people were misclassified as White, Mexican, or Black when not living on the reservation. Then there were the unexpected documents, such as the allotment records that confirmed the government strategy of initially recognizing the ongoing Indigeneity and cohesive community of the O'odham laborers in Yuma, or the unanticipated confessions in essays and oral histories created by the descendants of hacienda owning Mexican families that confirmed that these plantations functioned through the enslavement of Yaqui and O'odham peoples despite moves by descendants of the enslaved to reimagine themselves as settlers, or moments in ephemera that map different versions of family and identity such as the photo I describe in chapter four. Being able to navigate between the expected and the unexpected, to flesh their connections to each other beyond just contradiction is how descendants disrupt the linearity and binary formation of the archive. We imagine three-dimensional spaces within and in excess of the tension between two lines of narrative.

Chapter 3: Cartographies of dispossession

Buildings of Memory

I write wandering around on a self-guided tour of the Yuma territorial prison. I visit the place often, as it sits above old Main Street, a few blocks from the Yuma Historical Archives, Quechan reservation, and the most decent locally-owned coffee shop where my elders prefer to meet up at over the corporate chains. Yuma, like most other small cities is over run with generic corporate chain stores, making it more and more indistinguishable from any other city of its size from Arkansas to Nevada. This design is by intention but infuriates my older family members who wish they could still tell the difference between one town and the next town over. Character still matters. In Yuma, the prison is one of those few remaining historical landmarks that defines the town from the next town over, from Algodones, a medical tourism and agricultural enclave on the Mexican side of the border, or Gila Bend and it's mix-match of giant neon signs in the shape of flying saucers and rusted metal statues of dinosaurs further down the interstate. Today, it is the crisp edge of winter turning to an early and dry spring. Mesquite trees mottle the white light of the desert sun into delicate lace work upon the sidewalks and adobe walls. The prison cemetery sits atop the precipitous of a ledge that once kissed the banks of the mighty, muddy Colorado River. Now it is a greying bone yard on a rocky cliff that is so dry its sandy slopes look as if carved of cement. What is left of the dammed and desecrated river trickles thirty feet below me, a meandering wash of low water barely a foot deep throughout most of the year.

The riverbed below the prison is now filled in to create a city park. There are ornamental cacti scarred by the carvings of tourists' initials. Settlers were here they say. There is a public bathroom, paved service roads, a parking lot, and bike paths. Some cottonwood, arrowweed, and chaparral still assert their ancestral rights against cement and thrust a dusty branch towards the

sky. But a growing number of invasive settler plants- Middle Eastern palms, Australian eucalyptus, Amazonian bougainvillea, and a smattering of boxy shrubs that evoke images more of the grounds of the African or Asian plantation garden of a colonial civil servant than of the Sonoran desert- have been brought in to make the place more attractive to snow birds- the middle aged, middle class, mid-west originating, white settler engine of Yuma's current economy. The people who really like the predictable mediocrity of chain stores.

I walk down the path from the prison museum to the cemetery parking lot past a sign warning to watch my step for "dangerous insects and reptiles". Unfortunately, I see no such exciting animal. But I do spot a strategically placed chaparral (or shegoi in O'odham ñeok,) near the entrance, a subtle reminder to be respectful, that Indigenous people are also buried here. The cemetery looks like others of its age, with efficiently organized rows of stone piles marking the graves and providing a weighted cover in case of flooding. I walk carefully to the commemorative historical plaque and read the names. These dead are remembered as villains, the luridly romantic bandits and criminals of the wild west. The stuff of Hollywood and dime novels. But in reality, not everyone here was a dastardly evil-doer or romantic gunslinger. Here lay Indigenous peoples who struggled to survive the gold and land rushes that decimated their food supplies and drained their water sources. Here lay activists who rose up against slumlords, miner and timber barons, and fought for the defense of workers. Here lay women who navigated violent man camps, sexual assault, and limited survival alternatives to prostitution. Here lay Chinese immigrants who bravely moved to the mining boom towns and navigated survival during the times of indenture, segregation, lynching campaigns, and exclusion. Here are Afro-Mexicans who came from the mines and former slave communities of northern Mexico and African-Americans who came before and after the civil war to what was until 1912 still mostly

Indian country, hotly contested over by confederate sympathizing colonial powers. It is a fluctuating border space between tribal nations that resisted Spanish colonialism but were decimated by the California gold rush and the Gadsden Purchase. An area always Indigenous, but once under colonial regimes of Mexico, then San Diego county, then New Mexico territory, then Arizona territory, then finally the state of Arizona when border militarization began during the Mexican revolution. And yes, here are also thieves, murders, bandits, and other kinds of basic settlers. But it is not their stories that really interest me.

The Yuma Territorial Penitentiary is now a Wild West museum. In previous incarnations it was a strategic river crossing point, prison, a school ground, and a decrepit ruin. It sits upon Prison Hill and faces the town of Yuma, the Quartermaster Depot, the 8 Interstate Highway, and the transcontinental railroad on one side, the Colorado river on another, and across the river the Quechan nation, historical Fort Yuma, St. Thomas Indian Mission Catholic Church, and the remains of the Fort Yuma Indian Boarding School. The connection between the river, the border, and these particular institutions: city, transportation routes, prison, wild west museum, Spanish mission, military fort, border check point and customs house, Indian boarding school, and reservation; are not coincidental, but rather articulate how colonialism manifests itself through the layering and intersection of institutions of extraction, property, transportation, fabrication of memory and identity, assimilation, and incarceration.

A large billboard advertising the museum on the highway 8 as you drive into town shows a ghostly mug shot of a young, bald, harden-faced white man with what would commonly be described as a “crazy eyes” expression in a striped suit, a wild west criminal, scary but cool. It is uncannily similar to the advertisements of incarcerated prohibition era mafia men used to sell tours to Alcatraz Island in Northern California, another sacred site turned territorial prison that

was established to punish Indigenous parents who refused to allow their children to be stolen by boarding schools. But most visitors to San Francisco don't know that detail. What Alcatraz sells is the Hollywood glamor of Al Capon, and the Yuma prison is no different. Yuma knows its market. "Crazy eyes gold rush dude", a kind of local "Billy the Kid", is the image that attracts here. This is the image Yuma sells to tourists, the place of Western movies, the place where hard-living independent white men made their fortunes violently, resisting as much against the rapidly expanding reach of the federal government, morality, and society as they did against the elements and "hostile Indians".

The consumers of this image I encounter on my various tours of the site have ranged from midwestern Christian fundamentalists, to confederate flag waving biker gangs, sunburnt retirees in Walmart clothes, heteronormative WASPy families, to young couples assessing potential marriage locations for rental. Almost all of the visitors I have seen were white people, many of whom scowled at my brown presence, if they saw me at all. Most of the time I was apparently invisible to them and was literally walked over and stumbled into and grumbled at. But a few tourists could be what I consider to be *Hispanics*, or white aspiring brown folks, who have also consumed the same Hollywood images, see their own Spanish ancestors as also settler pioneers, and thus, are attracted to idea of the west that Anglo-settler colonialism promotes. This is also not coincidental. Aside from staging your wedding at the prison, you can also rent it for parties, stay overnight on ghost tours, or participate in historical re-enactments of famous escape attempts where you will be shot at by the prison's famous Gatling gun, filled with blanks, of course.

As a child I spent many nights struggling to sleep on the plastic orange chairs of prison lobby waiting rooms. Shuffled through the body searches and plexiglass compartments of

separation from family members who had done some societal wrong and gotten caught at it, typically drugs or petty theft, but also sometimes serious violence. There are years of my life that formulate in memory as these waiting rooms, the visitation rooms, the voice of a mustached guard, the sight of a gun in holster, the smell of ammonia, sweat, and vomit, uncomfortable orange plastic chairs. I once dragged my partner on one of my research visits to the Yuma Prison. He has spent many previous years of his life incarcerated, for being an impoverished man of color with little alternatives than participating in the marijuana underground economy that will probably be completely legalized in a few years to the benefit largely of white businessmen. It was beyond his imagination why anyone, aside from a researcher like myself, would ever pay someone to let them go kick it in a prison, much less, get married in a place like this. To which I mumbled a feminist joke about the similarities between institutions of patriarchy, but I admit, he has a point. There is a difference between those of us for whom the prison is a visceral horror and those who come here for fun and laughs. We have different memories.

The Yuma Crossing

Yuma began and continues as Indigenous land. The settler city was built around three central extractive activities- gold mining, agriculture, and transportation (of military, settlers, and the goods that support them and their economies). The Indigenous mapping of this land to the numerous Indigenous peoples who have a historic relationship to this place, Quechan, Cocopah, Pii-Pash, and Hia C'ed O'odham, centers on the meeting of the Colorado and Gila Rivers that sustained life and the web of sacred living places-mountains, valleys, and expanses of desert- that the rivers move through. The colonial cartography of this region centers on extraction and carcerality. The first colonizers to attempt to take the land were the Spanish who came to the

region looking for gold, areas to establish missions for the harvest of souls, ranches, and plantations, and to defend their route between central Mexico and northern California. The Spanish began exploring the region in the mid-1500s but did not establish a permanent settlement in the area until nearly two hundred and fifty years later in the late 1700s[98]. Mission Puerto de Purísima Concepción was founded in October of 1780 on the western banks of the Colorado river at the easiest point of crossing it, near where the Gila river and Colorado meet, known now as the Yuma Crossing. Then in January of 1781 the Mission San Pedro y San Pablo de Bicuñer was established about ten miles northeast of the Yuma Crossing on the California side of the Colorado river. Like most Spanish missions these were strategically placed in areas already widely populated by Indigenous peoples, with access to fertile land and water and long-used Indigenous trade and travel routes. The Spanish surveyed and mined for gold in the region, stole and occupied the best farmland from the Quechan people, and conducted the usual atrocities of rape, massacre, and enslavement of the local population as they did in all of their missions. In July of 1781 the Quechan people and their allies (most likely Kumeyaay and other Colorado river tribes) rebelled, burning the missions, killing the priests and soldiers, and taking the women and children. The devastation was effective enough to prevent the Spanish from returning for nearly a hundred years, when after Anglo settlers invaded the area during the California gold rush Spanish colonists returned.

Anglo settlers first entered the region in the 1820s to extract animal furs such as otter and beaver[99]. The Yuma Crossing was one of only a handful of overland routes between the U.S. territories in the east and California. These routes that had been long established by Indigenous

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[98] Trafzer, Clifford E., and Steve George. *Prison Centennial, 1876-1976: A Pictorial History of the Arizona Territorial Prison at Yuma.* Yuma County Historical Society, 1980.
[99] Ibid.

peoples for travel and trade between Indigenous nations and were violently taken over by settlers and the U.S. military during the gold rush and war with Mexico. The route from San Diego to Yuma was created by trade and travel between Quechan and Kumeyaay peoples. Coastal goods such as shells and salt that were brought across the Colorado river were traded inland along the Gila river for cotton, food items, copper, turquoise, macaws, and pottery materials from O'odham communities, whose large population centers like Casa Grande were trading hubs connected to routes that extended south to Honduras and north to Canada[100].

The California gold rush and the U.S.-Mexico war in the 1840s then brought floods of thousands of settlers across Arizona and into California[101]. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, established the borders between the U.S. and Mexico along the Gila River, with the Yuma Crossing to serve as a border point until the Gadsden Purchase of 1853 expanded U.S. territory south to where the current border between Arizona and Sonora is. In 1849 the U.S. military established a base on the western bank of the Colorado river crossing to supply and protect the thousands of settlers moving into California[102]. The military base, initially called Camp Calhoun then later Camp Yuma, occupied nearly the exact same location as the earlier Spanish mission Puerto de Purísima Concepción. Camp Yuma was on and off occupied by the U.S. military who also established a base camp a little further down river at Pilot Knob, a large rock formation jutting into the river. In 1852 a new regimen of troops arrived and developed Camp Yuma into Fort Yuma Military Reservation, a larger, more fortified, and more heavily armed garrison[103].

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[100] See "Probable Sinagua Trade Routes and Trade Sources." Native Peoples of the Colorado Plateau Exhibit, Permanent Collection. Museum of Northern Arizona. Flagstaff, Arizona.
[101] Trafzer, Clifford E., and Steve George. *Prison Centennial, 1876-1976: A Pictorial History of the Arizona Territorial Prison at Yuma*. Yuma County Historical Society, 1980.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

The military base violently occupied Quechan land in order to take over control of the river crossing from the Quechan who had been charging settlers to cross through their territory, either by directly demanding money, requiring the purchase of Quechan products such as melons and corn, or by confiscating or "accidentally drowning" livestock they guided across the river[104]. The establishment of the military base came at the demand of settlers who did not want to pay a fair price to Indigenous peoples for crossing their lands and often intentionally stealing and destroying Indigenous food supplies and crops on their way. Once the military occupied the crossing, a variety of opportunistic settlers moved in to create river crossing businesses such as ferries, plantations, and trading posts to take over the economic activities at the crossing once controlled by the Quechan. These businesses which extracted wealth from the control of land, water, and transportation routes, combined with the explosion of local mining, eventually developed the town of Colorado City and Arizona City, which later combined and became the town of Yuma[105].

Under settler occupation the area known as the Yuma Crossing was developed into a palimpsest of inter-related colonial institutions that were structured upon a dialectic relationship between violence, intensified occupation, and extraction as a method of operation. First was the Spanish mission destroyed by Indigenous rebellion. Then was the military base Fort Yuma, which also facilitated the settler extraction industries of mining, boat and stagecoach transportation systems, plantations / Spanish haciendas and a growing townsite with markets to sell plantation grown and shipped products to miners and travelers. The site of the Yuma Crossing itself has hosted an ever-evolving set of institutions including the Spanish mission, a

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[104] Sauder, Robert. *The Yuma Reclamation Project: irrigation, Indian allotment, and settlement along the lower Colorado River*. University of Nevada Press, 2009.
[105] Ibid.; Trafzer, Clifford E., and Steve George. *Prison Centennial, 1876-1976: A Pictorial History of the Arizona Territorial Prison at Yuma*. Yuma County Historical Society, 1980.

strategic transportation juncture, the military fort, an Indian reservation, an Indian boarding school, a reconstructed mission, a border check point, a prison, another school, a train station, a freeway, and a wild west museum, who often have repurposed the very same buildings as they transform from one purpose to another. This transformation between colonial, carceral, and extractive institutions upon the same site, sometimes through the same structures and buildings, is what I term the transfiguration of colonial carceral space and illustrates the method through which multiple colonial regimes interrelate and reinforce each other in a transcolonial zone.

Across the river, slightly downstream but within eyesight of Fort Yuma is the U. S. army quartermaster depot and border customhouse, which was initially built as a supply center for the military base at Fort Yuma and thirteen other frontier military forts in the late 1800s[106]. The first version of the depot was on the western bank within the larger military fort but after a flood in 1862 it was moved across the river to higher ground[107]. The depot functioned both to supply the army and to manage the U.S.-Mexico border by establishing a customs check point where Mexicans coming from Sonora to California were charged duties. Supplies arrived overland from Fort Defiance and Santa Fe, and by steamboat up the Colorado River from San Francisco through the Sea of Cortez and were stockpiled at the depot, sent to other forts, and sold to the thousands of gold rush settlers coming through the region who sought military aid and protection from Indigenous resistance[108]. What the history of the quartermaster depot customhouse reveals is that the U.S.-Mexico border has always functioned through military occupation in order to facilitate settler colonial appropriation and extraction of Indigenous land and resources. That the same building was used to both supply the military occupation, facilitate the movements and

[106] Kerckhoff, Mary Ben. The Old Customhouse (Quartermaster's Residence At Yuma Crossing). Yuma, AZ: Assistance League of Yuma. 1976.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

extractive activities of settlers, and limit movement / extract from racialized migrants speaks to the interrelatedness of these processes as the continue to constitute the technologies of the border today. The fact that the military fort was established at the same location of the earlier Spanish mission illustrates the ways that colonial regimes build off of and through their relationship to each other in transcolonial zones. The Spanish mission functioned in much the same way as the military fort reservation. Both institutions employed an army and the use of force to occupy Indigenous land and incarcerate Indigenous peoples to facilitate the movement and extractive activities of colonizers. The fluidity between their uses and the haunting of the mission that lived on through the military fort reservation and the border customhouse is an example of the ways that colonial carceral institutions are transfigured through the layering of transcolonial occupations.

The ongoing transfiguration of Fort Yuma is described by Quechan on their website;

> Originally called Camp Calhoun, the site was first used as a U.S. Military post in 1849. A fire destroyed the original buildings. By 1855 the barracks had been rebuilt. Called Camp Yuma in 1852, it became Fort Yuma after reconstruction. Transferred to the Department of The Interior and the Quechan Indian Tribe in 1884. It became a boarding school operated by the Catholic Church until 1900,"[109].

