

Decolonization

as a

prefigurative

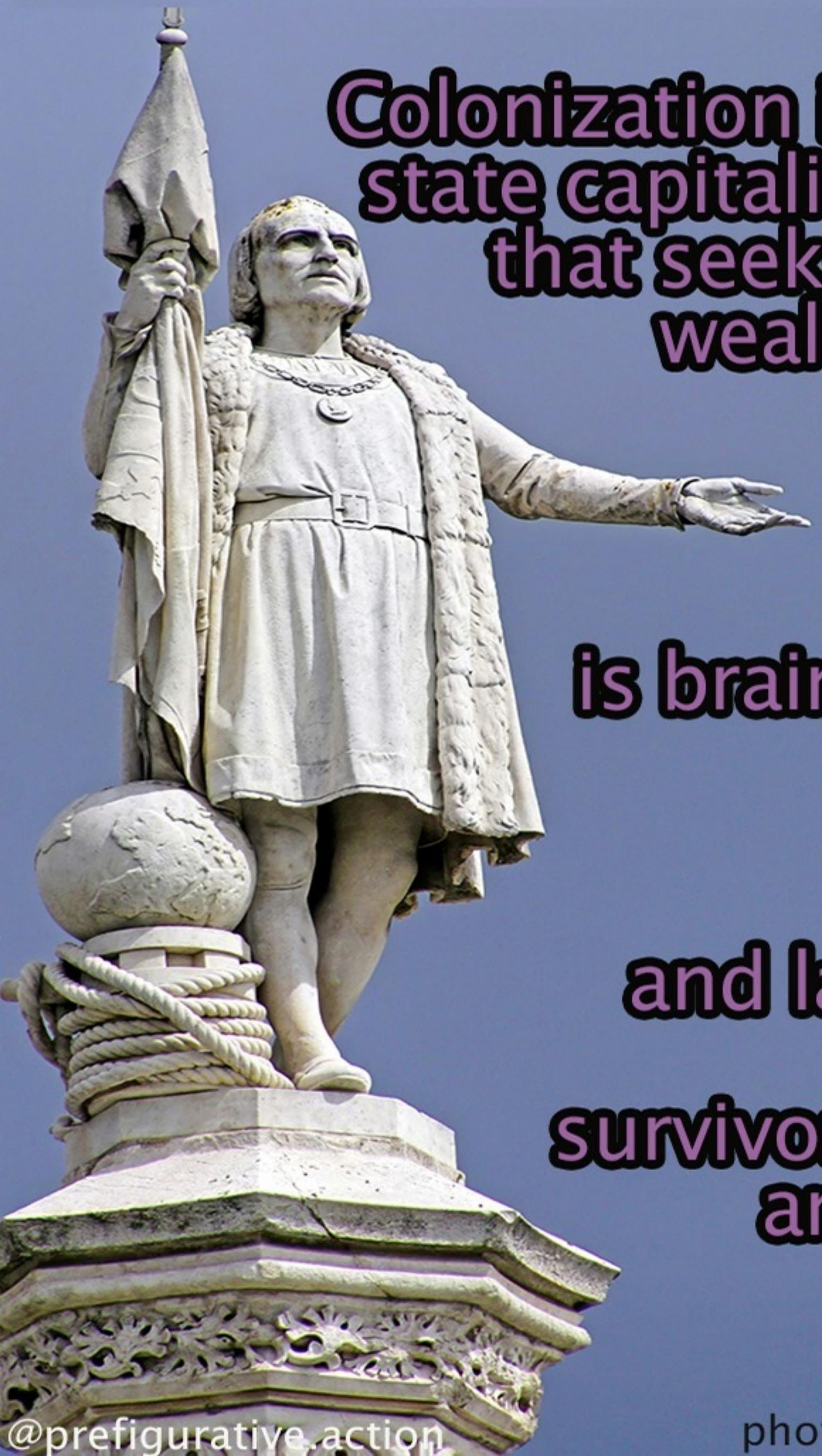
praxis...

Systems of colonialism have been integral to imperialist agendas, whether emerging from Western or Eastern metropols, or structured by capitalist or socialist economies.

In other words, colonialism is always geographically localized, propelled by the often violent acquisition of land by an invading socio-cultural group with consequences that are intergenerational, resulting in **reserve land enclosures** at bare minimum, and all out ethnic cleansing and genocide at its worst.

Colonialism is at the heart of every historical and ongoing territorial takeover, forced acts of cultural erasure, and drives towards assimilation.

Colonization is the corollary of state capitalism and socialism that seeks to consume the wealth of ‘new’ lands.



