RESURGENCE AND DECOLONIZATION: CREATING ALTERNATIVE WORLDS

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In 2023, Lily Gladstone (Siksikaitsitapi/NiMíiPuu) made history as the first Indigenous actress to win a Golden Globe for Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Motion Picture—Drama. She also became the first Indigenous person in the US to receive an Academy Award nomination for her portrayal of Mollie Burkhart, an Osage woman, in Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon*. The film, based on true events, chronicles the systematic murders of Osage Nation members in 1920s Oklahoma, who were targeted for their oil-rich land in what became known as the "Reign of Terror" (Fixico 2012, 42). This landmark achievement highlights Gladstone's exceptional talent and signifies a shift toward more accurate representations of Indigenous peoples in mainstream cinema. That same year, Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota) broke new ground as the first Native American woman to have a play produced on Broadway with *The Thanksgiving Play*. A biting satire, the play critiques the well-meaning yet misguided efforts of white educators attempting to create a politically correct Thanksgiving pageant. Through sharp humor, FastHorse exposes the performative nature of liberal activism and the contradictions of inclusion efforts that fail to involve actual Indigenous voices and presence.

These milestones are particularly significant when considered against the backdrop of the long history of Indigenous misrepresentation in American cultural production. They not only mark a shift in representation but also gesture toward the creation of "alternative worlds"—spaces that challenge settler-colonial paradigms and center

Indigenous presence, agency and futurity (Simpson 2016, 31). Since the 19th century, American theater and popular entertainment, predominantly produced by white Americans, have played a pivotal role in shaping dominant perceptions of Native Americans, often reducing them to simplistic, harmful stereotypes that supported settler-colonial narratives. As Bethany Hughes (2024) explains in *Redface: Race, Performance, and Indigeneity*, redface (non-Native individuals portraying Native American characters using makeup, costumes, and exaggerated stereotypes) functioned as a racialized performance, akin to blackface, through which (white) American identity was constructed by positioning Indigeneity as its constitutive Other (5). However, while blackface attached a caricatured Blackness to real bodies to legitimize their continued subjugation, redface worked by projecting a fabricated "Indianness" onto bodies to rationalize cultural and physical erasure. Whereas blackface emphasized inferiority to justify dominance, redface presented Indigeneity as something that could be appropriated, absorbed, or overwritten. The symbolic appropriation of Native identity, Robert Warrior (2005) argues, has long served settler-colonial nation-building, allowing white Americans to claim the image of the Indian while displacing actual Indigenous presence. Within this logic, redface did not merely distort Indigenous identity—it enabled the construction of a national identity predicated on Indigenous erasure, rendering Native peoples hypervisible as symbols and invisible as political subjects (92–94). Redface operates as a *collaborative curatorial process*—a complex configuration of embodied markers, dramaturgical techniques, and performative claims to authenticity that not only racializes Indigenous peoples but also works to delegitimize their political sovereignty (Hughes 2024). It constructs and circulates the "stage Indian" as an allegedly faithful depiction of Indigenous identity, yet the very impossibility of fulfilling this performance becomes its ideological function: Native peoples are continually framed as failing to match the expectations imposed by these fabricated images and thus, a "race that vanishes" (6).

Such representational practices have had material consequences beyond the stage, persisting throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in various performance-based contexts—from Halloween costumes and school pageants to sports mascots and advertising. In the realm of sports, for instance, football teams like the former

Washington Redskins, the Cleveland Indians (now Guardians), the Kansas City Chiefs, and the Atlanta Braves have been known to paint their faces, wear faux headdresses, and perform mock war chants or "tomahawk chops"—actions widely condemned by Native communities as offensive caricatures that perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Advertising has also played a role, with brands such as Land O'Lakes (formerly featuring a stereotyped Native woman) and the use of Plains Indian iconography in commercial logos (e.g., for tobacco or motor oil) commodifying Native identity without respect for its cultural significance. These seemingly harmless acts of cultural appropriation serve to naturalize settler presence while undermining Indigenous self-determination. In contemporary contexts, the same colonial logic that undergirds redface performance informs state and corporate efforts to encroach on Indigenous lands, as seen in the construction of oil pipelines across treaty-protected territories and continuous attacks on tribal sovereignty (Hughes 2024, 3). Thus, redface is not merely a problematic artistic trope but a foundational mechanism through which settler colonialism legitimizes its claims to land, power, and identity.