The historical summary above reminds us that many military bases originated as colonial occupations of Indigenous lands and that Indian reservations often began as prisons for the captives of war. The reservation today still holds the name Fort Yuma. It was through this U.S. settler military occupation that the Catholic Church, previously working under the Spanish empire, returned to reoccupy the site through first St. Thomas Indian Boarding School and later through St. Thomas Indian Mission, built by the Yuma settler community in 1923 as a replica of

[109] "About Us." Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe. Accessed June 13, 2019. https://www.quechantribe.com/about-us.html

the first Spanish mission at the site Purísima Concepción that had been destroyed by Indigenous resistance[110]. No less violent nor coercive than the military fort, the church and the school both worked as carceral institutions to forcibly assimilate Indigenous peoples to colonialism. In his historical study on the carcerality of Spanish missions, Benjamin Madley defines the term carcerality as pertaining to penal systems and their institutions and as a set of specific penal technologies such as regimentation, spatial confinement through the use of violence, forced labor extraction, sexual violence, surveillance, physical restraint, and corporeal punishment[111]. He meticulously documents how the Spanish mission system incarcerated Indigenous peoples and enacted the above technologies of control, thus functioning as a carceral system. Madley also draws a historical genealogy between the mission as an institution of slavery and the construction of the Spanish state, the Mexican state, and the U.S. state who all drew on the enslavement and carceral practices of the mission system to develop their systems of extractive, legal, social, and political power. He collects numerous contemporary eye witness accounts of the Spanish missions by a variety of observers from Russia, France, the U.S., England, Scotland, Spain, and elsewhere who argued that the Spanish missions enslaved Indigenous peoples in a manner comparable to the chattel slavery of Africans throughout the Americas. Madley considers how the two categories of incarceration and slavery "often blur [together]," through similar technologies but he distinguishes the mission system from chattel slavery due to the lack of capitalist slave markets (the legalized open sale of slaves) and a differing set of legal structures[112]. However, as plantation and mining economies, the accumulation of Indigenous

[110] "The History of St. Thomas Indian Mission." St. Thomas Indian Mission Church. Accessed June 13, 2019. http://www.stthomasindianmission.org/
[111] Madley, Benjamin. 2019. "California's First Mass Incarceration System." *Pacific Historical Review* 88 (1). University of California Press: 14–47. doi:10.1525/phr.2019.88.1.14.
[112] Ibid.

slaves in the missions and the wealth produced by Indigenous slave-made products such as wine, wheat, beef, or olive oil, facilitated the growth of racial capitalism. What Madley also documents through the archival record is that carceral systems such as the mission and slavery have always been a cornerstone process of establishing both colonies and states through territorial domination. While many scholars consider the function of the carceral state, Madley's study demonstrates that we must also attend to the carcerality of colonialism in its forms before and beyond the state, as systems like the mission or boarding school were imposed on Indigenous lands and peoples prior to their incorporation into the state and functioned as interpolating systems to subject Indigenous peoples to a state still under construction. Madley documents how collective resistance to the mission system was demonstrated by fugitivity of the violated, tortured, and enslaved and the burning of buildings. Madley documents a carceral trajectory from the Spanish missions to the Mexican Indian pass system to Indian indenture, legal whippings, prisoner leasing, kidnapping, white custody of Indian children, and the construction of the state's prison system. He states that "Mexican regimes of spatial confinement maintained with force set local precedents upon which U.S. citizens and administrations then seem to have grafted their own carceral systems, even as they undid Mexican rule,"[113]. This explains how Anglo and Spanish settlers could have collectively decided upon reconstructing the Spanish mission of Purísima Concepción in 1923 as St. Thomas Indian Mission during a period of consolidation of Anglo settler colonialism marked by the rise to power of the Ku Klux Klan in Yuma who sought to wrest control of the city and its economy from the previous generation of local elite who had been predominantly Catholic Spanish and Italian merchants and land owners[114]. The

[113] Ibid.
[114] See Ku Klux Klan papers, Yuma Historical Society.

reconstructed Spanish mission was not a contradiction under Anglo settler colonialism, but instead was a necessary anchor for its proliferation.

Directly across the river from the military fort-reservation-boarding school-catholic mission complex, and slightly upstream from the quartermaster depot customhouse is the Yuma Territorial Prison. The Arizona territorial legislature decided in 1875 that it needed a prison to further its administrative control of the territory. Initially the prison was planned to be located in Phoenix but Jose Maria Redondo, a representative from Yuma who owned vast haciendas (plantations) in the area that ran on enslaved Yaqui and O'odham labor, maneuvered to get the prison built in Yuma as an economic boon to his locality[115]. That a plantation owner sought to build a prison speaks to the interconnected logics of carcerality of both institutions. The prison began operation housing prisoners full time on July 1, 1876 after inmates had been forced to build the structure[116]. The prison became a test model of modern infrastructural amenities such as, "running water pumped from the Colorado river, flushing toilets, a sewer system, electricity, and forced-air ventilation,"[117]. It also became an early user of an electric generating system for the lights and ventilation. The prison held a library, school, and medical clinic. These amenities lead to the development of a narrative of the prison that figured it as an example of modernity, progress, reform, and humanitarian treatment to counter the popular descriptions of the prison as a "hell hole" with torturous conditions, such as the first experiment with solitary confinement in a sensory deprivation "dark cell", was compounded by the oppressive Yuma heat and mosquitos

[115]Trafzer, Clifford E., and Steve George. *Prison Centennial, 1876-1976: A Pictorial History of the Arizona Territorial Prison at Yuma*. Yuma County Historical Society, 1980.; Unpublished article by Mary Redondo Lorona. José María Redondo Family Collection, 1860-2011. Box: Folder: Yuma County Library District, Special Collections, AHS - Rio Colorado Division. Yuma, Arizona.; *Mrs. Figueroa Recalls Deeds of Her Father: Modern farming began on the Gila River*. Yuma Sun. José María Redondo Family Collection, 1860-2011. Box: Folder: Yuma County Library District, Special Collections, AHS - Rio Colorado Division. Yuma, Arizona.
[116] Nelson, Robert. *Early Yuma.* Arizona: Arcadia Publishing. 2006.
[117] Ibid.

from the surrounding rivers.[118] However, during the prison's operation it contained a little over 3000 prisoners, both men and women[119]. One hundred and eleven of those prisoners died at the penitentiary, largely from conditions resulting to overcrowding and poor sanitation such as tuberculosis that impacted Native American and Mexican prisoners at significantly higher rates than Whites, suggesting that the prison employed racial segregation[120]. Foster and Gillespie describe in their study on death in the prison how conditions degenerated in direct contradiction to the claims of sanitary humanitarian reform,

> Prison expansion and renovation continued throughout its operation, with most labor provided by the inmates. The prison closed on September 15, 1909, having exhausted room for additional expansion on "Prison Hill" and having fallen into disrepair and substandard conditions, even for the time. Prison conditions were overcrowded and deplorable, with claims that as many as ten prisoners were confined to each cell, measuring eight feet by ten feet.[121]

The prison has been glorified and romanticized in popular culture as a central institution and representational image of the wild west through newspapers, literature, popular history books and pamphlets, film, and through the building's repurposing as a "dark tourism" historical museum. After the prison closed it was used for a brief period from 1910 to 1914 as the site of Yuma Union High School, whose sports teams adopted the name the criminals[122].

The transition of the prison site from penitentiary to school to colonial history museum marks the continuity between these institutions as structures of colonial carcerality. Prison and school function in many ways as two sides of the same coin, regimenting, surveilling, and disciplining bodies into particular social tracks under racial capitalism. The prison both

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[118] Ibid.; Trafzer, Clifford E., and Steve George. *Prison Centennial, 1876-1976: A Pictorial History of the Arizona Territorial Prison at Yuma.* Yuma County Historical Society, 1980.
[119] Foster, Gary S., and Michael D. Gillespie. "The Yuma Territorial Prison Cemetery: Cold Cases of Grave Importance." *Illness, Crisis & Loss* 21, no. 1 (2013): 29-48.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Nelson, Robert. *Early Yuma.* Arizona: Arcadia Publishing. 2006.

warehouses and commits violence upon the bodies of those marked as disposable as it also extracts value from them through labor or by charging the state for the task of disappearing these bodies from the rest of society. The school disciplines and segregates youth into life tracks as workers, managerial class, or owners while also teaching conformity to colonial society. Those who fail at the conformity required by the school can find themselves within the prison. Prisons can also host schools, and schools can also host a form of incarceration through detention, punishment systems, etc. How the prison and the school connect to the museum is less obvious. The Yuma Territorial Prison museum romanticizes a period of colonial excess without and beyond the disciplining reach of the state – the idea of a pre-state colonial formation of the lawless wild west, a spatial temporality which figures as the opposite to the disciplining conformity of the prison/school – even while it stands as an example of the process of how the carceral state consolidated power through the nexus of colonial occupation, imposition of legal jurisdiction, and interpolation institution-building through the construction of things such as prisons, churches, and schools. That the memory of extractionist lawlessness is enshrined in a prison that marked the consolidation of the state, when the territorial government of Arizona formalized itself through the production of state institutions such as the Yuma prison which functioned as prerequirements for Arizona's transformation from Indian territory to colonial territory to finally U.S. state in 1912, is not entirely ironic. The idea of lawlessness that museum presents is not actually a moment without the domination of the colonial settler state, but rather a moment when the white supremacist settler was "free" to accumulate land and bodies of the racialized other without limitation by the liberal state. It is this spatial temporality of the unfettered domination of the white-slave-owning-Indian-killer-settler-colonist that the museum sensationalizes, a time of unrestricted accumulation and colonial violence, slavery, rape, and

extraction figured by the institutions of the mining man camp, the extraction boom town, the mission, and the hacienda/plantation. The myth of the prison is that it functioned to curtail the figures of the bandit, vigilante, and gold-mad miner turned murderer (a trope perhaps best represented cinematically in Humphrey Bogart's *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*), the supposed villains of the wild west who needed to be tamed by law, order, and Protestant morality in order to pave the way for the occupation of the territory by the modern state and modern social order. But in reality, when analyzing who the majority of prisoners were, it is obvious that the prison actually functioned to accumulate the bodies of Black, Indigenous, Asian, and Mexican people and White labor activists and radicals as the colonial social structure transformed from Spanish to Anglo rule.

The Yuma prison museum sits somewhere along the spectrum of dark tourism that ranges from medieval torture chambers and serial killer memorabilia collections to the sites of former slave forts and holocaust memorials[123]. Prison museums move along this spectrum either by sensationalizing violence akin to the way that a horror film makes gore thrilling and pleasurable, or by serving as a site of critical memory formation that task the observer with contemplating the weight of historical trauma to develop a moral reaction to past violence that can serve toward future violence prevention. Between these two poles of purpose in prison museums the Yuma Territorial Penitentiary museum leans towards the kitch and gore of the horror genre. Within the museum and the multitude of sensationalistic films and publications that proliferate about the Yuma prison the bulk of prisoners are represented by double narratives that obscure the violences of colonialism through settler myth making. The prison museum markets an image of lawless colonialism where the white possessive individual can make themselves through

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[123] Wilson, Jacqueline Z., Sarah Hodgkinson, Justin Piché, and Kevin Walby, eds. *The Palgrave Handbook of Prison Tourism*. Springer, 2017.

violence and unrestricted extraction. This form of criminality is the romanticized criminality of the Western film genre, where the rugged individual gunslinger realizes their potential through acts of theft and extraction. The colonial world of borderlands is made by outlaw figures who represent the myth of the Western that condensed "the killing of Native Americans, the taming of towns and the lynching of outlaws as part of a logic that moved America from colony to world power,"[124]. The celebration of this form of criminality, the white supremacist violence of the colonizer, is akin the romanticization of the rebelliousness of the southern confederacy not as treasonous against the colonial society but as a source of white supremacist pride that orientates the colonial society back to its extractive beginnings in genocide and slavery. The wild west gunslinger and the confederate rebel are criminals who become heroes through their function in the progress narrative of the colonial state. Their criminality is allowed for and glamourized. It is what the Yuma prison museum traffics to attract the droves of white tourists who see their own aspirations reflected in the narrative of the wild west.

However, the prison also functions to construct a different idea of criminality, that of the criminal who resists exploitation and colonial violence and that of the person of color criminalized for their survival strategies to colonial violence. The majority of actual prisoners in the prison were labor and political activists, migrants, Indigenous peoples, Black people, and racialized others. The prison disciplined resistance to white supremacist heteropatriarchal colonialism and warehoused individuals who ran afoul of colonial legality through their own survival strategies. An example of this kind of criminal is the story of Isabella Washington, a nineteen-year-old Black woman who was transferred from Maricopa county and sentenced to

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[124] Parker, Martin. "The Wild West, the industrial East and the outlaw." Culture and Organization, 17:4, 347-365, 2011. DOI: 10.1080/14759551.2011.590311

one year in prison for the crime of throwing her newborn baby into a canal in 1895[125]. Prison records state that Washington was an unmarried, non-drinking, illiterate, Methodist seamstress who was originally from Missouri and that she had other children than the infant drowned in the canal. Numerous local history books such as *Adobe and Iron: the story of the Arizona Territorial Prison at Yuma* by John Mason Jeffery, *Prison Centennial: 1876-1976* by Cliff Trafzer and Steve George, *Prisoners in Petticoats: The Yuma Territorial Prison and its women* by Elizabeth J. Klugness, and *The Prison Chronicle: Yuma Territorial Prison's Colorful Past* by Marti Murphy all describe Washington with sensationalistic language to portray her as a wicked baby murderer[126]. Her story is on display in the museum and has been used to sell the idea of the prison as a site for wild women of the wild west. She is described as an unimaginably horrible villain from a bygone era of lawlessness where murderous Black women threw babies into rivers. But considering a similar narrative from Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, a novel that meditates on the question of how a Black mother escaping slavery could kill her own children by exploring the psychological hauntings of slavery and the possibility that a mother's love might imagine death as a safer protection from enslavement for her children, we can imagine the racial colonial horror that settler society in Arizona posed to a teenage Black girl only thirty years after emancipation in a frontier territory ruled by Spanish plantation owners and Anglo businessmen largely immigrated from confederate territory where forms of enslavement such as indenture, debt peonage, convict leasing, and haciendas proliferated[127]. In *Beloved*, the central character

[125] Klungness, Elizabeth J. *Prisoners in petticoats: The Yuma territorial prison and its women*. Yuma County Historical Society Publications, 1993.
[126] Jeffrey, John Mason. *Adobe and Iron: The Story of the Arizona Territorial Prison*. Prospect Avenue Press, 1969.; Trafzer, Clifford E., and Steve George. *Prison Centennial, 1876-1976: A Pictorial History of the Arizona Territorial Prison at Yuma*. Yuma County Historical Society, 1980.; Klungness, Elizabeth J. *Prisoners in petticoats: The Yuma territorial prison and its women*. Yuma County Historical Society Publications, 1993.; Murphy, Marti. *The Prison Chronicle: Yuma Territorial Prison's Colorful Past: a Visitor's Guide to the History of the Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park*. Arizona State Parks, 1999.
[127] Morrison, Toni. "Beloved. 1987." *New York: Plume* 252 (1988).

Sethe escapes her master and kills her eldest daughter and attempts to kill her other children rather than to allow them to be recaptured by the slave owner. This act marks Sethe as a monstrosity to even her own community of freed Black people and she is devoured by a haunting guilt manifested as the ghost of the murdered child returned to consume Sethe's life until the community collectively works to exercise the spirit and free Sethe from her past. The trauma of slavery and its afterlife is figured as the return of the murdered baby as an insatiable revenant, a materially visible spirit of the uncomfortable undead. But the novel's work is to flesh out the context of the child's murder, the horrific violences of slavery, as the actually haunting. Considering Washington in the context of *Beloved*, we may ask what kinds of unspeakable violences would drive a young Black mother in colonial territory during a mining and land rush to infanticide? Was she a victim of rape or human trafficking? What afterlife of slavery did she encounter in Arizona and how did this trauma manifest as she found herself pregnant at a time when abortion was illegal and largely unavailable? We do not know by examining the prison archive what the larger context of Isabella Washington's situation was but rather than imagining her as some kind of wild west La Llorona monster tale to frighten tourists with, we can consider her within the context of Morrison's novel as a victim of the violences of colonial carcerality, both before her incarceration and after. This allows us to see how the prison continues to function as a colonial disciplining apparatus to transform the narratives of colonial violence into narratives of racialized criminality that is both glorified as a representation of the idea of a lawless past and functions to structure racial stereotypes of monstrosity today that are used to justify ongoing anti-black violence.

That the image of romantic criminality was appropriated by the children of elite white settlers when their school occupied the building speaks to the construction of the idea of the

outlaw rebel which Yuma-as-wild-west signifies. This is best exemplified by the 1960s TV series *Johnny Yuma*, which details the adventures of a former confederate soldier who goes "out west" to make his fortune as a gunslinger[128]. Johnny is described as a rebel in the theme song sung by Johnny Cash, a reference to both his status as a confederate veteran and as a symbol of the "lawless state" of western colonial occupation where a white settler such this can accumulate wealth without restriction of the state or society (laws or morality). This continuum of identity as the rebel from the confederacy to Arizona links narratives of slavery and colonialism as the settler who after the civil war can no longer accumulate wealth through the owning of Black bodies can now accumulate wealth through the killing of Indians and occupation / extraction of their land. I consider the differences between Johnny Yuma and Isabella Washington as illustrative of the two ideas of criminality that the Yuma Penitentiary Museum traffics in, the first being the idealized criminality of the slave owning/Indian killing settler rebel and the unhuman criminality of the racialized gendered other trying to survive in a world being made by the slave owning/Indian killing settler rebel. Those who uphold colonialism and racial capitalism are allowed to indulge in fantasies of rebelliousness and those whose bodies are marked for social death for their racial difference and lack of conformity to the structures of power cannot. The system allows for the good subject and the rebellious deviation of the good subject (violence). It also allows for and requires the construction of a bad subject who can and should be punished (racialized criminal). Anglo settler school children can play at being criminals as long as those constructed by colonial racial violence to be criminals (Black girls such as Washington) are punished and put in their place. The museum works to create this spatial

[128] "The Rebel: Johnny Yuma." TV Series 1959-1961. Internet Movie Database. Accessed June 13, 2019. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0052505/?ref_=tt_ov_inf

temporality in popular memory where the prison and the school work together to discipline good and bad subjects.

Transfigurations: development of colonial carceral spaces in the transcolonial zone

Transfigure (*a transitive verb)*

definition:

1) to give a new and typically exalted and spiritual appearance to
2) transform outwardly and usually for the better[129]

Whereas others have theorized the relationship between racial capitalism (how race is constructed through dispossession and accumulation) and carceral geographies I want to focus on the relationship between colonialism and carceral geographies, particularly within transcolonial spaces where competing colonial regimes overlap and reinforce each other. I build on Erica Meiner's use of the term carceral state to describe how we need to imagine carcerality beyond penal institutions and the prison-industrial complex to "highlight the multiple and intersecting state agencies and institutions" that have "punishing functions and effectively police poor communities beyond the physical site of the prison,"[130]. I use the term colonial carcerality to connect the process of colonialism within the context of transcolonial overlapping of Spanish and Anglo projects of occupation – the nexus of extraction, genocide, slavery, war, racialization, gendering regimes of domination, and partition – with not only the development of the carceral

[129] Merriam-Webster, s.v. "transfigure," accessed June 13, 2019, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transfigure.
[130] Meiners, Erica R. *Right to be hostile: Schools, prisons, and the making of public enemies*. Routledge, 2010.

state but also a way to connect the construction of the carceral state with the colonial process of imagining of space as bounded, extractable, accumulatable alongside the marking of bodies for death, dispossession, and disappearance. Carceral geographies are "geographies that signify regional accumulation strategies and upheavals, immensities and fragmentations, that reconstitute in space-time (even if geometrically the coordinates are unchanged) to run another round of accumulation,"[131]. I argue that in the transcolonial zone of the U.S.-Mexico border that carceral geographies are always also colonial and that coloniality structures carcerality as we know it in the Americas.