This ideology is brainwashed into the perpetrators of colonialism (the Settlers) and later generations. Indigenous survivors of colonization are also subject to indoctrination.

LEARN FROM THE PAST



PREPARE ^{IN} THE PRESENT



TO DEFEND THE FUTURE.

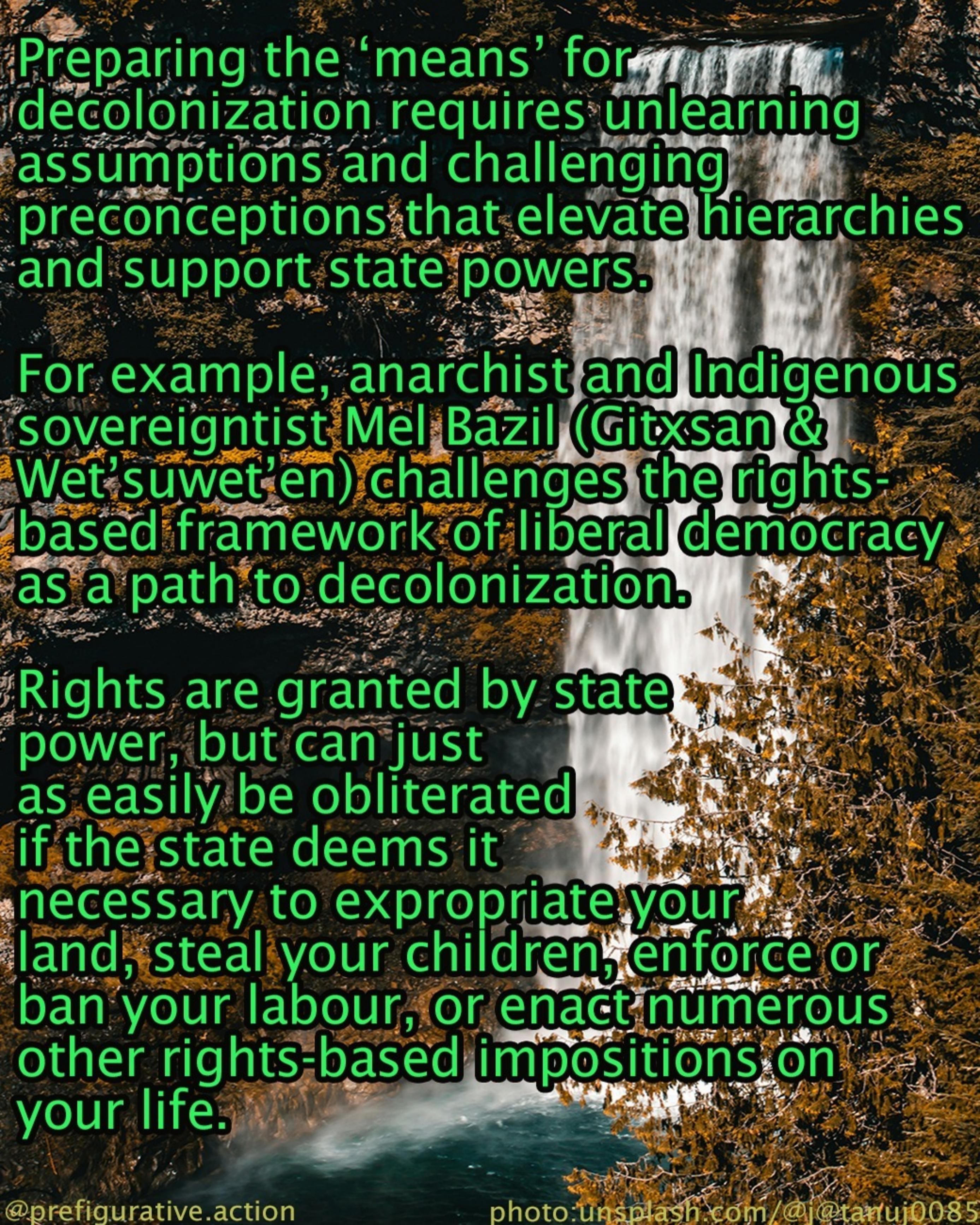


To effectively decolonize, everyone, both Settler and Indigenous, must be deprogrammed from the colonial mindset. Thus, fostering reciprocal relationships is a vital element in the decolonizing practices of prefigurative politics.

With prefigurative politics, we are striving to unify ‘means and ends.’

How communities create processes to attain their goals are as important as the goals themselves.