Redface, in this sense, manufactures what Thomas King (Cherokee) (2012) calls the "Dead Indian"—a figure rooted in nostalgia and myth, stripped of political agency and frozen in the past (81-85). Yet, as Hughes notes, it does so in response to the continued presence of what King identifies as the "Inconvenient Indian"—the living, resisting, sovereign Indigenous subject who refuses to disappear and disrupts settler narratives of closure and conquest. It becomes a mechanism through which American aesthetic culture "processes the materiality" of this inconvenient presence by translating it into manageable, commodifiable symbols (Hughes 2024, 6). This dynamic is closely tied to what Philip Deloria calls the practice of *playing Indian*—a longstanding ritual through which white Americans have performed Indigeneity to construct their own national identity. Deloria traces this tradition back to the Boston Tea Party, when revolutionaries donned Mohawk disguises not to remain anonymous, but to access the symbolic power of Indianness as a signifier of rebellion, authenticity, and anti-colonial resistance. The act of dressing as Indians was not incidental; it was foundational. By performing Indigeneity, white Americans gave material form to a national identity that depended on

Indigenous presence and necessitated Indigenous absence (Deloria 1998, 6–9; Slotkin 1973). This act marked the genesis of a persistent tradition of *playing Indian*, one that developed throughout the nineteenth century in theatrical performances and later permeated American cinema. In nineteenth-century literary and dramatic texts, Indigenous characters were often portrayed in one of two tropes: either as assimilated figures absorbed into white society (as in the Pocahontas myth) or as noble savages fated to disappear (as in the 1829 John August Stone's play *Metamora*). These narratives express a dual vision: one of "the nurturing, romanticized wilderness that assimilates," and the other of a "tragic, vanishing Indigenous presence–a tale of promise lost to betrayal and violence" (Bank 1997, 66). Plays like James Nelson Barker's *The Indian Princess; or, La Belle Sauvage* (1808) and George Washington Parke Custis's *Pocahontas; or, The Settlers of Virgini*a (1830) exemplify how early American drama converted Indigenous figures into mythic symbols that supported national origin stories and rationalized expansionist ideologies. As Zoe Detsi-Diamanti (2007) notes, such portrayals functioned by "incorporating the Indian into a politically expedient mythic pattern regarding both a sense of national origin and the romantic dream of uninhibited expansion" (103). These staged performances of Indigeneity were not confined to the theatre: they laid the groundwork for the proliferation of redface in twentieth- and twenty-first-century media.

Film and media scholars such as Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, Michelle Raheja, and Lisa Black have demonstrated how these stereotypical performances were translated into cinematic tropes, producing what Kilpatrick terms the Celluloid Indian. Raheja, in her study *Reservation Reelism* (2010), explores the "Hollywood Indian" as a racialized cinematic construction, while Black discusses the "Movie Indian" as a recurring figure shaped by settler colonial logics of nostalgia and control. These screen representations often recycled theatrical tropes of the "magical medicine man," the "Indian princess," or the "stoic warrior," roles devoid of Indigenous agency, often performed by non-Native actors. Such portrayals have reinforced detrimental stereotypes and erased the realities of Indigenous life, contributing to the ongoing denial of Native political sovereignty and cultural specificity. These enduring legacies of misrepresentation and cultural

appropriation underscore the critical importance of moments in which Indigenous peoples reclaim narrative authority.

In this sense, the achievements of Lily Gladstone and Larissa FastHorse exemplify what Scott Richard Lyons (2000) terms "rhetorical sovereignty"—the "inherent right and ability of peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires" (449). While redface performance and its cinematic descendants have historically reduced Indigeneity to static images and consumable symbols, rhetorical sovereignty insists on Indigenous agency in storytelling and self-representation. Gladstone's and FastHorse's contributions do not merely correct previous distortions; they actively reshape the discursive terrain, offering Indigenous perspectives that challenge settler colonial narratives and assert ongoing nationhood. In *The Thanksgiving Play*, FastHorse uses satire to dismantle white liberal performance of inclusion while refusing to reinscribe a romanticized or assimilated Indigenous presence. Instead, she exposes the structural absence of Indigenous voices in mainstream cultural production, staging a meta-commentary on the very dynamics redface performances have long obscured. Similarly, Gladstone's speech at the Golden Globe ceremony emphasized the importance of Indigenous youth seeing themselves represented through stories told "by ourselves, in our own words" underscores the transformative power of Indigenous narrative practices. Crucially, Gladstone's invocation of her ancestral language—Siksiká, part of the Algonquian language family and currently classified as "endangered" (Ethnologue s.v. "Siksiká)—signals a powerful engagement with the broader project of Indigenous language revitalization. Gladstone emphasized that she had to learn the language later in life, as she did not grow up speaking it. This detail is not incidental: it speaks directly to the profound disruptions caused by colonial assimilationist policies that systematically severed intergenerational transmission of language and knowledge. As scholars of Indigenous education and history have documented, both US and Canadian assimilationist policies—enforced through boarding and residential school systems—sought to eradicate Indigenous identity by disrupting language, spiritual practices, and familial ties. These institutions, operating under the genocidal motto "kill the Indian in the child," deployed linguistic suppression as a central mechanism of colonial

violence (Piccard 2013; Young 2015; Hinton et al. 2018). Gladstone's use of her ancestral language challenges what Caroline Desbiens (2004) identifies as the foundational logic of settler colonialism: the systematic separation of Indigenous bodies from land (366). Desbiens explains:

> If this weakening of cultural patterns is effected most directly by removing populations from their ancestral territories, it also proceeds through re-education into a white cosmology where the relationship to the land is configured differently. The loss of traditional knowledge about how to survive on the land—or the lack of access altogether to that knowledge through traditional Aboriginal education—effectively finalizes this separation of body from land. (366)

Desbiens's framework illuminates how colonial power operates not solely through the occupation of territory, but through the dismantling of gendered, embodied relationships to land. These relationships—central to Indigenous epistemologies—are sustained through everyday practices, teachings, and intergenerational knowledge systems that colonialism has sought to rupture. As Desbiens argues, this separation is finalized not only by the physical displacement of Indigenous peoples but also by re-education into settler cosmologies, wherein land is reconceived not as a living relation but as a commodified resource. The result is a profound ontological violence that severs land from meaning, people from place, and knowledge from embodiment. Thus, the land for Indigenous peoples is not just a commodity, a resource to be exploited, but a defining element of their cultures. The land informs their languages and (hi)stories and participates in their ceremonies. Viewed through this lens, Gladstone's use of her language, despite not having grown up speaking it, affirms an ongoing process of reconnecting to intergenerational knowledge systems deliberately targeted by colonial assimilation. Indeed, it enacts what Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) describes as "land-based pedagogy"—a grounded refusal of settler ontologies and a reactivation of reciprocal relationships with land, kin, and memory (145-73). Simpson (2017) explains:

> Setters easily appropriate and reproduce the content of the story every year when they make commercial maple syrup in the context of capitalism, but they completely miss the wisdom that underlies the entire process because they deterritorialize the mechanics of maple syrup production from *Nishnaabeg* intelligence,

> and from *Aki*. They appropriated and recast the process within a hyperindividualism that negates relationality. The radical thinking and action of this story are not so much in the mechanics of reducing maple sap to sugar but lie in the reproduction of a loving web of Nishnaabeg networks within which learning takes place. (154)

The Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, and artist further maintains that for many Indigenous peoples education "comes from the roots up" and is "enveloped by land." In her worldview, the land demands that an individual develops knowledge and skills to ensure his/her/their own survival and, in the process, learns how existence is dependent upon reciprocity and respect with all elements of creation, existing in both the physical and spiritual realm. When understood this way, the reclamation of land-based pedagogy, languages, and epistemologies must be seen not simply as acts of cultural revival but as expressions of political resistance. These practices are part of what Simpson and others conceptualize as resurgence: a lived, embodied refusal of colonial systems and a generative assertion of Indigenous presence, governance, and futurity. The revitalization of land-based education, continues a long history of resistance that has been central to Indigenous survival in the face of centuries of dispossession and attempted erasure. As Simpson (2018) explains, Indigenous peoples have been engaged in over four centuries of resistance against a violent backdrop of conquest, genocide, expansive dispossession, unfettered capitalist exploitation, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and environmental destruction (n.p.). Thus, Indigenous presence today is not an accident of survival but the result of sustained, generative refusal in the face of a relentless struggle for Indigenous life and freedom—what is referred to as Indigenous resurgence. The term signals more than cultural revival; it denotes the active exercise of Indigenous jurisdiction, governance, and lifeways outside of colonial paradigms. As Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully (2018) explain, "Resurgence is often used to refer to Indigenous peoples exercising powers of self-determination outside of state structures and paradigms. It is deployed by communities as a force for reclaiming and reconnecting with traditional territories by means of Indigenous ways of knowing and being" (23). Hence, the scholars further maintain that these individual and collective powers include "the resurgence of governance, Indigenous legal systems and languages, economic and

social self-reliance, and sustainable relationships with the ecosystems that co-sustain all life and well-being" (Asch, Borrows, and Tully 2018, 23). In this sense, resurgence builds upon a long genealogy of resistance—not only to oppose colonial violence but to regenerate Indigenous legal and political orders grounded in land, relationality, and self-determination.