Transcolonial carcerality is developed through transfigurations, a process which the colonial occupation of the Yuma Crossing exemplifies. Transcolonial carceral logics and institutions build power through drawing upon and repurposing each other in a palimpsest of technologies that are refined and strengthened over time, transformed into something different that is represented as a form of liberal reform yet still maintains the structure of feeling, and often the structural function, of earlier more overt technologies of violence. The example of the military Fort Yuma constructed on the site of the earlier Spanish mission and transforming into an allotted Indian reservation with a boarding school, church, and restructured tribal government to enforcement of cultural assimilation is one way that colonialism transfigured itself on Quechan land. A school or Bureau of Indian Affairs styled government may appear to be less overtly brutal than direct military occupation and incarceration, yet it is structured through the same violence and its disciplining function of genocide through forced assimilation, which is still genocide. Seen together then, we can understand the set of relationships that allows the institutions of occupation at the Yuma Crossing Site to transfigure into each other through a

[131] Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2017. "Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence." In *The Futures of Black Radicalism*, 225–40. Verso.

colonial overlapping, creating a transcolonial carcerality, that links the structures and technologies of the border, the mission, the mine, the dam, the military fort, the prison, the man camp, the boarding school, the reservation, the museum, the plantation, the border check point, the allotment (private property), and the city to each other.

The Partido Liberal Mexicano in Yuma Territorial Prison

In 1909 members of the junta of the Partido Liberal Mexicano, (PLM,) the ideological faction that is largely credited with launching and theorizing the Mexican revolution through their propaganda, organizing, and insurgency efforts, was transferred from a jail in Los Angeles, California to the Territorial Penitentiary in Yuma, Arizona Territory. Arizona was not yet a state and was still in the violent process of shifting from Indian Country to Colonial Territory, largely fueled by a massive migration of land and mineral hungry settlers seeking wealth in the aftermath of the U.S.-Mexican and Civil Wars of the mid-1800s. In the turn of twentieth century these migrations intensified as the water of Arizona began to lure speculators who imagined the desert, already proven to be fertile by thousands of years of Indigenous agriculture through remarkable engineering accomplishments of traditional canals and washes, to be the new Orient, a jewel of colonial possession to outshine the wealth Europe had extracted from Asia and the SWANA (South West Asia and North African) regions. Standing in the way of the accumulative appetites of capital were a variety of resistances, from Indigenous peoples, to disgruntled and exploited mine and farm laborers, migrant poor whites, leftist activists, Black people seeking survival and community, Asian and non-white migrants seeking similar, women disrupting the order of heteropatriarchy, and Mexican revolutionaries. The PLM members sent to Yuma

Territorial Prison were political refugees seeking revolution in Mexico and through their exile they would form a variety of alliances with the other peoples mentioned above.

The PLM was known for publishing *Regeneración*, a radical leftist newspaper focused on anti-dictatorship sentiment and revolutionary politics from Mexico that had emerged from earlier publications critical of the regime of dictator Porfirio Díaz like *El Hijo del Ahuizote*. In 1904 members of the PLM's organizing junta fled persecution in Mexico through a dangerous river crossing where one member, the poet Santiago de la Hoz, drowned[132]. Once outside of Mexico and the reach of the Díaz regime's repressive grasp, the organization rearticulated itself through clandestine fugitive networks in the U.S stretching throughout California, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, Missouri, and even Canada[133].

In Douglas, Arizona the PLM bases included exiled junta leader Manuel Sarabia who was illegally kidnapped by Arizona rangers and local police and taken to Mexico without due process nor involvement of federal immigration authorities in the summer of 1907[134]. News of the illegal detention and Sarabia's disappearance to Sonora, Mexico spread through PLM networks and affiliated publications, raising the sympathy of white leftists and labor who saw this as an attack on the free speech and civil rights of unionists and progressive activists. The PLM at that time was affiliated mostly with labor struggles in Mexico (notably the bloody mining uprisings in Cananea, Sonora and the garment and textile workers uprising in Rio Blanco, Veracruz that are considered the first confrontational events of the Mexican revolution, both resulting in horrific

[132] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.
[133] Ibid.; Turner, Ethel Duffy. *Ricardo Flores Magón y el Partido Liberal Mexicano*. Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1960.; Lomnitz-Adler, Claudio. *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*. MIT Press, 2014.
[134] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.

massacres of workers and their families by the state and corporate paramilitaries). Once in exile the PLM used the opportunity to organize international support for the struggle in Mexico largely through labor and leftist networks in the U.S., Canada, and Europe, however some of their most impactful networks of influence were with other anti-colonial struggles in Latin America, Africa, and the Philippines[135]. In response to the kidnapping of Sarabia, solidarity protests erupted in cities throughout the U.S., resulting in media coverage and letter campaigns targeting the U.S. President.

On August 23, 1907 PLM leaders Ricardo Flores Magón, Librado Rivera, and Antonio I. Villarreal's residence in Los Angeles, California was illegally raided and their possessions seized by paramilitary forces called the Furlong detectives, presumably at the request of the Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz[136]. The three men protested and resisted the attack and the immediate reaction of concerned neighbors likely thwarted their disappearance to Arizona and then Mexico like their comrade Sarabia, as was Furlong's initial plan. Instead they were sent to jail in Los Angeles where Magón and Rivera awaited extradition to Missouri for criminal libel charges against the owner of the Cananae mine and Villarreal to Texas for immigration violations. They were also charged with murder of a man in Cahuila, Mexico and robbery of $25, a ridiculous allegation given that the crime was supposedly committed while the three were living and publishing newspapers in the United States. Aware that the initial case trumped up by the Mexican consulate would fall apart, the prosecutors eventually decided to charge the exiled activists with violating the U.S. neutrality laws which prohibited interference in the governance of an allied nation and to be held in U.S. federal prison instead of extradited to Mexico. The new

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[135] Newkirk, Anthony B. "Peter Cole, David Struthers, and Kenyon Zimmer, Eds., Wobblies of the World: A Global History of the IWW (London: Pluto Press, 2017)." *Labour/Le Travail* 82 (2018): 297.
[136] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.

case was designed to become a chilling example to revolutionaries seeking refuge in the U.S. and to U.S. citizens considering supporting revolutions and dissident politics abroad. The three revolutionaries were then released and re-arrested on federal charges on 25, September 1907[137].

The PLM leaders remained in prison in Los Angeles, gaining notoriety and support as political prisoners from broad sections of society such as wealthy white heiresses concerned with free speech and Asian immigrants concerned both with their own international revolutionary sympathies and with political attacks on immigrants of color[138]. Their lawyers during this time period were the notable socialists Job Harriman and A.R. Holston, introduced to the PLM junta by Anselmo L. Figueroa, a leader in the Spanish language caucus of the Los Angeles Socialist Party[139]. Figueroa was from Yuma, Arizona and the descendant of an elite Spanish settler family who colonized parts of California, Arizona, and Sonora. The street Figueroa in Los Angeles is named after the colonial legacy of his plantation owning family. In his youth, Anselmo was also a former prison guard of Yuma Territorial Penitentiary. His conversion from wealthy haciandado and prison guard to socialist and then eventually to one of the most radical leaders of the PLM during its ideological transition into anti-colonialist anarchism was actually rather typical of the organization and its revolutionary conversion powers. In this trajectory of radicalization Figueroa was similar to fellow haciendado Praxedis G. Guerrero and many of the other intellectual and strategic leaders of the PLM. While I am fascinated by what circumstances could have turned a privileged colonial elite such as Anselmo or Praxedis into a committed anti-colonialist, anti-

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[137] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.

[138] Ibid.; Turner, Ethel Duffy. *Ricardo Flores Magón y el Partido Liberal Mexicano*. Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1960.; Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana. Mandeville Special Collections. University of California San Diego.

[139] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.; Turner, Ethel Duffy. *Ricardo Flores Magón y el Partido Liberal Mexicano*. Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1960.;

racist, abolitionist revolutionary, I am more interested in how the less privileged peoples they tried to organize, peoples such as my own Indigenous ancestors in Yuma, might have received them as comrades.

The repression of the junta leaders in Los Angeles in effect shut down the publication of *Regeneración*. However, like a skillfully mutating phoenix, *Regeneración* re-emerged through clandestine organizing in Los Angeles as *Revolución* on June 1, 1907 under the editorial and publishing team of Modesto Díaz, Federico Arizméndi, and Fidel Ulíbarri[140]. However, as fugitives in exile and clandestine revolutionaries, Ricardo Flores Magón, Librado Rivera, and Antonio I. Villarreal were actually heavily involved in the newspaper through a variety of ingenious methods of smuggling information in and out of prison to their comrades. Junta leader Práxedis G. Guerrero was also active in the paper through his organizing in Texas. At this time the party and their various publications were still advocating liberal progressivism modeled after the nineteenth century Mexican liberal movement of Benito Juarez and on the PLM's own platform for liberal revolution in the 1906 party manifesto, a grassroots pedagogical project that culled together the proposals, ideas, and aspirations of the party's followers and bases of support across the U.S. and Mexico into a draft document that would eventually provide the basis for the 1917 revolutionary constitution, the constitutional framework Mexico still operates under, albeit in a weakened and less progressive form. The framework of liberalism during this era reflected a civil rights and inclusion approach with socialist reforms for marginalized peoples such as workers, peasants, women, etc. As a popularly constructed document however, the 1906 manifesto also reflects the limitations of popular opinions from the largely working and middle class base of the party at the time – orientalist racism against Asians, limited attempts to include

[140] Ibid.

Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues, and no mention of Afro-Mexican or queer communities and their needs, despite the emergence of discourse at the time challenging both anti-blackness and homophobia. Later incarnations of the party and the revolution itself would bring Indigenous, Asian, Black, gender, and queer issues to more prominence. But the emergence of more radical tendencies leading towards anarchism could already be traced through the time period that the PLM leaders were incarcerated in Yuma.

Revolución experienced further repression and Lázaro Gutierrez de Lara, Modesto Díaz, Federico Arizméndi, and Fidel Ulíbarri were arrested for criminal libel on 27 September 1907[141]. Gutierrez de Lara, a mestizo lawyer for the other junta members and an outspoken leader from the uprising in Cananea, Sonora who claimed Tohono O'odham ancestry[142] was detained for three and a half months while Mexico and the U.S. colluded to create false charges that would allow his extradition. Other junta members Praxedis G. Guerrero, Manuel Sarabia, and Enrique Flores Magón arrived in LA to reorganize the party, the paper, and the prisoner support campaign. Sarabia would be arrested, along with Díaz, Arizméndi, and Ulíbarri again several times in 1908. The paper was continually repressed through arrests and accusations of illegality. Editor Modesto Díaz died while incarcerated in 1908[143].

A new paper with financial support from the heiress Elizabeth Darling Trowbridge briefly emerged in 1908 called *Libertad y Trabajo*, headed by the Indigenous Mayo strike organizer from Cananea, Fernando Palomarez, and Juan Olivares a refugee from the Rio Blanco uprising in Veracruz[144]. The incarcerated junta members smuggled articles out of jail to the new

[141] Ibid.
[142] Turner, John Kenneth. *Barbarous Mexico*. CH Kerr, 1910.
[143] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.
[144] Ibid.

publication that were published under pen names or under the names of women members of the PLM[145]. In June 1908 Palomares and Olivares returned to Mexico to direct insurrection activities and organize the resistance movement. Trowbridge also financed the investigative travels of socialist journalist John Kenneth Turner and Lázaro Gutierrez de Lara across Mexico that would result in Turner's explosive series of articles, *Barbarous Mexico*, which popularized the Mexican revolution to north American audiences as a moral quest for democracy and abolition against the enslavement and genocide of romanticized noble savages[146]. Manuel Sarabia would eventually marry Trowbridge, organize underground in Tucson, briefly publishing *El Defensor Del Pueblo*, then flee with his wife to England where they would continue to organize solidarity for the Mexican revolution until a brief return to Mexico during the Madero regime where he joined the Socialist Party (for which he was scorned by his former PLM comrades). When the repressive Huerta regime arose Sarabia fled into exile again to Boston where he died prematurely from tuberculous in 1915, which he contracted from the unsanitary conditions faced as a political prisoner almost a decade earlier.

The initial Los Angeles cases against the PLM were dismissed for lack of evidence, then through coordination between the U.S. And Mexico, the three PLM leaders Librado Rivera, Antonio I. Villarreal, and Ricardo Flores Magón, were re-arrested under new federal charges of violating the U.S. neutrality laws and the case was transferred to the significantly more conservative and racially segregated Tombstone, Arizona in May of 1909, with the PLM members represented by Tucson labor lawyer W.B. Cleary against an all-white jury who were

[145] Ibid.
[146] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.; Turner, Ethel Duffy. *Ricardo Flores Magón y el Partido Liberal Mexicano*. Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1960.; Turner, John Kenneth. *Barbarous Mexico*. CH Kerr, 1910.

selected for their hostility to labor and leftist organizing[147]. The all hostile white jury found the PLM leaders guilty and they were sentenced to eighteen months in Yuma Territorial Prison on 19 May 1909[148]. They would not be released until the revolution was fully underway in 1910. The three-year ordeal of their trials and incarceration for advocating for revolution, 1907-1910, marked a critical period in the radicalization of the movement from liberalism to anarchism. This also marked the beginning of important rifts between those PLM members and sympathizers who remained committed to ideals of liberalism, such as civil rights, democracy, and solving the problems of colonial society through nation-state and economic reformism, and those exploring what anarchism could offer to colonized peoples of color and Indigenous communities, and how an anti-colonial, anti-racist analysis could merge with an anti-nation state and anti-capitalist politic.

Speculative Histories: the PLM in Yuma

There is not much in the archival record that I have had access to that describes the conditions the PLM members experienced within the Yuma Territorial Penitentiary. I want to imagine that from their position on one side of the Yuma Crossing that the presence of the military fort, reservation, border check point, Indian boarding school, plantations, mining man camps, and the rising capitalist development of the town of Yuma had some shape and influence on how the radical members of the PLM junta, Flores Magón and Rivera, began to understand the connections between colonialism and racial capitalism, and that this is turn solidified their turn towards anarchism as a politic that could encompass their embracement of abolition of the

[147] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.
[148] Ibid.

hacienda slave system, vagrancy laws and other forms enslavement, along with their anti-capitalism, and emerging ideas on repatriating land to Indigenous peoples in Mexico and thinking through interlinked local collective autonomies as an alternative political structure alternative to the colonial nation-state that was rooted in their understandings of Zapotec, Mixtec, and Yaqui political traditions. My speculation that Yuma mattered in this process has yet to be confirmed in the archival record, it is after they leave the Yuma prison that the ideological split between the anarchist and liberal factions of the PLM junta deepened. Librado Rivera noted in a letter to Manuel Téllez sent from Fort Leavenworth Prison on July 12, 1921 that after their release from Fort Yuma and their return to Los Angeles not only did they return to their revolutionary publishing efforts but that, "Nuestras viejas ideas de libertad y emancipación a favor de los explotados y esclavizados peones mexicanos fueron expuestas nuevamente también"[149]. It is this "newly exposed" revision of their "old ideas of liberation and emancipation in favor of the exploited and enslaved" that I argue developed into a form of anarchism centered on abolitionist autonomy.

What is also interesting and will be explored further when this project transforms to a manuscript is the fact that while the PLM junta was incarcerated in the Yuma prison their revolutionary newspaper was being run from Los Angeles by Anselmo Figueroa, a former prison guard at the Yuma Territorial Penitentiary. It was also Figueroa who connected the PLM with their defense lawyer and who lead the organizing for their release. I imagine that as their compa he might have also advised them on how to survive the conditions of the prison within which he once had worked. Anselmo Figueroa was from a wealthy hacienda-owning Spanish elite family from Sonora, Mexico. As a young man worked as a prison guard at the Yuma prison, considered

[149] Rivera, Librado. Cartas y Textos. Ediciones Antorchas. Cuidad de Mexico, D.F. 1980.

to be a good paying and well-respected job at the time. The details of his politicization and class rebellion are not known as there is no definitive biography of Figueroa yet written. But at some point, he moves to Los Angeles and becomes a prominent activist in the socialist party, which is the capacity in which he meets the PLM and becomes a member of their junta. In June of 1911 Anselmo Figueroa would be arrested with other members of the PLM when their newspaper offices were raided in Los Angeles and he would be charged with violating the U.S. neutrality laws and sent to federal prison on McNeil Island along with his compañeros[150]. Figueroa would become one of the signers of the Manifesto of September 23, 1911 that first announced the anarchist direction of the PLM as a struggle against the nexus of the church, the government, and capitalism- illustrating a clear understanding of the ways that these institutions transfigure one another in their creation of colonial carceral geographies of domination[151].

Indigenismo: Problematic Appropriations

Indigenismo is an ideology of neocolonial nationalism based on a romanticization of racial and cultural mixture made popular in the twentieth century in Latin America and adopted by some tangents of the Chicano/a movement and Chicano/a Studies. Mexico's post-revolution statecraft has tried to assimilate Indigenous peoples into a multi-cultural melting pot, (based on the colonial caste system and the practice of *enblancamiento* or whitening,) so that the descendants of European colonizers could inherit claims to nativism and the state could become the arbiter of a shared national patrimony (i.e. the land) which no longer belongs to any specific Indigenous group, but now to everybody who could claim state citizenship. Post-revolutionary

[150] Ibid.
[151] Albro, Ward S. *Always a rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican revolution*. Texas Christian University Press, 1992.; Albro, Ward S. *To Die on Your Feet: The Life, Times, and Writings of Práxedis G. Guerrero*. Texas Christian University Press, 1996.