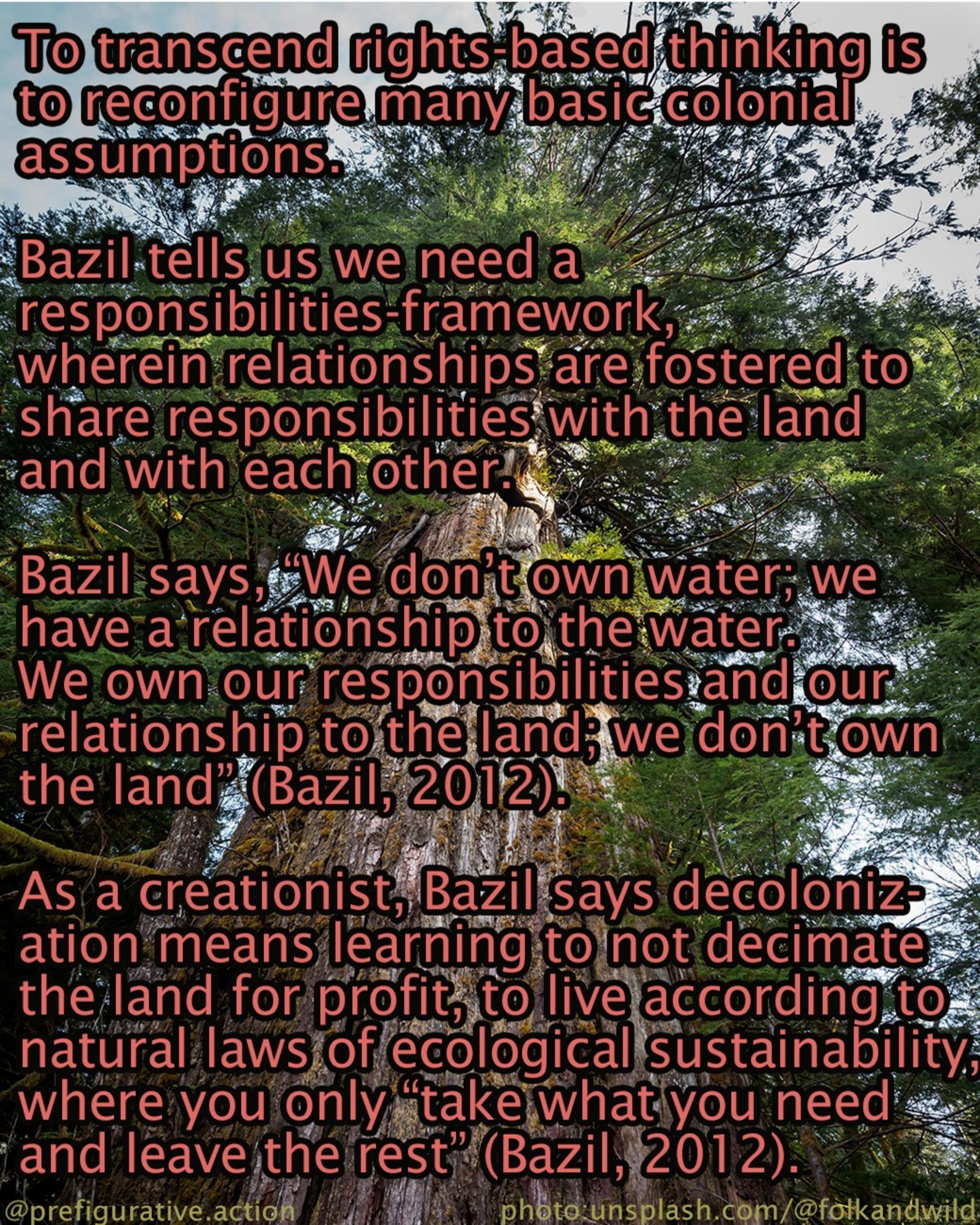
In decolonization, the stakes are greater for Indigenous peoples decoupling from colony, since there are structural privileges differentiating Settler and Indigenous peoples in colonial societies that must be accounted for when people begin to find a way to work together.



Preparing the ‘means’ for decolonization requires unlearning assumptions and challenging preconceptions that elevate hierarchies and support state powers.

For example, anarchist and Indigenous sovereigntist Mel Bazil (Gitxsan & Wet’suwet’en) challenges the rights-based framework of liberal democracy as a path to decolonization.

Rights are granted by state power, but can just as easily be obliterated if the state deems it necessary to expropriate your land, steal your children, enforce or ban your labour, or enact numerous other rights-based impositions on your life.