Resurgence does not emerge from a vacuum; it draws strength from generations of resistance to colonial intrusion, from survival against genocidal policy, and from the refusal to accept the terms of assimilation. As Glen Coulthard (2014) affirms, "*settler colonialism is territorially acquisitive in perpetuity*" (152), meaning that the struggle for land and jurisdiction continues to lie at the heart of Indigenous resistance. The legitimacy of colonial land claims has been validated through ideological frameworks that cast North America as *terra nullius*, advanced narratives of the "vanishing Indian," and employed deficit theories that infantilize Indigenous peoples and justify their governance by others. This constellation of racialized narratives worked to naturalize settler authority while undermining Indigenous nationhood. It is to this ideological landscape that Vine Deloria Jr., writing in 1969, responded with his critique of the settler state's enduring refusal to acknowledge Indigenous political and legal sovereignty. "Whites have always refused to give non-whites the respect which they have been found to legally possess," he observed, noting the persistent settler belief that "although the law says one thing, 'we all know better'" (Deloria [1969] 1989, 27). These racialized, and paternalistic narratives provided the rhetorical scaffolding for coercive state practices aimed at assimilation—practices exemplified by the Indian Residential School system and the Sixties Scoop in Canada. Under the guise of education and protection, these programs systematically removed Indigenous children from their families and communities, severing intergenerational ties and undermining cultural continuity. Deloria captured the dehumanizing logic of these institutions with sardonic clarity, comparing their intent to turning "the wild animal [...] into a household pet whether or not he wanted to be one" ([1969] 1989, 28). This logic of deficiency and disappearance has continued to shape colonial policy and public perception. As the Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice (2018) remarked in his seminal book *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter,*

deficit theories were often used to legitimize several injustices, including (cultural) genocide:

> [a]ccording to the settler stories of Indigenous deficiency, our people were supposed to vanish into the sunset long ago; our families' stubborn refusal to disappear has vexed and perplexed colonial apologists for centuries, for, in spite of all their hopes and ambitions, policies and practices, laws and customs, and assaults and editorials, our peoples are still here, as are our relations, as are our stories. (5)

Justice's observation not only dismantles the myth of Indigenous disappearance but also foregrounds the enduring legal and ideological mechanisms through which settler colonialism continues to operate. The notion that Indigenous peoples were destined to vanish—reinforced through enduring cultural performances of redface—functions as a legal rationalization for the ongoing denial of Indigenous jurisdiction, land rights, and sovereignty.

Although the last Residential school closed in the 1990s, the financial and colonial drive to usurp Native peoples of their ways of life is still operating. For instance, one could mention how, on February 2, 2004, the Save the Peaks Coalition formed to protect the San Francisco Peaks and oppose the destructive activities of Arizona Snowbowl Ski Resort. Similarly, in August 2011, environmental and Indigenous groups launched a campaign to press President Obama not to approve Phase IV of the Keystone XL Pipeline project that would run through tribal lands, water resources, and places of spiritual significance. In 2013, the Havasupai Tribe Filed a Lawsuit to stop the operation of a uranium mine; and, famously, in 2016, Standing Rock Sioux opposed the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). As Deborah Cowen (2018) argues in relation to the development of infrastructures across North America, the building of railroads and pipelines was instrumental to the undermining of Indigenous sovereignty: "Historically and in the present the construction [of] railroads and pipelines relied upon the settler states' claims to jurisdiction, but that jurisdiction is also materialized through infrastructure" (15). These projects are not merely environmental threats—they represent an ongoing assertion of settler state power over Indigenous territory and governance. Much of Indigenous legal scholarship underscores how settler colonialism in the United States

functions not only through land dispossession but also through the calculated erosion of tribal jurisdiction. In US federal Indian law, tribal jurisdiction refers to the inherent authority of Native nations to govern their own peoples and territories, encompassing criminal, civil, and regulatory authority within reservation boundaries. Yet this authority has been steadily curtailed by federal statutes and Supreme Court decisions that undermine the sovereignty of tribal legal systems. Landmark cases such as *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe* (1978), which denied tribes the right to prosecute non-Native offenders, and the Major Crimes Act (1885), which centralized prosecution of major crimes in federal courts, have produced what Muscogee (Creek) legal scholar Sarah Deer terms "practical vacuums" in legal protection—gaps that disproportionately endanger Native women and children (Deer 2015). These jurisdictional voids are not accidental oversights but reflections of a settler colonial logic that severs Indigenous nations from their political and territorial authority. The erosion of tribal jurisdiction must be understood not as a technical oversight but as a deliberate form of colonial violence—one that systematically exposes Indigenous communities, particularly their most vulnerable members, to sustained harm. This dismantling of legal authority has far-reaching consequences, not only in terms of public safety and justice but in its structural impact on Indigenous sovereignty. When tribal nations are denied the legal capacity to enforce their laws within their own homelands, the result is a profound disempowerment that fractures both political autonomy and the relational systems through which Indigenous communities maintain connections to place, kinship, and governance. The denial of jurisdiction thus operates as a mechanism of dispossession—fragmenting sovereignty, undermining Indigenous legal orders, and reinforcing settler control (Williams 2005).