Mexico developed a form of centralized nationalism that sought to unify the Mexican nation in a homogenous cultural project rooted deeply in the romanticization of a glorious past of Indigenous cultural achievement centered on the Aztec empire and combined with a fetishized modernization connected with the Spanish conquest.[152] The project also largely erased African and Asian contributions to Mexican culture and history, as well as non-Aztec identified Indigenous societies and campesino communities who were seen as holding on to a form of primitivism that held back the national progress. The prioritization of the nation-state within the Indigenist project drives the need to assimilate the Indigenous in order to erase competing claims of sovereignty that could challenge the legitimacy of the state. Indigenismo can be defined as a discourse emanating from the perspective of Westernized Mexicans, who may or may not have Indian ancestry but are culturally and socially distanced from the reality of Indigenous lives, communities, and experiences so much so that they can only view Indigenous peoples through the ideological frameworks of Eurocentrism[153]. This discoursive objectification fixes the Indigenous in place through the outside gaze of white supremacy, making Indigenous people static objects and things rather than complex individuals or communities with their own autonomy and self-definitions.

A central text of Indigenismo is *La Raza Cosmica* by Jose Vasconcelos, a moderate bourgeoisie liberal of Spanish, not mixed-race descent who participated in the revolution and became the Minister of Education after the revolution and is considered the father of the Mexican public education system[154]. Jose Vasconcelos became involved with the presidential

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[152] Batalla, Guillermo Bonfil. *México profundo: Reclaiming a civilization.* Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2004. Print.
[153] Knight, Alan. "Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910-1940." *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940.* Ed. Richard Graham. Austin: University of Texas Press. 1990, 71-103. Print.
[154] Gabilondo, Joseba. "Afterward to the 1997 edition." *The Cosmic race: La Raza cósmica.* Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997. Print.

campaign of Francisco Madero during the revolution and remained somewhat affiliated with the Partido Liberal Mexicano until the mid-1920s despite the split between the PLM and Madero in 1911. After 1911 the revolutionary junta of the PLM became much more radical, promoting an anarchist and anti-state decolonization agenda while Vasconcelos's political views were much closer to the earlier formation of the party under Madero's moderate liberal ideology of constitutionism, civil liberties, and democracy. Because he stayed close to the regimes of the liberal presidential candidates, Vasconcelos held import social and political positions in the post-revolutionary Mexican state. He was the first secretary of education, president of the National University from 1914 to 1924, ran unsuccessfully for president himself in 1929, and through his political connections and patronage he encouraged the development of the most prominent Mexican muralists and artists of the period[155]. He represents in many ways the antithesis to the radical accompliceship and politics of autonomy and abolition that the PLM advocated for during their anarchist period and he presents a very different kind of argument for futurity. In 1925 Vasconcelos published his vision of Latin American mestizaje, biological and spiritual evolution based on Iberian-American culture and an idealized hybrid of Catholicism with mystical orientalism, in the treatise *La Raza Cósmica* where he positioned Mestizos as the chosen peoples to move forward aesthetic, racial and spiritual progress and unity in the promised land of the Americas.

The main idea of *La Raza Cosmica* is that U.S. imperialism and German fascism are based on a narrow idea of "pure" white supremacy that is backwards, destructive, and seeks to violently dominate the rest of the "unpure" or brown world. This is used to explain the U.S.'s violent attitude to Mexico, a civilized country of mixed brown people. Vasconcelos's vision of la

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[155] Ibid.

raza cósmica was based on the positioning of Mestizo Latinos against U.S. imperialism, whereas Latin America was proposed as a morally superior haven of benign miscegenation and creative hybridity in opposition to U.S. scientific racism and blatant White supremacy. Mestizaje*,* or racial mixing, is uncritically romanticized in the book and the violence of the racial caste system under Spanish colonial rule and maintained through the Independence period is redeemed. Vasconcelos argues that all ideas of purity, including Indigenous attempts to retain distinct cultures and autonomous territories, are backward and lead to racial violence. He argues that it is only through racial and cultural mixing that the backward primitiveness of racial purity, racial supremacy, scientific racism, and wars of genocide can be destroyed and world peace be established. He also claims that Indigenous peoples in the Americas once had great civilizations but through their own degeneracy these civilizations crumbled and that it was the Spanish conquest and the introduction of European blood, culture, ideas, politics, and economic practices into the Americas that have redeemed the Indian. Vasconcelos has been well noted as a romanticizer of the Spanish conquest in Mexico and the roots of his later fundamentalism and conservatism are seen in la raza cósmica as he proposes that Spanish and Iberian cultures are more advanced than that of Indians, Africans, and Asians. He uplifts European colonialization and conquest as the catalyst which redeemed the Indian, African, and Asian by uniting them with the European, thus beginning the process of racial mixture between the four races of the world that will lead to the final level of human evolution, the fifth or cosmic race, which will transcend the modern age materially, socially and spiritually through the fusion of all beautiful and artistic human elements. Of course, in his idealized fifth world, the common language would be Spanish, the common religion Catholicism, and individual cultural and racial differences would be erased as miscegenation forced Indigenous people to fade into history. This was seen by Vasconcelos as

a far better option than the brute White supremacy of U.S. racism and the rise of fascism in Europe which would result in the stagnation of humanity in one race limited from its cosmic potential by ethnic and cultural purity.

To Vasconcelos, the current-day Indian who wants to retain their land and community is primitive and in the way of progress. The mestizo who embraces hybridity, who appropriates the best aspects from all the cultures of the world they have access through via being a hybrid, who is a "cosmic mix" of the races (which he identities as Indian, European, Black, Hindu, and Muslim,) is the force of the future, a cosmic future of peace and beauty- where everyone will be brown, beautiful, Catholic, and Spanish-speaking. This treatise is what Vasconcelos used to construct the Mexican education system, where the glorious past of the great Mexica and Mayan empires is idealized and appropriated within a narrative of national history where the Eurocentric, capitalist, modern mestizo becomes the man of today and the ideal, liberal, industrial future.

Vasconcelos's theory is at once entrancing and inspiring as it provokes a beautiful image of unity based in multiculturalism and yet it also supremacist and oppressive in the way that it devalues people of color and proposes that their best option is to interbreed with whites and disappear. This is more true by today's standards as his language on race is quite dated, yet at the time his work was largely viewed as a positive challenge toward racism[156]. Yet precisely because it raises up the Mestizo as the new racial ideal and valorizes Mestizo and people of color identities against Anglo White supremacy, *la raza cósmica* established a powerful metaphor and rallying point against U.S. imperialism throughout Latin America. While his work is viewed as central to the project of statecraft in Mexico, Vasconcelos envisioned *la raza cósmica* as a

[156] Ibid.

potential basis for Mestizo internationalism that would transcend the nation-state, often paralleling his vision to the unifying pan-Latin Americanism of Simon Bolívar, Jose Martí, and Jose Enrique Rodó[157]. Under Vasconcelos, Mexican education policy sought to eradicate Indigenous languages and culture and promote Indigenous civilizations as dead, static, and inheritable/appropriate-able by all. This policy would be maintained throughout the twentieth century as the Mexican public school system became a central tool of the state to erase Indigenous cultures and land claims. Vasconcelos's romantic phrase, "p*or mi raza habla el espiritu*," (through my race speaks the spirit,) became the slogan of Mexican public schools. Yet, Indigenous students, particularly those in impoverished areas, were largely given instruction only in Spanish and encouraged into the vocational trades rather than promoted toward academic scholarship and higher education. Since the state racial system in Mexico determines Indigeneity based on markers of authenticity such as language that can be targeted through colonial schooling projects and cultural shaming, many people who would be considered Indigenous in the U.S. are socially barred from state recognition of their Indigenous status in Mexico. The mestizo-centered state educational system established by Vasconcelos continues to be contested today by Indigenous communities who seek more culturally relevant education that promotes the survival of their languages and cultures instead of working to erase them.

La raza cósmica established a powerful metaphor and rallying point against U.S. imperialism throughout Latin America and has also been adopted by many Chicano and Chicana artists, theorists and community organizers as an empowering response to experiences of racism within the U.S context, celebrating Vasconcelos's call to Latino-mestizo unity, "por mi raza hablará el espíritu," (through my race shall speak the spirit). I argue that it is also Vasconcelos's

[157] Ibid.

approach of creating a spiritually motivated political theory that particularly resonates with Chicanos who were in search of new epistemological methodology that incorporated Latin American spirituality. Yet, the danger of adopting aspects of la raza ideology is that it reproduces indigenismo and the racism of the post-revolutionary Mexican state that continues to wage colonial war on indigenous communities.

According to Cristina Beltran in her essay *Patrolling Borders: Hybrids, Hierarchies and the Challenge of Mestizaje,* dominant forms of mestizaje and Chicanismo based on the work of Vasconcelos, "becomes a kind of foundational or 'fixed' identity that forecloses more creative and productively defiant approaches to identity and subjectivity. Rather than risking a radical reconception of subjectivity that calls existing categories into question, theorists of mestizaje too often reproduce already existing narratives of romantic identification and exclusion,"[158] While Beltran critiques Chicano theorists claims to indigeneity, which she sees performing a hierarchy of hybridity, as presenting an inverse of Vasconcelos's Iberian supremacy but continuing to employ Western dualism to present Indian supremacy as the cultural and political survival tactic of the Chicano, but to the detriment of Native American sovereignty. This critique has fueled a shift in Critical Chicanx and Latinx Studies away from theorizing hybrid identities and towards critically analyzing systems of power that engage brown people in an effort to develop a methodology that captures the decolonial aspirations of radical Chicanx/Latinx politics without reproducing power-over Indigenous peoples. It also presents an opportunity to bring Chicano/a theory into greater conversation with Native American political thought that has critiqued indigenismo and New Ageism in order to generate possible approaches to a more nuanced theory in regards to issues of indigeneity.

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[158] Beltran, Cristina. "Patrolling borders: Hybrids, hierarchies and the challenge of mestizaje." *Political Research Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2004): 597-607.

Accompliceship Without Appropriation

Anselmo Figueroa was similar to another key PLM junta member, Praxedis Guerrero from Guanajuato, another idealistic son of wealthy hacienda owners who rejected the social role of the slave owner he was set to inherit and instead fought and lost his life for the cause of emancipation and abolition. These two class traitors, Figueroa and Guerrero, exemplified a politics of what I term radical accompliceship to decolonization and abolition. I take the concept of the accomplice from the embodied examples of Figueroa and Guerrero and from the zine *Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the ally industrial complex, an Indigenous perspective* by the Indigenous Action Media Collective. The zine concerns the relationships of solidarity activism from the perspective of Indigenous sacred site defenders. While the zine is focused on a critique of the non-profit industrial complex and the commodification of activist work that was not a context during the Mexican revolution it speaks to the concept of the accomplice to which I argue Figueroa and Guerrero exemplified. The zines defines an accomplice as “a person who helps another commit a crime,” and articulates how committing a crime to further abolition and decolonization requires a different set of risks than support or solidarity[159]. Being an accomplice centers anti-capitalism, including the non-commodification of struggle, and commitment to doing the material work of abolition and decolonization. The zine discusses at length the problems of coming to activist work through guilt, shame, and as a form of self-therapy through a critique of “acts of resignation” whereby those with systemic privileges use resistance movements for their own actualization rather than committing to the work of resistance itself.

> Resignation of agency is a by-product of the allyship establishment. At first the dynamic may not seem problematic, after all, why would it be an issue with those who benefit from systems of oppression to reject or distance themselves from

[159] Indigenous Action Media. "Accomplices not allies: Abolishing the ally industrial complex." (2014).

> those benefits and behaviors (like entitlement, etc.) that accompany them? In the worst cases, "allies" themselves act paralyzed believing it's their duty as a "good ally." There is a difference between acting for others, with others, and for one's own interests, be explicit. You wouldn't find an accomplice resigning their agency, or capabilities as an act of "support." They would find creative ways to weaponize their privilege (or more clearly, their rewards of being part of an oppressor class) as an expression of social war. Otherwise we end up with a bunch of anti-civ/primitivist appropriators or anarcho-hipsters, when saboteurs would be preferred[160].

While the zine is not explicitly addressed to Mexicans and Latinx folks, the issue of resignation of agency is important when considering the ways that Indigenismo limits potential Latinx collaborations with Indigenous communities for decolonization. The romanticization and appropriation of Indigenismo would be in this analysis a form of "self-therapy" that would center the Latinx ally and their needs for individual identity healing over the work of protecting Indigenous lands, thus it should be avoided in favor of structuring Latinx and Indigenous relationships on the practice of accompliceship, on the work of dismantling colonialism and advancing abolition. As the Indigenous Action Media zine argues, "direct action is really the best and may be the only way to learn what it is to be an accomplice,"[161].

In my own political journey, I came back to O'odham jeved through action, through using my privilege to advance decolonization. Aside from reconnecting with my own family and conducting research to document our connection and dispossession from our community of origin I returned to O'odham community first by serving as a Spanish-English translator and facilitating delegations to Zapatista encuentros where I was able to materially support the ability of an O'odham activist to participate in organizing with the Mexican Indigenous National Congress (Congreso Nacional Indigena). From doing this work I was then invited to organize trusted Mexican friends to assist in translation between O'odham in Mexico and Tohono

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.

O'odham tribal members from the U.S. during organizing efforts to protect a critical sacred site in Sonora. Later I joined efforts to protect Moadak Do'ag from desecration in Arizona and now I am a part of the O'odham Anti-Border Collective. For me as a descendant there has also been a process of healing and identity formation in this journey but my commitment and my efforts have first and foremost been about the work of materially advancing O'odham sovereignty as an accomplice, as someone willing to "weaponize my privileges" such as my bilingual language skills, to provide capacity for other O'odham to organize. Being an accomplice is my responsibility as a descendant and a relative.

Pedagogies of accompliceship: the PLM develops resistance to transfigurations of power

Being an accomplice is also a viable political option for Mexican and Latinx folks that does not reproduce mestizo/a privilege. Being an accomplice a pedagogical process, it is something we learn by doing, and the history of the PLM is a key historical example that we can use to learn from.

> Sitting in the threshold of the door, Pedro thought, thought, thought, and inside his brain wheeled, until it made him feel physically ill, this simple question: how could it be possible to live without government? Everything, everything Pedro accepted, apart from this that one could live without government, and, feeling a burning in his head he got up and began to walk without destination, meanwhile inside his head wheeled the torturous question: how could it be possible to live without government?
>
> -from the short story *El Sueño de Pedro* by Ricardo Flores Magón[162]

For the Partido Liberal Mexicano the Mexican revolution raised a series of pedagogical challenges as well as an opportunity to question social structures, re-imagine new possibilities, experiment, and create a new society based on revolutionary values. This approach to revolution as an ongoing social process beyond the moment of taking power questioned the colonial nation

[162] Magón, Ricardo Flores. *Para qué sirve la autoridad?: y otros cuentos*. Ediciones Antorcha, 1981.

state and required a pedagogical methodology that the PLM developed through their writings as a way of talking about what needed to be learned and what we needed to teach ourselves in order to achieve sustainable revolutionary change.

In this sense we can analyze the role of knowledge production, education, struggle, communication, popular culture, and art in the PLM's practice of organizing as a form of pedagogical methodology, where revolutionaries considered what it was they needed to understand, do and say to one another and to their people in order to teach themselves what it was necessary to know in order to accomplish the goals of the revolution. Queer third world woman of color feminist M. Jacqui Alexander's concept of the pedagogical imperative of political thought and activism[163] resonates with the PLM's literary framing of the organizer as well as their evolving discourse of revolution as the work of regenerating an anti-colonial project against the nation state, racism, and global capital. Toward this process participants and adherents to the PLM wrote newspapers, created visual art, composed poems, staged plays and musicals, played songs, threw parties, wrote fiction, took photos, encouraged grassroots journalism and independent investigation, drafted screenplays and dreamed of producing movies, wrote letters, submitted testimonials, creatively protested in the streets, made flags and banners, gave speeches, organized celebrations and bailes, told stories, convened meetings, discussed, debated, and did everything they could think of in order to further the cause of the Mexican revolution through quotidian popular culture.

Short stories by Ricardo Flores Magón appeared in the pages of *Regeneración* from 1911 to 1917 while the newspaper and the revolutionary junta of the PLM were based in Los Angeles, California after their release from the Yuma Territorial Penitentiary and after open warfare of the

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[163] Alexander, M. Jacqui. *Pedagogies of crossing: Meditations on feminism, sexual politics, memory, and the sacred*. Duke University Press, 2005.

Mexican revolution had begun. The internet archive of Flores Magón's writing, sponsored by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historía[164], describes the stories written between December of 1910 and early February of 1911 as clarifying to readers the role of the revolutionaries who were traveling across both Mexico and the United States to organize support for the revolution. The archive curators note that during this period of time, the overall tone of the newspaper was pessimistic, reflecting the appearance that Madero's forces, to whom the PLM was still aligned at that time, might be losing the war[165]. The online archive website claims that the stories' objective at this time were to denounce and agitate the indifferent masses to support the revolution instead of permit its defeat, suggesting that the aim of the stories was to vent frustration at very audience the PLM sought to organize. This may be true, yet when the stories from this period are read alongside stories after the release of the Manifesto *del 23 de septiembre de 1911* by the Revolutionary Junta of the PLM, (one of the central documents that confirms their split with Madero and expresses a radical reassessment in ideology, political aims, and strategy), we can see that the shift toward anarchism also presents a shift in thinking about the role of the organizer and the importance of cultural strategies and Indigenous political thought in the revolution that I argue stems in part from an increased PLM engagement with Indigenous communities and the agrarian movement at this time, not only from the influence of white anarchists and Western theory as many historians claim. My method of reading these two stories together, as a lesson improved upon and rethought, is also one of the central methodologies and reading practices of this study, which I term a pedagogical reading practice.

[164] Obra Literaria. ArchivoMagón.net Accessed June 13, 2019. http://archivomagon.net/obras-completas/obra-literaria/
[165] Ibid.