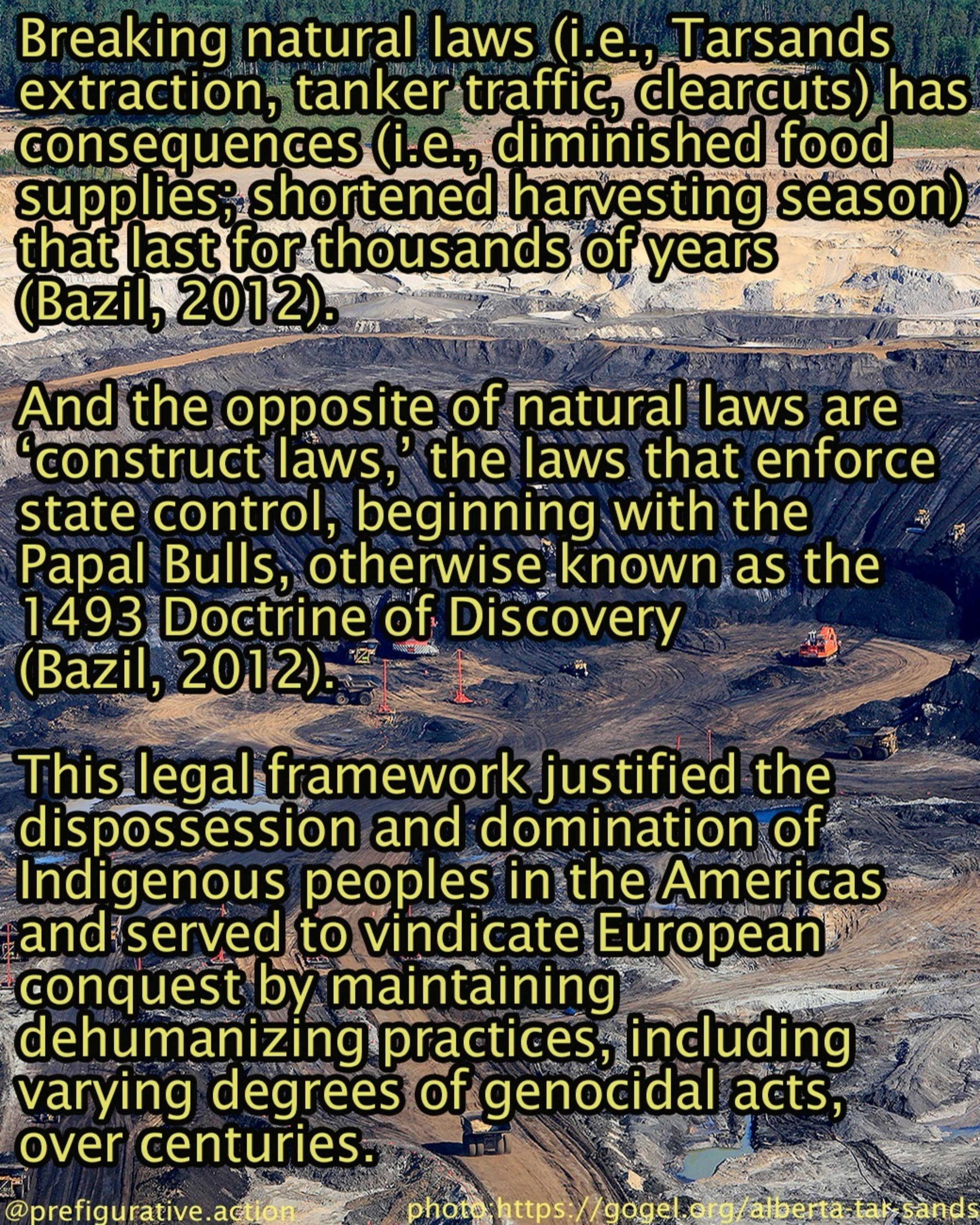


To transcend rights-based thinking is to reconfigure many basic colonial assumptions.

Bazil tells us we need a responsibilities-framework, wherein relationships are fostered to share responsibilities with the land and with each other.

Bazil says, “We don’t own water; we have a relationship to the water. We own our responsibilities and our relationship to the land; we don’t own the land” (Bazil, 2012).