The first story *El Apóstol*, published in Regeneración, number 19, 7 January 1911[166], presents the earlier period movement's perspective on organizing. It describes the failed attempts of el Delegado Revolucionario in his struggle to secretly organize people to join the revolutionary guerrilla forces. The story dwells on describing his bodily suffering and sacrifice - thirst, heat, hunger, and fatigue as form of articulating the organizer as a martyr and also of embodying a practice of radical emulation that was emphasized in the earlier period of the movement as revolutionary writers sought to explain what forms of personal comportment, virtue, and moral fortitude were necessary to cultivate revolutionary discipline[167]. As a critique upon the lack of effectiveness in the movement's organizing work as a weakness or lack of virtue in the oppressed who don't seem to get the need to rise up, the story describes the failure of the community to recognize the value of the revolutionary organizer's embodiment of personal sacrifice and radical discipline. A foreigner, an outsider, el Delegado Revolucionario arrives at the shacks of an impoverished community in search of a group of sympathetic peasants he has heard about in his travels. Yet when arrives to the community he was searching for that he had assumed would welcome his message of revolution with open arms, he finds instead an indifferent group of people who ridicule him, and ultimately sell the information of his arrival to the police who arrest the organizer and execute him.

Like many of Flores Magón's short stories, this one combines moments of narrative description with metalogical or metanarative discussions of the functioning of ideologies and systems of power, that abstract out from the text and refer oftentimes to the organizing and intellectual work that the PLM is doing to further the revolution or to the way Flores Magón

[166] Regeneración, Compilación Completa. ArchivoMagon.net. Accessed June 13, 2019. http://archivomagon.net/periodicos/
[167] Kaplan, Samuel, and Enrique Flores Magón. *Peleamos contra la injusticia*. 1986.

imagines that this work is received and processed by his audience of readers or listeners (in the case of the illiterate who engaged with the newspaper through recitations). In this story, the protagonist is propelled both by his emotional and moral responses to the suffering he sees in the communities he visits, but also by the idea of immunizing these suffering souls against oppression. "La idea" functions in this story, and many others written by Flores Magón, as a key plot device, in conjunction with strategies of the affective and moralizations, to propel both the action of the narrative and to drive for some kind of similar response of action from the reader to wake up and realize the virtue of joining the revolution.

The story also reveals the ways that Flores Magón imagined at the time the work of organizing and consciousness raising. The protagonist is referred to throughout the text as an apostle, a catechist, a delegate, a propagandist, or a revolutionary whose task is to convince the people he encounters in his journeys to join the revolutionary struggle. In this story he makes a speech to the peasants living in a remote and deeply impoverished mountain village to join the resistance or to make donations to the struggle. The protagonist and his revolutionary ideas are compared to the soaring eagle that flies overhead, symbolizing a wider, sharper perspective than that accessible to the people on the ground, "muy alto, muy puro, muy blanco[168]". Meanwhile, the indifferent villagers are likened to the flies that buzz into the open mouths of a sleeping old drunk. Failing to be moved by the impassioned speech of the organizer, the townspeople gossip negatively about his arrival and unanimously decide to close their doors to him, refusing even a glass of water to the man dying of thirst and hunger. At this point a man who is described as a worker goes to the police station and asks how much money he can make if he turns in a revolutionary, to which is he offered twenty reales. The story ends with the arrest and execution

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[168] Magón, Ricardo Flores. *Para qué sirve la autoridad?: y otros cuentos*. Ediciones Antorcha, 1981.

of the revolutionary by the police for the meager sum paid to the informant and concludes with a spiritual and moralizing reference to those who "please themselves to throw dirt on the eyes of the martyr" who suffers long and treacherous pilgrimages to bring to their brains the "idea of the regeneration of the human race via through well-being and liberty."[169]

One interesting aspect of the *El Apóstol* is the use of religious symbols and moralizing. Despite the fact that the PLM were deeply opposed to the Catholic Church and organized religion as colonially oppressive, the story demonstrates how they sometimes utilized religious moral discourse to develop a sort of liberation theology method of organizing. Other evidence of this strategy is presented in Enrique Flores Magón's oral history, *Peleamos Contra la Injusticia* as told to Samuel Kaplan, where the younger Flores Magón brother describes using bible stories to teach concepts of anarchism and socialism to prisoners he was attempting to organize while incarcerated in order to both make the concepts relevant to the educational experiences of the prisoners who were already largely familiar with the Christian Bible, but also to evade authorities who were hostile to political organizing within the jail[170]. Additionally, the story marks a practice of drawing upon Mexican Catholic traditions to memorialize revolutionary martyrs as a pedagogical tool to discuss the proper comportment of revolutionary participants and stimulate moral and disciplinary development.

Yet the stories of Ricardo Flores Magón were also a place for the writer to make arguments about what revolution actually means and to communicate the complex and constantly evolving ideology of the PLM in more accessible and popular forms than his formal prose and journalism. This was particularly important to the movement in the context after the fall of 1911 when the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz had ended yet the war waged on as factions struggled for

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[169] Ibid.
[170] Kaplan, Samuel, and Enrique Flores Magón. *Peleamos contra la injusticia*. 1986.

military control of the country. In his later story *Expropriación*, published in *Regeneración*, number 68, 16 December 1911 in Los Angeles, California, Flores Magón again writes about a traveling organizer but this time with an entirely different outcome in order to explain to readers what exactly the PLM was advocating for when they asked people to join the revolution[171]. The story begins by discussing the impact of an organizer's recent visit to a group of slaves who continued to meet and plan revolution after being aroused by his talk that compared the lords of the plantation estates to the first colonizers who arrived from Europe to disposes and enslave the Indigenous population. In this rewrite of the earlier story of the organizer which had been told in the omnipresent third person, perspective shifts to a first-person narrator who is one of the slaves who the organizer seeks to organize. The narrator of *Expropriación* says that the organizer was right and confirms agreement with the analysis that the landlords are colonizers and the slaves of the plantation are the descendants of the Indigenous peoples who have rights to the land that was stolen by the colonizers. Disgusted, the narrator laments the starvation, lack, and forced labor of the slaves in comparison to the leisure and luxury of the landlords.

The first paragraph detailing the outrages of the plantation ends with the denouncement of sexual violence as a method of slavery and colonization. This connection between colonization, slavery, and sexual or gendered violence was an ongoing theme in the work of Flores Magón and was based on the prevalence of actual testimonies of plantation sexual violence gathered by the revolutionaries. In this particular Flores Magón short story the theme of sexual assault, rape, and violence against women as well as the denial of women's rights to bodily autonomy and personal choice is mentioned repeatedly as Indigenous women drive the action the plot and are figured as the more militant and action-orientated characters ready to take

[171] Magón, Ricardo Flores. *Para qué sirve la autoridad?: y otros cuentos*. Ediciones Antorcha, 1981.

up arms and demand social change. While discourses of gender within much of the PLM writing by male authors is limited and problematic, often invoking vulgar displays of sexism and homophobia, as well as invoking ideas of proper womanhood based on White, religious, and bourgeoisie concepts of femininity, there are several moments in their writing, such as in this story, where an alternative view of women is presented that resonates with the writings by Mexican feminists at the times, with the alternative social roles of Indigenous women, and with the on the ground organizing of the thousands of women who did take up arms during the revolution.

However, despite the important role given to women in the story, the main character of *Expropriación* is still the male traveling organizer, not the Native women or the enslaved narrator whose gender is not revealed. Like Flores Magón's earlier story *El Apóstol*, *Expropriación* spends significant time describing the arrival of a traveling revolutionary to the campo. However, unlike the peasants in *El Apóstol* who were unmoved by the discussions with the revolutionary organizer, the plantation slaves in *Expropriación* are successfully agitated to action by the words of the orator. The characters in *El Apóstol* were slow, tired, resigned and complacent to their misery before and after the arrival of the organizer. However, the characters of *Expropriación* have long been outraged and frustrated by the injustices of the plantation. The arrival of the organizer only cements their prior feelings and confirms that something must be done to address their grievances. In addition, the oratory style shifts between the two stories. In *El Apóstol* the quotes of the organizer's speeches were urgings to support the guerrillas because of the righteousness of their abstract and lofty ideals. But in *Expropriación*, the organizer speaks of metaphors rooted in the experiences of an Indigenous relationship to land:

> Brothers of misery, raise your face. We are human beings equal to the rest of the human beings who inhabit the earth. Our origin is common, the land, this old land

> that we water with our sweat, is our common mother, and for the same, we have the right to what feeds us, to the wood of her forests and the water of her springs for everyone without distinction, with only one condition: that we fertilize her and love her. Those who say they are the owners of the land, are descendants of those bandits who, by blood and fire, snatched her from our ancestors, four centuries ago, when these acts of arson occurred, of wholesale massacres, of savage rapes that History records in this name: The Conquest of Mexico. This land is ours, comrades of chains: Let's take it for ourselves and for all of our descendants![172]

This key passage demonstrates what Flores Magón would often refer to as the basis of the PLM's understanding of Mexican anarchism and what became also their redefinition of regeneración- the political thought and governance structures of Indigenous peoples based in communal social structures and complex relations with land that exceed Western thought and capitalist concepts of property and ownership. This point of view was perhaps most famously argued in the 1912 PLM statement, *El Pueblo Mexicano Es Apto Para el Comunismo*, (by Enrique, Ricardo and W.C. Owen) that the Mexican people were better situated for realizing the goals of communism than Europeans because unlike Europeans who had rare practice in communalism but centuries of practice in colonialism, Mexicans had centuries of practice in real communalism through their exposure to Indigenous traditions and forms of governance and remarked that the agrarian movement of Emiliano Zapata illustrated this point well[173].

In the story *Expropriación* the organizer's language based in land-based cultural symbols and an Indigenous critique of colonialism motivates the slaves of the plantation to action, whereas the abstract and more Western language of the organizer in *El Apóstol* who talks about the lofty, white ideas of liberty fails to connect to the lived experiences of the villagers. I think this demonstrates Flores Magón's complex understanding of the Indigenous and campesino experience as a land-based epistemology and the importance of Indigeneity and anti-colonialism

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[172] Ibid.
[173] Magón, Ricardo Flores. *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader.* AK Press, 2005.

to the oppositional tendencies in the revolution. The story also articulates a political perspective rooted in land-based cultures and epistemologies that see the land through a framework of relationality, rather than property ownership, and that also sees a distinct connection between sexual assault and gendered violence against Indigenous women and the colonization of Indigenous lands.

The story *Expropriación* also differs from *El Apóstol* in that it goes into further detail into the actual process of revolutionary organizing. *Expropriación* explains the secret meetings of the plantation slaves first to meet with the organizer and then to continue to organize themselves into a revolutionary force after the organizer continues on his way to other plantations. In these meetings the slaves engage in political discussions, affirming that "la madre tierra es nuestra en común". The story makes a point to highlight the participation of Indigenous women and youth, stating that women and youth were the most radicalized and ready to take up arms among the whole community. Yet rather than presenting the colonized and enslaved as indifferent to their oppression until aroused by an outside agitator, the story narrates the process through which the oppressed engage in strategic analysis based on their own historical memory of long resistances. For example, they meet to discuss strategy and evaluate the failures of previous attempts at uprisings and petitioning authorities such as the government or the church. In simple, everyday language the characters in the story share experiences of violence with each other, as well as experiences of resistance and critiques of the failure of politicians like Madero to resolve the problems of the poor, landless, and Indigenous. It is through their own collective process resulting from these conversations that the slaves decide on their own that the government and the rich colonizers are allied with one another and both should be destroyed "¡Muera al Gobierno

y mueran los ricos! … ¡No más hambre!', gritaban. '¡A tomar la hacienda!', volvían a gritar."[174] The final scene of the story describes the Indigenous women leading the charge on the plantation with the men following behind, solidifying the importance of native and enslaved women's leadership in the moment of revolutionary action and symbolizing a dramatic change in power relations as the formerly victimized women become the empowered catalysts for action. The culminating scene of violence shifts self-consciously from the discharge of guns to the well-positioned arrows of "Regeneración" itself, theory made weapon, breaking down the fortress of the landlords and slave owners, who again are referenced as rapists, murderers, and colonizers who stole the land from the Indigenous peoples. In the final last two paragraphs of the story the sun shines on a new day, full of romantic language and descriptions of natural beauty, when the newly freed slaves gather to reorganize their society to live in harmony with the land and to have masters no more. As in many of Ricardo Flores Magón's stories, the philosophy of regeneración, of developing a decolonial society based in pre-colonial and exceeding colonial traditions (those survival strategies of Indigenous and enslaved communities that exceed colonialism), albeit a fairly romanticized slightly indigenista version of them, is referenced rather than any explicit mention to anarchism, communism, or Western political ideas. This shift is critical. In this story PLM has learned the value of Indigenous and colonized knowledges and has begun to re-evaluate their romanticism of Eurocentric political thought.

Positioned together, these two stories, or in many ways, one story revised and rewritten into a different story, reveals perhaps a self-reflexive critique of moments when organizers failed to connect to the community and an acknowledgement of lessons learned when strategies shifted toward organizing through the cultures and experiences of the colonized rather than attempting

[174] Magón, Ricardo Flores. *Para qué sirve la autoridad?: y otros cuentos*. Ediciones Antorcha, 1981.

to impose outside Eurocentric political ideologies. The stories provide a lens into the theoretical concerns of Flores Magón and the PLMs attempts to communicate revolutionary ideas in popular language and cultural, artistic forms. Thinking through the meaning of revisions, of retellings, of the lessons that multiple versions together of the same story teach us is my methodological reading practice for this study.

Chapter 4: Cartographies of memory

Returning to Yuma: Everything begins with the river

In my mid 20s I realized that when I asked my elders questions about the past they answered by talking about water and land first. I guess I had always been aware of this pattern, but as I began to think about becoming a writer myself the shape of their stories became more clear to me. Usually, they would describe the river… the Colorado River, the Gila River, the San Luis Rey river, a river somewhere that our ancestors were connected to. A river that defined them as people, river people. My family is mixed, Mexican (meaning culturally Spanish,) and Native American (of at least three different nations in my direct blood line - Akimel O'odham, Tohono O'odham and a third, which I was told as a child was Cocopah but is actually Luiseño, I have extended cousins who are enrolled in Cocopah but to my current knowledge my direct ancestors were not Cocopah). Culturally, my immediate family identifies as Mexican with Pima ancestry. Pima (Akimel O'odham – meaning people of the river) being the cultural lineage that was most maintained in the family. Pima being who we see ourselves as, as connected to, as from. Pima being the tribe we currently have more colonial documents to verify our connection to, and the tribe we were once federally recognized as. We are probably technically more Tohono O'odham and Luiseño than Pima, by blood quantum. But Pima is how we identify. By the river.

Before any question I had to my elders could be answered, first, we must acknowledge the river. This practice feels appropriate to any discussion of Yuma as well. In my family stories we must speak of the river's power. Its depth. Its speed. Its width. Its miles of forests, arrowweed, cottonwood, mesquite, ironwood, willow, oak, palo verde, medicine and materials, food and life, shade and beaver, duck and fish. Because the rivers near Yuma connected to the

sea of Baja California and the Ocean was present in the migrations of animals, birds, and fishes through the lower Colorado River basin, we must imagine the taste of sea turtle eggs harvested from the sand dunes that line the river bed. We must feel the thread of saltwater shells around our necks. We must pray for the tío who drowned in the rapid currents. We must picture a map of trees and Indians, extinct trees and extinct fish. We must remember that if we are still alive, so too, is a river. Run dry. But waiting. Somewhere in our veins.

My grandfather Ernesto Salomón was born on the border in 1914, at the height of the Mexican Revolution. According to the archivists at Mission de San Diego Alcalá, his mother's maternal family was from a Luiseño community in north county San Diego, where family oral history maintains they had been enslaved by either a settler rancher or the mission itself, from which they escaped to Yuma in the late 1800s, where his mother and her sisters were born out of wedlock, their father being a Mexican man married to another woman who died very young from a horseback riding accident. The nature of his relationship to their mother, a traditional Luiseño midwife and medicine woman who was renowned for her work with herbal remedies, is unclear and isn't something my elders were ever willing to discuss, but we know that her father and his family were in her life to some extent. My grandfather liked to talk about how his parents met at a Catholic Indian school and fell in love as children, but I have yet to find concrete archival verification of their attendance at Indian boarding school. I do know that his parents were functionally literate in English and Spanish from letters my cousin Maria has inherited, which seems to back up the family stories of a Catholic residential school education given that Catholic communities in the border region were heavily Spanish speaking in the late 1800s even though Indian boarding schools sought to Americanize their students and provided a functional enough literacy training to facilitate religious conversion and bible study.

My grandfather's paternal family were Akimel O'odham and Tohono O'odham laborers who had been brought / were displaced to the area around Yuma, Arizona, where the Colorado River marks the borders between California and Arizona as it cuts through the U.S. and the states of Sonora and Baja California as it cuts through Mexico. The Quechan and Cocopah reservations navigate their own border relationships with the towns of Yuma and its suburbs of Winterhaven, Summerton, and Bard on the U.S. side and with San Luis, Los Algodones, Cuidad Morelos, and a smattering of growing *colonias* on the Mexico side. Quechan territory is historically on the western banks of the Colorado, while Cocopah traditionally were further south into Mexico. The Pii Pash (Maricopa) used to reside between Quechan and Mohave but relocated to Akimel O'odham territory in Eastern Arizona during the famines of the late 1800s that had brought the Colorado River tribes into conflict with settlers and each other. The land on the eastern banks of the river is traditional Hia C'ed O'odham territory which followed the Gila River east into Tohono O'odham then Akimel O'odham communities and followed the mountain springs and streams south into Mexico. So, it is not surprising that in the era of immense settler influx, various O'odham peoples (Hia C'ed, Tohono, and Akimel) found their way to the plantations and mines of Yuma for work, either as free laborers often passing as Mexicans or as captured or indentured Indian slaves.

Prior to U.S.-Mexican colonization this river region held its own form of bordered geography between Indigenous peoples- Quechan, Cocopah, Hia-Ced O'odham, and Pii-Pash (Maricopa), with encounters, relationships, and competitions with Kumeyaays, Mohaves, and other O'odham peoples (Akimel O'odham and Tohono O'odham). This land that once was the bottom of a great sea, and still holds the fossils of salt water shells in the rare areas not decimated by all-terrain vehicles, is cut by rivers, swaths of desert, shifting climates, volcanic rock, caliche,

white clay, and ancient sacred mountains. The Arizona-Sonora side of the river is obvious for its saguaros, chollas, and chaparral. The Californias side of the river is dune, ocotillo, and for a brief moment in the spring, fields of delicate desert flowers. Bighorn sheep, antelope, desert tortoise, wolves, jaguars, deer, antelope, black panthers, and bears once abundantly roamed the Sonoran desert which meets the border of the Colorado desert in Yuma. There is still an area in the eastern Sonoran desert whose name in O'odham ñeok mean buffalo, pisinimo. Petroglyphs in our region describe to the traveling hunter where to find such large animals, dating back to the times of the mastodon. There are still songs sung in local Indigenous communities about the macaws and parrots who would visit, and be traded, by Indigenous peoples from Central America along robust trade and cultural exchange routes. There are still stories passed down in our communities of Indigenous traders and explorers who sailed to the nearby sea of Cortez, to the Pacific, and encountered other continents long before Europeans. The sacred salt of those beaches is still collected in ceremonial ways by young native men journeying the desert hundreds of miles by foot.

Volcanic rock and fossil bed gives way to finely sanded dunes that have inspired the sci-fi imagination of Hollywood to dream of other worlds, other frontiers beyond California and the "golden gate to trade with the Orient,"[1] the original name of San Francisco's famous red bridge to the wealth of the pacific. The first bridge across the Colorado river in Yuma was built to fill a missing link to complete the transcontinental railroad, and still lights a neon sign declaring "Ocean to Ocean Highway - Yuma" at night as cargo trains haul cheap Chinese goods from California ports to online and dollar store shoppers in the Midwest. The narrow bridge pass holds the train on one side and a single lane of traffic on the other. Cars from Arizona going into the Quechan reservation and the state of California must pause at a red light for the infrequent traffic

from the reservation into town to pass first. The two states operate different relationships to time. California saves daylight and is one hour late from November to March. Coordinating the basic tasks of quotidian life becomes a repetition of confusion as you ask, "California time or Arizona time?," as you lose hours here and there crossing the bridge from the rez into town and back. Or in my case, from San Diego into Yuma to see family and onward to Tohono O'odham nation where my partner lives. Only in the hot months, when the tourists leave and those who must live in the desert remain, do the two states share temporalities, despite the fixed location of the sun as the earth moves round it day in and day out. California still orients itself to the frontier future and Pacific gaze, Arizona remains firmly placed in its colonial past, the wild west, wall, border, and ideas of greatness wedded to confederate nostalgia.

Early maps of the Yuma region describe not complete desert but miles of cool densely wooded forests that lined the Colorado and Gila Rivers down to their meeting point just above downtown Yuma and past it to sea; cottonwood, willow, mesquite, iron wood, palo verde, juniper, arrowweed, cattail. All of it food, tool, medicine, relative. According to my own elders the soft duney sands of the Colorado river near Algodones and Yuma harbored the spawning grounds for giant sea turtles. There are whispers about wandering dolphins and small porpoises, enormous fishes, various shellfish, and multitudes of water fowl now extinct or endangered from the severe impacts of dams and diversions that has reduced a river once over a mile and a half wide and at least thirty feet deep, a river once navigated by steam boat, to a warm, weak willed six-inch shallow trickle. This sweet water, as it was called by those who lived here and drank from its banks, runs from the Rocky Mountains to the sea through lands sacred to many Indigenous peoples. Or at least it used to.

Yuma is located just west of where the Colorado River and the Gila River used to meet[175]. The rivers were known to naturally change course in flood times, sometimes moving miles away from the track of their earlier beds. The intrusion of settler water extraction projects after the U.S.-Mexican War and the Gadsden Purchase along the Gila shifted the course of the river northward, and the Gila River dam in the 1870s brought severe starvation, mass death, and displacement to Akimel O'odham peoples. Our family suspects that this event is also what brought our Akimel O'odham ancestors to the mines, cattle ranches, and plantations of Yuma. After the U.S.-Mexico War, the border between the U.S. and Mexico cut across the meeting point of the Colorado and Gila Rivers, leaving a small slice of land with the town of Yuma in the U.S. but the remaining area around it to the south and east in Mexico. The boundary line of the state of California was the Colorado River, hence the small town of Yuma was technically part of New Mexico territory, but given the distance from the territory capital of Santa Fe, the residents preferred to deal with authorities in San Diego, which was much closer.[176] The early settlements around Yuma were officially in Arizona territory but in reality, functioned more as outposts of San Diego county until the late 1800s. The region is still somewhere between California and the Southwest, a border space. A transitive space of transportation, movement, and extraction.

Laguna Dam was built thirteen miles north of Yuma to divert the mighty Colorado[2] to the fields, homes, and businesses of Yuma County, Imperial County, and from San Luis to Mexicali in Mexico. This water feeds millions of acres of settler towns, farms, and industry. Construction on the diversion dam began in 1905 and it is supposedly modeled after similar diversion

[175] Love, Frank. "Poston and the Birth of Yuma: The Father of Arizona Invents a Story." *The Journal of Arizona History* 19, no. 4 (1978): 403-416.; Love, Frank. *From brothel to boom town: Yuma's naughty past*. Little London Press, 1981.; Love, Frank. *Hell's Outpost: A History of Old Fort Yuma*. Yuma Crossing, 1992.
[176] Ibid.

structures from India.[177] Laguna dam is a weir structure, mostly buried under the river as a solution to extract clear water out from the sand dunes and silt that had provided fertile river bed farmland to local Indigenous peoples and into the fields and businesses of settlers. Etched into its sides are large swastikas, a creative stamp of the original engineers supposedly inspired by their research on similar dams built by British colonists in India, that stand with a different representational haunting now in the white supremacist imaginary of Arizona, and in Yuma, a town heavy with support of the KKK after WWI where it is not out of the ordinary to see Confederate flags rippling in the wind[178].

Construction on the entire dam and canal project lasted from 1905 to 1909[179]. The labor was performed by a largely Indigenous and Mexican workforce, the same people who would be displaced and see their lands reduced by the settler land grab that accompanied the completion of the irrigation project. After the dam Quechan saw their reservation on the river reduced by half[180]. In the 1920s my ancestors, O'odham Indians who worked in the region as disposable labor after colonial displacement from their original villages and may have been brought initially as slaves, lost our Bureau of Indian Affairs managed allotments in the area to white settlers and became unenrolled and no longer recognized by the federal government through a swindle where illiterate Indians were mailed residency verification letters that had to be signed and returned to the BIA in order to keep Indian allotments active during the land grab. Most elders claimed they never actually received the letters in the first place, and those that did could not read them as few at the time could read or understand English and did not know they had to be signed and mailed

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[177] "Laguna Dam District Arizona." National Park Service, Accessed June 13, 2019.
https://www.nps.gov/nr/testing/ReclamationDamsAndWaterProjects/Laguna_Dam_District.html
[178] See Ku Klux Klan papers, Yuma Historical Society.
[179] "Laguna Dam District Arizona." National Park Service, Accessed June 13, 2019.
https://www.nps.gov/nr/testing/ReclamationDamsAndWaterProjects/Laguna_Dam_District.html
[180] Sauder, Robert. *The Yuma Reclamation Project: irrigation, Indian allotment, and settlement along the lower Colorado River*. University of Nevada Press, 2009.

back. When they protested to the government, according to my elders, the B.I.A. told them that because many of the non-Quechan and non-Cocopah Indians who lost local allotments and their federal recognition spoke Spanish for work (due to their historic experience of Spanish colonialism in the region) that they should "go to Los Angeles and become Mexicans, there is plenty of work for Mexicans in the city". Some of these formerly allotted Indian laborer families did move, and maintained their O'odham, Yoeme (Yaqui), Kumeyaay, Luiseño, Tongva, or Mohave heritages at home while navigating as Mexicans to the outside world. Passing as Mexican and assimilating into the Mexican-American community became a survival option thrust on some Indians by the federal government, and despite its challenges and dispossession, it solved a major concern of their generation- being able to protect their children from the abuses of Indian boarding schools. Crossing the border into Mexico was another boarding school survival strategy, perhaps best exemplified by over 70 tribal members of Quechan who left Fort Yuma in the late 1800s to set up a new community just over the border in Mexico where they would not be compelled to relinquish their children to boarding schools[181]. Eventually these families were coerced back into the U.S. during the allotment of the Fort Yuma reservation, thus given an impossible choice – defend their land by returning to claim allotments of the reservation so they would not be sold off to white settlers or protect their children from abuse and forced assimilation by remaining in Mexico without land protections. Many of our family stories about the transition from Indian to Mexican identity focus more on the issue of evading boarding schools and much less on access to certain resources like jobs that Mexicans had privilege to. This complicates the common belief that people became Mexican and voluntarily shed their Indigenous identities and cultures to take advantage of a positive privilege (jobs) when in many

[181] Ibid.

cases it was done more out of coercion or avoidance of brutal violences (boarding schools, child separation, indenture and peonage, etc.). Many of our O'odham and Yaqui community members and much of my extended family remained in the area and married into the Quechan and Cocopah communities, their descendants make a significant portion of current tribal members. While some other displaced Indians moved into the city of Yuma and became part of the Mexican agricultural and mine labor force, occupations they were already familiar with. While others like the boarding school resisting Quechan moved to Mexico while other Indians like many Yaqui families followed the advice of the B.I.A. and moved to cities such as Los Angeles and Tucson.

I'm related to all of these folks and I am marked by their stories. When I'm in Yuma random old folks will stare at me in the store or on the street, and eventually come up and ask if I am one of "those Mexican Indians who lived out by the reservation," referring to my great-great grandparents' generation and when I answer yes, they will ask my last name. Sometimes we find out we are related this way. Other times it is just a way for people to find out who I am, and usually they will respond by telling me which of my relatives they know. Once I asked my grandfather why, if we were Indians, that we did not have enrollment cards. He laughed at the stupidity of my question and responded, "That's for white people. If you're really an Indian you don't need a card from the government to tell you," he continued with a chuckle. "You're a Salomon. Just go to Yuma, everyone knows us there. They know you're a Pima." And so far, in my returns to Yuma I have found this to be true.

The memory of our community remains here in Yuma but the question of Indigeneity and authenticity forms when descendants leave Yuma to a place where no one knows our history nor remembers us. Given that at least half of the O'odham and Yaqui descendants of Yuma live

away from Yuma this raises a question for many of my relatives as to whether we can claim Indigeneity in the ways that federally recognized Indigenous peoples can. For many of my relatives, federally recognized tribal membership equates authenticity and a lack of federally recognized membership makes one feel an imposter, particularly among other Native people. Many of my cousins who lack enrollment distinguish themselves as Indigenous but not Indians, or will describe themselves as of Indigenous descent or ancestry without claiming our actual tribal affiliations, careful to try to find some way to articulate the differences of our collective experience as non-recognized descendants from that of other relatives who were incarcerated within the reservation system, sent to boarding schools, and have had generations of their families intimate lives and basic needs regulated by the federal government. To attend to the fact that our experience has not included some of these particular violences is important and accountable. The politics of returning to our tribal communities for detribalized descendants depends upon being a good relative and accomplice to autonomy and rejecting the appropriation that fuels Indigenismo and settler fantasies.

Fictions of blancamiento: temporalities of dispossession

Secondary historical analyses of Yuma distinguish the Indigenous population from the Mexican population through a representation of Indigeneity as signified by non-mixed race and culturally traditional people, those who may still wear traditional dress, speak their Indigenous language, continue to live in their original communities, and practice their traditional ways and religions. It is a definition of Indigeneity that centers a static notion of culture and excludes mixed-race people, mobility, adaptation, and innovation. As a descendant in the archive who knows the families of people who were documented in archival records I often noticed

Indigenous people who had converted to Catholicism, moved from one location to another, or who were Indigenous people from Mexican territory labeled as described as Mexicans. For example, in the popular history books about the Yuma Territorial Penitentiary historians have largely used the prison records as a source of truth about a prisoner's identity, trusting that when prison officials classified a prisoner as Mexican or Native American that these distinctions were accurate and represented racially distinct groups, rather than linguistic, cultural, or geographic differences. For example, Angelita Sonoqui, an O'odham woman from Tucson who served time for adultery is classified as Mexican[182]. Yet some Sonoquis are still enrolled tribal members in Tohono O'odham nation and other historical records such as church records document the family's Indigenous identity. Which raises the question of whether Angelita considered herself Mexican or whether she was classified as such because she spoke Spanish, was Catholic and assimilated into Spanish settler culture, or because she was from a region which had actually been part of Mexico rather recently when she was incarcerated. Conflating people like Angelita, dark skinned people of Indigenous descent, with the Spanish settler class who also identified as Mexican distorts our understanding of the social history of nineteenth century when racial caste distinctions were still powerfully operating within Spanish colonial culture and society. Within a Spanish settler community at the turn of the century someone phenotypically Indigenous like Angelita Sonoqui would have been viewed as *una india*, a distinction that would have structured her life very differently from that of white Mexicans. Colorism would have limited her economically, politically, and socially within the Mexican community as it would have also limited her vis-a-vi the Anglo settler community, much in the same way that a short, dark-skinned Indigenous Mexican today will have a very different racialized experience of being a

[182] Klungness, Elizabeth J. *Prisoners in petticoats: The Yuma territorial prison and its women*. Yuma County Historical Society Publications, 1993.

Mexican than a tall, light-skinned, European-looking Mexican. These racial distinctions manifest in very different material life-chances within Mexican society because contrary to the myth of the unified mestizo nation is still a very racially stratified society.

The Chicano movement of the 1960s-80s was a complex and multi-angled struggle that encompassed anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-racism, racialized class struggle, anti-carceral activism, gender justice, environmental justice, and reformist efforts toward inclusion and access to middle class white privileges within American society under a broad umbrella of movements and organizations that represented the multitude of interests of a diverse Mexican-American community. Culturally however a focus of Chicanismo has centered a singular narrative of reclaiming Indigenous roots through a framing of Mexicanness as racial and cultural mestizaje that drew inspiration from the state Indigenismo of Mexican nationalism through the appropriation of Aztec heritage. This has obscured in many ways the ability to discuss Mexican Indigeneity in other forms, both of migrant Indigenous peoples from Mexico and of the detribalization process that occurred in the transcolonial zone as Indigenous people like Angelita Sonoqui became Mexicans. Tackling the rift between Chicano/a and Native American understandings of Indigeneity is important because these cultural definitions cause us to exist in different temporal worlds, there is a slip stream between us created by colonial assimilation that we do not have shared strategies as brown/red peoples to confront white supremacy and both our communities (re)produce anti-blackness and anti-darkness. Indigeneity in mestizo/a identity functions in a past-tense. It is common to hear a mestizo/a say, “my ancestors were Indigenous”, or “mi abuela (mi difunto) was an Indian”. Whereas for Natives, Indigeneity is the now. Our identity exists in the present. I am Native. My dad is O’odham. In scolding me not to “go to college and lose my mind”, i.e. become an Aztec like a Chicano, my grandfather would make me

sit at the table and practice call and response drills with him. The same way he taught me Spanish, making me repeat the word over and over and over. "What am I?" he would ask, pointing to his chest. "A Pima." I would have to answer. "Right, now what are you?" he would demand, pointing at me. "A Pima" I would have to respond. "Yes, you are not an Aztec, and neither is anyone in this family, make sure your little cousins don't turn into Aztecs either," he would scold. This in no way diminished my Mexicanness, as often these conversations were held in Spanish, while we drank tequila and listened to José Alfredo Jimenez sing rancheras. To my grandfather, there was not much of a distinction between being O'odham and being Mexican, which makes sense given the location of the border cutting across O'odham lands. But being a Mexican in a way that made our Nativeness a past tense, or that encouraged coopting a different Indigenous culture was a no-no in our house. It is difficult for me to find space in Mexican American community to belong. We are not immigrants. We are not Aztecs. We are not Natives from the south or Latin, assimilated people. The Chicano movement and its resistance politics have engaged many of my relatives, as a resistance struggle of Spanish-speaking people opposed to racism and Anglo colonialism. But within that, there is always this discomfort, this illness of fit between the temporalities of assimilation and whitening. We are still O'odham in the present tense. Not Indigenous in the past tense like many other Mexicans.

This slip of time matters, in how we think of place, land, belonging, community, and political strategy. Critical Xicanx/Latinx studies deals with this distance and the distancing act of colonialism and colonial assimilation by examining the processes of colonization and racial violence, the constructions of power and systems of oppression, the dynamics of race and racialization, how racialized people navigate systems of oppression, and the nuances of

complicity with colonialism [183]. Unlike Indigenismo, Critical Xicanx/Latinx Studies is concerned with the potential for mixed race folks to participate in colonialism and attends to issues of settler colonialism, anti-blackness, orientalism, and heteropatriarchy without romanticizing a mixed-race positionality or appropriating Indigeneity. For these reasons Critical Xicanx/Latinx Studies can be a useful location from which to consider the processes of detribalization, colorism, and blancamiento, topics not often explored enough in Native and Indigenous Studies. In Native and Indigenous Studies the move to nationalism and emphasis on federally recognized citizenship (in the U.S. context) as the only method of measuring authenticity leaves open both questions about the role of whiteness within Indigenous communities and the political positionality of non-enrolled, disenrolled, and non-federally recognized descendants [184]. While there are emerging conversations within the field about disenrollment and descendants' rights there is not enough scholarship exploring these issues and questioning how the move towards nationalism often gets conflated with the ways that federally recognized tribal nations can reproduce the nation-state and through a possessive form of citizenship that has been formed through a history of anti-blackness as well as how tribal governments often conflate nation building with capitalist development. However, by putting Critical Xicanx/Latinx Studies together in conversation with Native and Indigenous Studies and the larger field of Ethnic Studies we can do work that moves

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[183] Ana Maria Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995); Cristina Beltran, "Patrolling Borders: Hybrids, Hierarchies and the Challenge of Mestizaje," *Political Research Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2004): 595, https://doi.org/10.2307/3219821; Sheila Maria Contreras, *Blood Lines: Myth, Indigenism, and Chicana/o Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008); Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011); María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003); María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016).