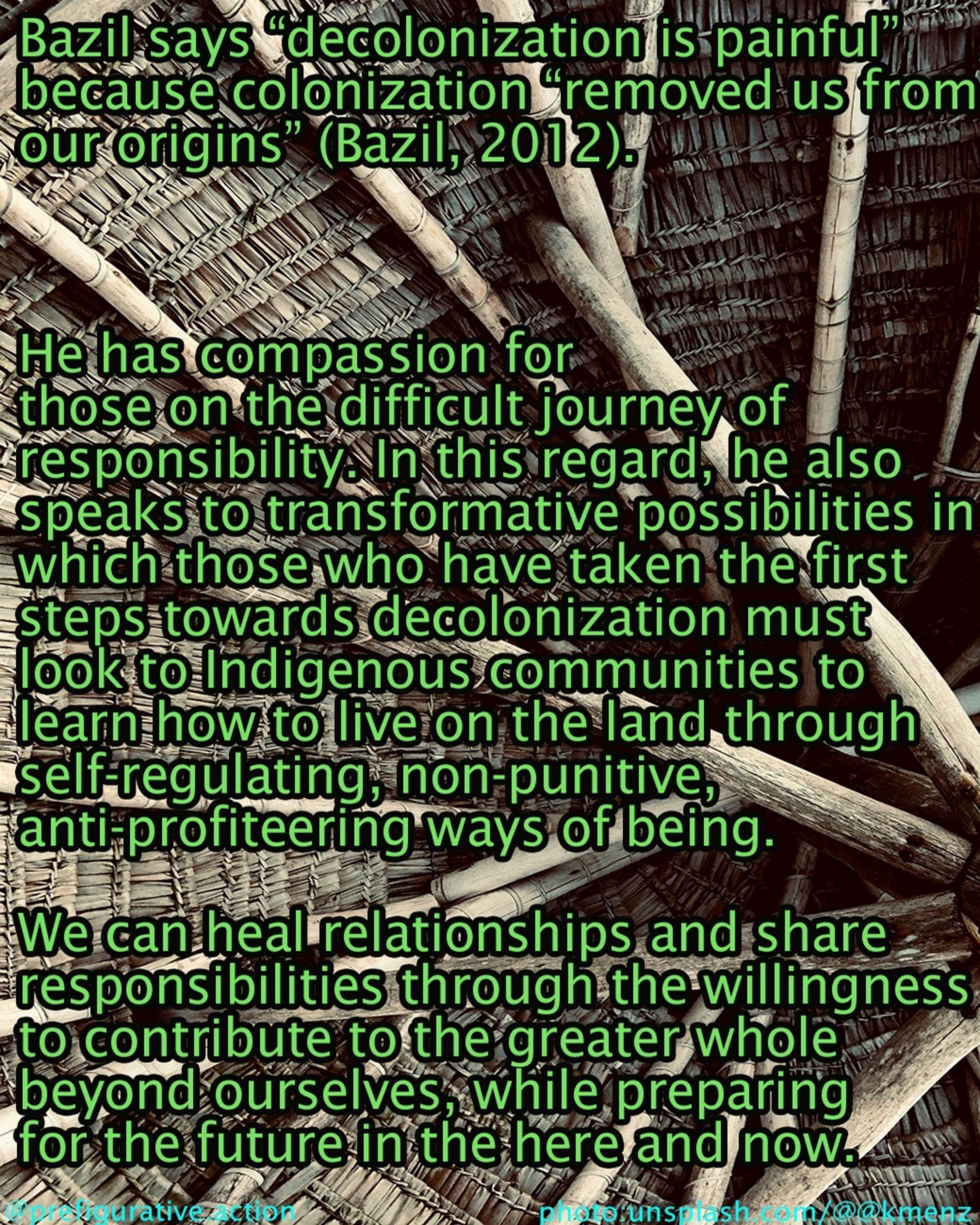
As a creationist, Bazil says decolonization means learning to not decimate the land for profit, to live according to natural laws of ecological sustainability, where you only “take what you need and leave the rest” (Bazil, 2012).



Breaking natural laws (i.e., Tarsands extraction, tanker traffic, clearcuts) has consequences (i.e., diminished food supplies; shortened harvesting season) that last for thousands of years (Bazil, 2012).

And the opposite of natural laws are ‘construct laws,’ the laws that enforce state control, beginning with the Papal Bulls, otherwise known as the 1493 Doctrine of Discovery (Bazil, 2012).

This legal framework justified the dispossession and domination of Indigenous peoples in the Americas and served to vindicate European conquest by maintaining dehumanizing practices, including varying degrees of genocidal acts, over centuries.



Bazil says “decolonization is painful” because colonization “removed us from our origins” (Bazil, 2012).

He has compassion for those on the difficult journey of responsibility. In this regard, he also speaks to transformative possibilities in which those who have taken the first steps towards decolonization must look to Indigenous communities to learn how to live on the land through self-regulating, non-punitive, anti-profiteering ways of being.

We can heal relationships and share responsibilities through the willingness to contribute to the greater whole beyond ourselves, while preparing for the future in the here and now.



Transformation, 2018 by Gord Hill (used with permission)