[184] (Wilkins and Stark 2018; Wilkins and Wilkins 2017)

towards an undoing of settler colonialism, anti-blackness, orientalism, and heteropatriarchy in meaningful ways that can inform collective action and alternative institution building.

Putting multiple fields together and drawing from a variety of theoretical and scholarly trajectories is necessary for discussing the political and cultural realities of O'odham jewed (homelands) and the needs of our O'odham peoples and descendants as we exist underneath two competing colonial regimes and are severed in half by two colonial nation-states, the U.S. and Mexico. The blend of these influences is marked on our people, as we dance to cumbias and Ramon Ayala covers at tribal dances and speak Spanish with our elders, listening for their missionized accents. A Native and Indigenous Studies approach to O'odham issues that does not draw on the work done to examine Spanish colonialism and the U.S.-Mexico border within Critical Xicanx/Latinx Studies would be insufficiently prepared. However, an Indigenous Studies approach to the border is different from a Xicanx/Latinx Studies approach in that it centers the analysis of the colonial occupation of Indigenous lands rather than centering the figure of the (im)migrant or the Mexican citizen under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

To examine the border as an Indigenous space and to consider how Spanish and U.S. colonialism both work to occupy Indigenous lands and manage Indigenous bodies requires an examination of the spatial temporalities of Indigeneity and of the colonial carcerality of the transcolonial zone. As a descendant it is important to me that we unpack the impacts of detribalization, assimilation, and blancamiento in our movements, in our communities, in our families, across our own bodies within a system that one side of the border denies Indigeneity based on blood quantum and archival documentation and on the other side based on language and racial purity. How do we account for the slippages of colonial time that borders of identity

and the transcolonial context [185] of Spanish and Anglo colonialism creates between brown peoples, and could dealing with this time warp also get us to a place to critically think about whiteness and anti-blackness in both Indigenous Studies and Xicanx/Latinx studies, in our communities and movement spaces? I argue that looking at the material processes of dispossession, detribalization, and blancamiento should not romanticize the mixed-race positionality nor should it reproduce the mixed positionality as a trope of tragedy and placelessness (the stereotypical trope of alguien ni de aquí, ni de allá). Rather I argue that examining the material processes of dispossession, detribalization, and blancamiento can provide us a road map towards a politics and praxis of radical accompliceship to abolition and decolonization. Looking at the felt experiences and material historical processes is important because it grounds our theorizations and attempts at decolonization in the flesh, in the matter of our daily lives and our theory, beyond binaries and essentialisms. It allows us to ask uncomfortable questions such as does revitalizing Indigenous cultures do enough when we have relatives who are disenrolled, undocumented, and barred by the border from being with us? Is reproducing the nation-state and reliance on political citizenship instead of race, with its positional baggage of heteropatriarchy, anti-blackness (because citizenship is inherently anti-black) and undocumented, disenrolled, and disenfranchised descendants really what we mean when we say decolonization? Or is regeneration/regeneración, spurring new life from an old root in a way that makes the synergy of both hardier to current conditions, not hybridity but new growth, a way to hold the complexity and problems of complex dualities, a way to think about the slippage and circularity of time, perhaps a more useful path?

[185] D V Taylor-Garcia, "Decolonial Historiography, Thinking about Land and Race in a Transcolonial Context," *Intensions* Fall/Winte, no. 6 (2012): April 4, 2014, http://www.yorku.ca/intent/issue6/articles/daphnevtaylorgarcia.php.

Archival fictions: constructing blancamiento

As a story-carrier of my family and community, I've been and am being trained by my elders to maintain our history. In this dissertation I use both the stories I have learned, my experience of conducting research, and my own lived experience as felt theory [186] and as a method of research ceremony [187]. I am cautious about the potential problematics of confessional field notes to illustrate a positioning of perspective that may either elide issues of power in research or reproduce fictions of solidarities that are more fraught than acknowledged, [188], I still find that the methodology of memoir can be useful for theory, particularly for developing theory from the felt experiences of non-enrolled and non-recognized Indigenous descendants. As I enter these stories, I keep in mind their limitations but I also consider them evidence that should be valued as a non-western and feminist epistemology where relationship and embodiment matter [189].

In the Yuma Historical Society archive is a collection of biographies on local people. Parts of the collection were gathered by historians, librarians, archivists, and volunteer history buffs on notable people often mentioned in the city's founding such as politicians, business men, military, and church figures. Other materials have been donated by local families who still live in the area and want to see their own stories included in the story of Yuma. This collection typically includes newspaper clippings, obituaries, photos, marriage certificates, military records, and the

[186] Million, Dian. "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History." *Wicazo Sa Review* 24 (2): 53–76. 2009. https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.0.0043.
[187] Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*.
[188] Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota, 1994).
[189] Gloria Anzaldua, "Now Let Us Shift... the Path of Conocimiento... Inner Work, Public Acts," in *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, ed. Gloria Anzaldua and AnaLouise Keating (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), 540–78; Audrey Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," *Sister Outsider*, 1978, 53–59, https://doi.org/10.1109/DASC.2006.313747.

occasional transcript of an oral history interview. In this collection is an oral history interview a librarian conducted of my tío Charles Salomon. Within the archive also are xeroxed pictures of our difuntos who were the first generation to arrive in Yuma. If you were not a relative, you might think the version of the story my tío tells in the interview and that these photos reveal is true. It is not. At least not entirely. Some of it is real. And some of it is a fiction, purposefully told to a white historian by one of our family elders. I knew Charles Salomon, he was my grandfather's uncle. He came to our family parties. I have sat with him and heard the version of these stories he told to us, the descendants. His son is a favorite tío of mine who I visit when I go to Yuma. I have a lot of respect for tío Charles, for his wisdom, for his memory. I am not very interested in disproving or disrespecting the version of things he presented to paint our family as belonging more to the community of Spanish pioneers (miners and plantation owners) who are valorized in Yuma and Arizona historical circles than to the historically invisible community of Indigenous laborers, some enslaved, whom the Spanish settlers exploited and displaced. I am more interested in why. Why would he have thought about this, why would he have told this story, and what kinds of material and theoretical work does it do? What is the purpose and work of archival blancamiento, a white-washing, either by colonial record-keepers or by descendants ourselves? And to whom are the white and dark stories told, for what purposes are they differently shared?

Figure 4:1: Rosa Orosco Salomón with children and grandchildren, Juan Macias missing

The image threw me. Figure 4:1 is a picture of my ancestor, Rosa Orozco Salomón with her children and grandchildren. It is a bad photocopy. Some faces are unrealistically lightened by the copying process. Some figures are darkened and obscured. The names to identify relatives are a guess and debated over amongst our family. But there is some accuracy. Rosa, a full-blooded Akimel O'odham woman, (according to allotment records that some of her descendants who are enrolled citizens of several Indigenous nations rely on for blood quantum calculation), sits in the middle. Rosa is affectionately known in our family as "la India," and is the constellation from which our line distinguishes itself, all of her descendants are our family, no matter how far removed. I am most closely related to the two dark faced men in the back, labeled here Rodolfo and Alberto, two of Rosa's grandsons and my great-grandfather's full brothers. They look strikingly like my great-grandfather Juan, in features and skin tone. The note by their

names, Enes Mendez, refers to their mother Dolores, a Tohono O'odham woman from the Mexico side. The Enes name (sometimes also spelled Enos, Enis, Yanez, or Llanas) is well known in the T.O. nation. This is another detail that some of my relatives have used to validate our collective blood quantum, to keep from being erased or disenfranchised.

But there is something missing. If you look at Figure 4:1 you will see that the woman in the white dress, on the far right side with the faint label of Tasia (short for Anastacia), has a brown hand resting upon her shoulder. You might think, at a close glance, that this hand belongs to her nephew Alberto Salomon behind her. But it does not. It belongs to someone who is cut out of the frame, and thus a missing apparition, an absent presence in this version of the story of our family tree. The full photo is shown in Figure 4:2, where the person connected to the hand on Tasia's shoulder, a young man who is appears to be part African American, is visible.

Figure 4:2: Rosa Orosco Salomón with children and grandchildren, with Juan Macias

Another version of this story, another version that may or may not be true, is that this missing person may be Juan Macias, one of Rosa's sons she bore before her relationship with her

long-time Papago (we are not sure if he was Hia C'ed or Tohono) husband Gregorio Mendez. Juan Macias is the son of Ramon Macias, a man who may have been Black and Tohono O'odham, who worked as a miner in Yuma and may have been from Tucson or northern Sonora (I speculate these things from census and other archival records where he appears and blackness is mentioned). What is visible in the photo is some Indianness and a move to whiteness, the whitening of the faces through the copying process, especially of the women. What is missing in the photo is Blackness, or at least darkness, and our relationship to it, as part of our family, as what made us, as my grandfather often would say, "Black Indians". Figure 4:2 is the full photo, in a fuzzy, pixelated lessor quality digital image but better scanned, with a bit more color, with the dark and curly haired Juan Macias restored and remembered back to his phantom hand.

I speculate, but there is no documented way to confirm this, that Juan may also have been the openly queer tío my grandfather and his brother Oscar would tell stories about. In these stories, there was an openly gay uncle who lived near the reservation with his lover. Who would make scenes by showing up to family gatherings with said boyfriend and who once, caused a huge drunken brawl as macho Catholic men tried to throw him and the boyfriend out. But the elders of the family, who still thought of gender in traditional Indigenous terms, argued for acceptance. My grandfather and his younger brother were in their teens and twenties at the time. In their story, which they would often tell together, they became Indian men that day when they rose up with their youthful scrawniness against the bigger men of their parents' generation and threatened to beat the shit out of anyone who dared lay a hand on their uncle and his lover. They challenged the whole family, the church, and colonial masculinity (which on most other occasions they heartedly embraced and aggressively embodied), in order to obey a grandmother who argued in the uncle's defense. It was their coming of age story. It was also a story they told

more and more frequently when folks of my generation began to come out of the closet and bring queer lovers home. The creator just made them this way, my grandfather would often reassure us.

Though I am not exactly sure which uncle they were referring to, because often they would tell these stories when they were drinking, and when they were drinking they would often mix up names and relatives between their father's and mother's sides of the family. It's possible the gay tío was not a Salomon but a Beltran, one of their mother's relatives. Juan Macias is the only one of their father's uncles who never married, he is often spoken of with affectionate memory, as a helpful and loyal elder, a scoundrel like many of his generation, and a drunk, but never as a womanizer, which sets him apart from the other men in our family history. There is something queer about his story. In the ledger books where I found his name in the Yuma archive he is always with another man with a Spanish surname, buying obscene amounts of alcohol. Racking up bar tabs that remain calculated against the accounts of other area residents who usually buy food, supplies. He is also the only member of our family who is mentioned in the store ledger. In these late 1800s trading post ledger books, only whites and Mexicans are extended credit and appear to have access to consistent prices. The ledger documents how traditional Indians from Quechan, Cocopah, and Hia C'ed O'odham were denied credit and over-charged. It was also illegal to sell traditional Indians alcohol. But missionized Indians who had already been somewhat assimilated to Spanish domination and the labor economy, like much of the Yaqui and O'odham community in Yuma, were sometimes treated similarly to Mexicans. They could also be conflated and confused with Mexicans to become what one Anglo settler remembers as "men of a mixed Indian and Mexican race,"[190]. The ledger illustrates how Juan

[190] Mrs. Summerhayes Oral History. San Diego Historical Society.

Macias was able to purchase alcohol, an example of his access to a privilege that was denied more traditional Indigenous peoples.

This label of Mexican Indian has stuck on our family. During one of my research trips to Yuma I ventured into a used bookstore and after awhile of watching me browse the racks I was asked by the older white man behind the counter if I was “one of those Mexican Indians who used to live over by Quechan,” meaning if I was a descendant of the Yaqui and O’odham mining and farm labor community that moved around the region pursuing work from the late 1800s. Caught off guard, I began to laugh at the amazing and surprising specificity of his question and answered yes. He asked my last name and I told him. Everyone knows us by our family names. “I knew I knew you Indian!” he exclaimed laughing. And then he invited to sit and have a coffee and told me hours of stories about his adventures growing up and getting into trouble with my grandfather’s cousins back in the day, and about the various ways that everyone hustled to get around the prohibitions of alcohol on the reservations. I initially wanted to think about how my O’odham difunto Juan Macias used his passing privilege to buy alcohol in the ledger books. I wondered if he used his Blackness or his fluency in Spanish to evade the laws against selling liquor to Indians. If he brought all those beers back to the rez or drank them with his male companion. But I what I realized, the more time I spent in Yuma, in the archive, and being recognized by old timers like the man in the bookstore who referred to me by the community of my great-great grandparents, was that being a Mexican Indian in a border town was its own thing, its own liminal border space that wasn’t as easily classified by the work of the passing. Even as I come across things like the oral history of my tío Charles Salomon that works hard to

do the work of passing, to lighten our story like the fading process of a copy of a copy of a copy[191].

Mexicanness as Indigenous erasure: Narrative strategies and cartographies of excess

I have, my entire life, always known myself to be an Indigenous person, specifically, to be an O'odham descended woman. Despite distances between family, land, and community of origin, I was always told I was Pima and Papago (the old Spanish terms for O'odham peoples) and that I inherited this through my father. As a child my identity was formed as an urban, mixed Indigenous person. My official records all maintained that I was American Indian. I was racialized by others as an "Indian", but also sometimes as a Mexican. I was always aware that I also have Mexican ancestry and culture on my father's side, but as a child and until my late teens, my Indianness was emphasized to me by my family and by others around me much more than my Mexicanness. When I think of why the altered "whitened" version of the family photograph is the one that most often circulates, in the archive through an elder who was interviewed about the early days of Yuma, and through family gatherings, and random, often horribly incorrect information some lost and confused cousins throw up on genealogy websites, I wonder... was it his notorious drunkenness (documented in the ledger books of Yuma bars and trade posts in another part of the archive), or was it blackness, queerness, or some kind of story of family violence, a falling out, a rift, that separates who I think may have been Juan from what would I call the whitened version of our family history, the one shared by light skinned family members, like my tío Charles who was half Spanish, with light eyes and skin, who strongly identified as a Mexican, and to the colonial archive as a descendant of settler pioneers of the gold

[191] See figure 5:1

rush. Who tells a story in the archive that mixes up names, dates, and places in a way that creates a false distance between himself and his indigeneity? Who says, "my great-grandmother was a Pima Indian," instead of what documents from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, other archives, tribal enrollment offices, and my side of the family would argue, that his father was a Pima Indian (or at least a half) and part of a community of O'odham displaced and exploited laborers who tried to survive the gold rush, that tío Charles was at least one-fourth Indian, and thus an Indian too, like the rest of us Salomóns. (Something that he actually embraced when he was at our family gatherings, telling us rather different versions of these same stories he shares in the archive). That he may have also had Black relatives. That he may have also had queer relatives. That some of my relatives who live on reservations, other descendants of Rosa Orosco Salomón, will have to confront the inaccuracies of his version of our story in the Yuma archive with other documents, other colonial versions of the story, to avoid disenrollment, to keep their children and their grandchildren enrolled in Quechan, Cocopah, O'odham, Yaqui, Luiseño, and Kumeyaay communities.

Part of my process in this dissertation is to find language for how to talk about the ways that in these struggles over a colonial form of recognition (blood quantum), our oral histories do not matter, unless validated by the colonial archive as Charles's interview was. And that only the colonizer's version of the truth, whether a census taker decided to write Mexican or Indian based on the language you spoke in border town that a few years prior had been Spanish territory, matters to your eighth and tenth generation grandchild's ability to stay recognized by her tribal community now, or to become a Mexican and move to the city and assimilate. To eventually call herself a descendant of a pioneer family instead of a community of Mexican Indians, instead of an O'odham person. Go to the city and become a Mexican. Which is what the Bureau of Indian

Affairs instructed some of my ancestors to do when their tribal status and land allotments were terminated to liquidate Indian lands around Yuma for agricultural interests after the Laguna Dam was built in the 1920s.

I am working out a narrative strategy, in some ways polyphonic, through the composite of stories, poems, archival notes, textual and theoretical analysis, a pedagogical reading practice, and a time slipping, swirling drawing of a map, a form of drawing a narrative mapping process, to think through what the land's story teaches us about positionality, survival strategies, resistance, and future world making. In this weaving, I want to hold both a relative who may have been an addict, queer, Black, and ostracized and a relative who remade himself into a settler, someone worthy of documenting through a false distance, a slip stream he wove to become white via his proximity to Spanish colonialism, together. What I am interested in is not the juxtaposition, not deciding a value or judgement, which is true, which is false, which is dominant and counter. But how they are both true. How to draw a map of Yuma that could play on the screen like Akira Kurasawa's film *Rashomon*, different perspectives of different aspects of the same set of events. The work that both of these stories do and the perhaps impossibility of easy judgements between them. And what their togetherness tells us about the limits of thinking through identity, both in terms of mestizaje and indigeneity, through the overlapping layers of the transcolonial context between Spanish and Anglo colonialism, how both systems of subjection and extraction coexist, co-form each other, and reinforce each other through the space of border and national cartographies, through the stories we tell and are told about us. Through the way we even know ourselves in relation and in memory.

There is part of me that carries this story, the different versions of this photograph, into my memories of skin bleaching or quiet moments with my tía Lolita as we poured through

photographs of her youth and she began to cry at pictures of herself as a child with a healthy tan, a trigger for the memories of her mother soaking her in chemical baths of bleach, trying to scrub the brown from her tiny legs so no one would know they were Indians or of Indigenous descent in the Los Angeles Mexican-American community her mother had scrambled, passed, and married into. As a descendant, it is difficult to separate the affect of historical trauma, of the skin memory of cycles of violence that still play out in my life, cycles that have not been broken, from my analysis of the past, so I won't. This affect, this feeling, is also how I come to theory, how I come to the questions I have for the archive, for literature, for the texts I study.

To articulate the felt theory of this research I share vulnerable stories, metaprocesses, poems, maps, and metaphors. This narrative is not linear, but works as a memory, circular, intersecting, weaving. Like a story, like the best kind of story, from my elders. My dad and I used to stay up at night burning sage and arguing about the past. This dissertation is my attempt to the follow the trace of research my dad and his brother began in the early 1980s when they tried to unravel the question of why they were not enrolled in a tribal community like many of their cousins, if in fact we were O'odham and not Mexicans. At the time, while they had access to the stories of their elders who I do not because they are now gone, what they did not have access to was the colonial archive and an analysis of the historical moments from gold rush to revolution that their elders had endured. They did not read Spanish. These archives are spread out across the border, across states, across colonial institutions that are difficult to navigate even as a trained historian with a PhD. But what they did find often created difficult questions. What my dad and I would later argue about was the question of the truth. "Why does he always lie to me," my dad would ask in frustration about his father when we would compare notes on stories abuelo told us that did not match up. You're missing the point, I would counter. His stories aren't

facts, they are lessons. They have a completely different narrative structure. When my grandfather would tell me a story, he would repeat it differently each time. I learned to decipher the cues. What was going on in my life that he wanted to comment on in a roundabout and indirect way so I would get it without him yelling at me and bossing me around? What was going on in the world, in politics, with the rest of the family? What was I struggling with in my own identity formation and life choices? This is what his stories were about, what they commented on, not the actual facts as they had happened. He would tell me stories about places, about our elders, about history, but the story was always actually about me and him, who we are in the moment, what am I struggling to become and what does he want to warn me about. He never talked to me about the skin bleaching. Instead he would force me to sit for hours at the table with a bottle of tequila and rehearse drills of Spanish vocabulary and Spanish pronunciation. To try to learn how to roll an r properly and not sound like such a gringa, which is still a bit difficult for me but I am better for the practice. He would tell me the story about how his Pima grandfather wooed his step-grandmother, a light skinned Mexican woman, the mother of Charles Salomon, by pretending to be a Mexican and hiding his Nativeness until after he had married and impregnated her, so she would have no choice but to stay with him when she discovered that she was actually with an Indian from a large and poor Indian family. The story would always end the same, with the humbling of this white woman who gives birth to a dark brown baby and has to confront her own prejudices with a warning not to get wrapped up in the desire for a certain skin color, because the color of mixed-race children is always an unpredictable thing. A reminder that I could not, as my tía Lolita's mother also could not, as lies some of our elders have told the archive could not, bleach Indigeneity and the dark roots of our ethnicity away. Over time, the story he told me changed. He would change the name of the shamed woman, from the light

skinned Chona Mason to the dark-skinned Dolores Enes Mendez, from a step relation to my own lineage, from a warning against desiring whiteness to a warning against desiring to distance myself from my access as a mixed person to white privilege, from desiring a romanticization of darkness. But it was the same story. My story. The story he gifted me. And it was very different from the version of the same events he would tell my father. To both of us, a lesson. A map. But to different places. Something perhaps more powerful that the truth my father wanted from the stories. This kind of story doesn't get you entitlements, or citizenship. But it teaches you something about Indigenous regeneración, about an O'odham understanding of relationship to land and kinship that exceeds colonial definitions of Indigeneity based on blood quantum as in the U.S. or language.

By linking these intergenerational stories of blancamiento and becoming Mexican I want to provide a mapping of the affective processes of dispossession and cultural assimilation that have worked to transform Indigenous subjects through anti-blackness and temporal anti-Indianness into detribalized brown folks. Most of the Latinx folks I know do not when or how exactly this process happened in their families and thus are vulnerable to social projects that promote healing the soul wound of detribalization through cultural appropriation, spatial-temporal distancing, and cultural homogenization, all processes that actually deepen the logics of colonialism and marginalize Indigenous peoples who continue to be Indigenous in the present tense. But since it was so recent for my family I am able to document and critique the material process of detribalization that worked to delink Indigenous peoples from their communities and cultures so that their lands and bodies could be exploited by colonialism. Blancamiento elicits two possible responses from descendants, either we accept it and aspire to whiteness and become complicit in colonialism, anti-Blackness, and anti-Indianness or we reject it, not necessarily by

cultural revitalization but more importantly by doing the political and material work of decolonization, antiracism, and abolition. Because my family happens to have a living historical memory, continued community connections, relatives still in the communities, and a paper trail it is possible for us to return to our tribal community in some capacity as relatives, as descendants. But for many Latinx brown folk this is not the case. The work of detribalization has been so complete that they do not know if they actually have Indigenous ancestry or where their communities of origin where, and there is not a narrative map passed down in their families to connect them back to place. For those folks, generic forms of pan-Indigenous spirituality, Indigenismo, and cultural appropriation can be tempting strategies of creating space to work through these issues and histories but I fear that they may cause more problems than they resolve. I can hear my grandfather's voice reminding me, "that is not our way". Instead, what I have witnessed as a more useful strategy to build and heal relationships between detribalized folks and Black and Indigenous communities is just to do the work of decolonization and abolition. We are more useful as partners in crime to destroying the colonial and racial capitalism systems than we are wanders looking to find ourselves. As a descendant, I know from personal experience that it is easier to return to a community as an accomplice than as someone seeking a wholeness that we may not ever be able to fully recover. My present-tense practice of descendant responsibility is more towards a futurism beyond colonial carcerality than a romantic golden past. This is precisely because I think the story of detribalization has power, it can guide us towards a critical understanding of power works, and it is ok if all we can remember is that because a critique of power can be a compass to a new future beyond subjugation.

Chapter 5: Conclusion: Unbound: Futures like water

Fugitive Autonomies: afterlives of revolution and O'odham autonomy beyond borders

Once considered extinct by the U.S. federal government the Hia C'ed O'odham, whose traditional land extended from where the Colorado and Gila rivers met near Yuma to Ajo, are in the process of organizing a campaign for federal recognition and thus research on Hia C'ed O'odham history is emerging as a critical site of struggle in asserting the autonomy and ongoing presence of the people against myths of tribal dissolution[192]. In my archival research I found an article in a 1985 edition of the Yuma Sun newspaper's ¿Que Paso? historical interest section that retold a disturbing story about two Hia C'ed men who had been incarcerated in the Yuma Territorial Prison for practicing traditional forms of community accountability that illustrates how some Hia C'ed people maintained a traditional O'odham political structure and autonomy well into the twentieth century despite Spanish and Anglo colonialism. In 1911 near Blaisdell Station U.S. military troops stationed in the Yuma area because of the Mexican revolution found a wild horse dragging the body of a dead Indigenous man[193]. They brought the body to Yuma where the victim was identified as a "sand papago" (Hia C'ed O'odham) from one of the two Hia C'ed villages near Dome and Blaisdell. Four Hia C'ed men and one boy were arrested by the Yuma sheriff and a trial was held to seek justice for the murder of the victim who had been identified as Jose Charlie. What the trial revealed was that the dead man Jose Charlie had been accused of killing an O'odham woman and that the village had its own process to address this crime that resulted in capital punishment, as according to traditional custom. One of the men

[192] Sauberan, Jacelle. "Extinct No More: Hia Ced O'odham Officially Join Tohono O'odham Nation. Indian Country Today. Published June 30, 2013. Accessed June 13, 2019. https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/extinct-no-more-hia-ced-o-odham-officially-join-tohono-o-odham-nation-8uwc8QKGbUGIa9BWdVVwzA/
[193] Rube, B. Johnny. "Vengeance: Murder Victim Dragged to Death Behind Horse." ¿Que Pasa? Yuma Sun. September 13, 1985.

arrested and who was incarcerated in the Yuma prison for Charlie's murder was Pluma Aguila, a relative of my partner who is a descendant of the Aguila family. He had no knowledge of this story before I showed him the old newspaper articles I had found in the archive describing the incident. The court records reveal that the trial was conducted in Spanish and English without adequate translation to the monolingual O'odham speaking defendants, so the conclusions of the court and the archival documents produced by the court must be taken with a grain of salt. The newspaper article depicted this event as a lurid example of Indian savagery and sensationalistic criminality of the outlaws who filled the Yuma Territorial Penitentiary. But when my partner and I considered analyzed the article it appeared to us that this was an instance where the traditional Hia C'ed community in the villages near Blaisdell and Dome had addressed a social transgression through their own system of justice and that the state found this action a threat to its own efforts to monopolize justice, hence it sought to punish the traditional leaders of the village who had taken justice into their own hands. This practicing of Indigenous autonomy where the village resolved, however problematically, its own problems with crime and violence was a threat to the colonial judicial system which sought to establish a monopoly on the administration of justice and the use of capital punishment. But it also demonstrates a moment in 1911, at the height of the Mexican revolution and one year before the territory of Arizona was incorporated as a U.S. state, when traditional O'odham autonomy along the U.S.-Mexico border was still being practiced despite the occupation of the colonial nation states in the transcolonial zone. I think of the afterlife of this moment occurring now as throughout O'odham jewed talking circles are emerging to discuss what traditional governance and accountability customs have been and what they could become in an effort to address issues of gender violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and historical trauma. The return towards community

accountability within O'odham communities continues a trajectory of autonomy beyond the nation-state.

Armed resistance of O'odham to colonial imposition continued until the early 1940s when the village of Stoah B'ith (White Clay) rose up under the leadership of "Pia Machita," a traditional elder who rejected the U.S. occupation of O'odham lands and specifically refused to recognize the Gadsden Purchase, choosing instead to strategically recognize Mexico and claim a strategic form of Mexicanness as a method evading Anglo colonialism. "He rejected the Bureau of Indian Affairs, livestock inspectors, the New Deal, the Papago Tribal Council, census takers and even white Roman Catholic priests,"[194]. Machita understood how U.S. sanctioned tribal governments and the federally recognized model of tribal sovereignty and nation-building, especially after the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act restructured Indian reservations, was a form of colonial assimilation and discipling meant to destroy traditional Indigenous autonomy. His analysis that Mexican colonialism allowed for more room for traditional Indigenous autonomy was in line with what Indigenous communities in Mexico were fighting for with the practice of autonomy as a separation from the nation-state that emerged from the Mexican revolution, and that was articulated by the Zapata's agrarian movement and the PLM who heavily influenced Zapata and his advisors. Machita and his followers from Stoah B'ith engaged in direct action, taking up arms against the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. army, and the Tohono O'odham reservation government who they viewed as assimilationists and colonial collaborators. The traditionalists' grievances could generally be classified as a rejection of outside colonial control of their lives, but the escalating factor in leading to the rebellion was the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border across O'odham lands, fueled by white American's WWII orientalist

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[194] Flaccus, Elmer W. "Arizona's Last Great Indian War: The Saga of Pia Machita." *The Journal of Arizona History* 22, no. 1 (1981): 1-22.

hysteria over mythical Japanese "terrorists" entering the U.S. through Mexico, and the imposition of the military draft on Indigenous peoples. The traditional O'odham saw the U.S. as their enemy and did not want to be forced to fight imperialist wars for the colonizer. They also did not want their traditional territory militarized, occupied, and partitioned in response to orientalist fear-mongering. The traditional O'odham of the Stoah Bith uprising were protecting both the lives of their own people who were under threat of the military occupation and draft and they were protecting the integrity of O'odham Jewed as it extends beyond the border into Mexico. They first used armed resistance to try to abolish the control of the colonial government, its military, and its agents in the tribal government over their lives. When armed resistance failed, they took to fugitive strategies by refusing to recognize the U.S.-Mexico border politically by claiming that O'odham territory could not be divided because the Gadsden Purchase was fraudulent (O'odham did not consent to it) and the region was still whole under Mexico, but utilizing the border strategically as they fled U.S. persecution by escaping into Sonora, Mexico[195]. Machita and his adherents used Mexicanness as a fugitive strategy- they would launch guerilla attacks and literally flee across the border to Mexico to evade capture, and their use of Mexican identity was not an acceptance of Spanish colonialism but a strategic fugitivity from Anglo colonialism and assimilated tribal council control. The Stoah Bith rebellion marked a moment of afterlife for the ideas of autonomy that emerged within the Mexican revolution as an abolitionist alternative. This form of autonomy is not a colonial utopia but is a relational-spatial organizing between decolonization and abolition, tierra y libertad. It is a geography of fugitivity made by criminals to colonialism and their accomplices. This moment continues in the ongoing

[195] Ibid.

resistance to the U.S. Mexico border and the insistence on practicing the ability to cross and transgress this border by O'odham peoples across O'odham jewed.

A River Knows No Borders

In this dissertation I have positioned together cartographies of containment such as the archive, the border, transcolonial zones, and transfigured colonial carceral institutions alongside geographies of excessive fluidity such as the cuerpo-agua, difuentes, descendant spatial excess, and abolitionist autonomies to illustrate different practices of mapping relations through violence and through felt narratives of survivance and resistance. In concluding with the ongoing practices of O'odham autonomy that continued beyond the partition and militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border I gesture towards the ways that Indigenous autonomy and fugitivity informs O'odham politics on the border and O'odham futures beyond the border and beyond the occupation of the nation-states of the U.S. and Mexico. Within that context I wish to return to the question of poetics. In the poem I put together the archival traces that provide a factual narrative of the enslavement of O'odham and Yaqui peoples in the border region against the work of my tío Bill to use the colonial archive to reconnect dispossessed and unrecognized Indigenous descendants with their tribal communities of origin. Within these two uses of the archive I offered my own felt and embodied experience of living between and in excess of the archive. In doing this research I have found that the fugitive futurity of Pia Machita's declaration of Mexicanness is in conversation with my and tío Bill's identities as Mexican Indians of Yuma. The map of enslavement in the poem is also a map back home. My grandfather used to tell me the story of the expansiveness of the Colorado and Gila rivers so that I would know the rivers as his grandparents knew them before colonial extraction. His stories were so detailed and clear that I

have been able to use my memory of his conversations alone to find our family cemetery and the places where our ancestors lived alongside the meeting of these two rivers without GPS. By following the river I was able to see the land and know where we had lived. Going to Yuma and learning the story of our dispossession and the enslavement of Indigenous peoples on the border opened new relationships for me to our origins and to our community of origin, because I was able to explain where I was from and how I became disconnected. This story was acknowledged by other O'odham I have met as part of our collective history that needs to be told. If we remember the rivers, the rivers will remember us. Returning to the river through our cuerpo-agua is a futuring act, the stories of our difuentes take us home and teach us how to create our regeneration from the spaces we find ourselves in between.

Coda: burn the mission, free the rivers

Burn the Mission

Across the Southwest Indigenous peoples resisted Spanish colonialism by burning down missions and killing colonizers. These acts of resistance are celebrated annually by the descendants of what Deborah Miranda calls, “bad Indians,”[196]. In San Diego the Kumeyaay community hosts an annual “Burn the Mission Day” where tribal members and their friends gather at the burial grounds of Mission San Diego de Alcalá and honor the ancestors who resisted with speeches, ceremony, and general rowdiness to remind the white settler church congregation that native folks celebrate having burned the place down before, and we might do it again someday. In O’odham jewed there is the annual O’odham revolt run commemorating the routes that O’odham runners took to spread the revolt conspiracy and unite the villages in rebellion. In Pueblo territory there are numerous Pueblo revolt celebrations. There is a rise in what Indigenous Action Media Collective calls the politics of ungovernability across Indian Country that is exemplified by the revival of celebrating mission burning. “Make it impossible for this system to govern on stolen land,” they suggest[197]. This also coincides with an ongoing collaboration between Indigenous land protectors and anarchists that dates back to the times of the Mexican revolution. This is the position that those of us who are Mexican, Xicanx, and Latinx accomplices can participate in. We too can be ungovernable. We can, like our revolutionary ancestors in the PLM, be accomplices to destroying the colonial carcerality and abolishing borders on Indigenous lands. We do not have to be like the settlers of Yuma who reconstructed a mission to solidify their colonial claims to space. The space of abolitionist

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[196] Miranda, Deborah A. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*. Berkeley: Heyday Press. 2013.
[197] Indigenous Action Media. "Anti-colonial & Anti-fascist Action: 'Make It Impossible for This System to Govern On Stolen Land." November 9, 2016. Accessed on June 13, 2019. http://www.indigenousaction.org/anti-colonial-anti-fascist-action/

decolonization is a space where new relationships between Indigenous, Black, and Brown folks can be imagined and enacted. We can all burn down the mission together.

Free the Rivers

> me: what can we do to protect traditional foods like tepary beans and salmon?
> 14-year-old Wintu boy: blow up the dams
> -food sovereignty workshop I gave to a Native youth summer camp at my university

When my grandfather would tell me stories about Yuma he would always begin by describing the confluence of the Colorado and Gila rivers. He would describe the beauty of the rivers, their immensity, their abundance of life, their power. I didn't know at first that the rivers he described to me where rivers he had in his over one hundred years of living never seen. He told me stories about the rivers as his grandparents had known them, prior to the dams. He was educated to know these rivers by what they had been before settler desecration and extraction, and he wanted me to grow up knowing the rivers in that way too. When I first went to Yuma I expected to see a river a mile wide and thirty feet deep. I actually did not even know there was a dam, that was how complete my grandfather's education had been, that I wouldn't even imagine anything impeding the flow of these waters, that I could know them and imagine meeting them as my grandparents' grandparents had known them. This is story I carry, the story I will pass on to my own children. Once there were great rivers. There will be again.

The call for tierra y libertad is a speculative futurism that imagines decolonized spaces and abolitionist geographies in the transcolonial borderlands. These geographies are shaped by their radical unboundedness, they expand and include[198]. To create them is "a way of studying,

[198] Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2017. "Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence." In *The Futures of Black Radicalism*, 225–40. Verso.

and of doing political organizing, and of being in the world, and of worlding ourselves. Put another way, abolition geography requires challenging the normative presumption that territory and liberation are at once alienable and exclusive— that they should be partitionable by sales, documents, or walls,"[199]. Tierra y libertad, land and freedom, body and place, together. "Abolition geography is carceral geography's antagonistic contradiction,"[200]. When we free the rivers, we free ourselves. Burn the mission.

[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.

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