In Canada, similar patterns of jurisdictional denial and legal marginalization have prompted widespread Indigenous resistance. In 2012, the Idle No More movement emerged in response to the federal government's dismantling of environmental protection legislation and disregard for treaty obligations. Originating among Treaty Peoples in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, this Indigenous-led movement called for a peaceful revolution to honour Indigenous sovereignty and defend the land, water, and sky. Its grassroots mobilization continues to challenge settler colonial structures and

inspire transnational solidarity. Further underscoring the continuity of jurisdictional and territorial conflict, in 2018, the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline through unceded Wet'suwet'en territory in Northern British Columbia proceeded despite opposition from all five hereditary Wet'suwet'en clans, various First Nations, and environmental allies. In December 2019, the British Columbia Supreme Court granted an injunction against land defenders, effectively criminalizing Indigenous resistance on their own ancestral lands (McKay 2024, n.p.). This episode reflects a broader pattern of criminalization across the Americas, in which Indigenous land defenders are treated as threats to state and corporate interests rather than as sovereign actors asserting their legal and relational responsibilities to territory. The continuity of Indigenous resistance in the face of ongoing settler encroachment attests not only to the enduring structures of colonial violence but also to the living, evolving legacy of Indigenous self-determination. Contemporary Indigenous peoples are not simply descendants of survivors; they are survivors in their own right—actively confronting legal, environmental, and epistemic forms of domination. This persistent engagement gives rise to what Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor (2009) calls *survivance*: "an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion" (85). Coined by fusing "survival" and "resistance," *survivance* signifies more than endurance; it embodies the ongoing assertion of Indigenous presence, agency, and continuity. It is, as Vizenor (2009) explains, "the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent," and works to displace narratives rooted in tragedy, defeat, or victimhood (85).

Hence, scholars such as Coulthard (2014) and Simpson (2011; 2013) have pointed out, resistance is insufficient on its own. It must be sustained by Resurgent practices that actively seek to transcend the limitations of the settler colonial systems. Such practices envision and materialize different ways of thinking, organizing, and being, thereby constituting the foundation for the emerging of alternative worlds that not only disrupt colonial logics but also fortify interdependent kinship networks vital to the continuity and prosperity of Indigenous communities. Indigenous Resurgence is here conceived as a practice of cultural self-recognition and empowerment at the center of a decolonial project that aims to go beyond the asymmetrical political forms of recognition and

politics currently (and for the past five centuries) enacted by settler States in North America, centered on genocidal practices, forced exclusion and assimilation. Thus, Resurgence is not only affirmative, but also transformative as it attempts to correct unjust models of redistribution of power and resources. At the heart of these movements lies the notion of "grounded normativity," which Glen Coulthard (2014) defines as "the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time" (13). These place-based relationships are never hierarchical in nature, rather they present themselves as nonlinear, across time and space, entail responsibilities, and are subject to self-correction and rebalances. The land has a pedagogical function teaching Indigenous people how to live in relation to one another in non-dominating and exploitative terms, suggesting practices at odds with colonialism and capitalism, which threaten Indigenous identities through land acquisition, settlement, and resource extraction.

In particular, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's groundbreaking works have illuminated the essence of Indigenous Resurgence movements, stressing their regenerative potential. In *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* (2011) and *As We Have Always Done* (2017), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson explains how the Indigenous Resurgence movements were not created to challenge or even change the current settler colonial system, but rather they are aiming for a non-hierarchical, non-exploitative, non-extractive, and non-authoritarian approach. Moreover, they seeks to rebuild the vitality and autonomy of Indigenous modes of living, that settler colonialism sought to destroy through state policies, the school system, and dispossession (Talaga 2018). Resurgence is also an intergenerational effort as the Elders are actively engaged in the formation of future generations in love and committed to their land and Indigenous knowledge. The movement is an invitation to rebel, persist, commit, care, connect, and think about a radical alternative based on reciprocity and refusal of colonial recognition.

Whilst decolonization and resurgence do not necessarily foreground sovereignty, Indigenous scholars are promoting the concept of "resurgence-based decolonial indigenization" with the aim of revolutionizing the academic landscape by inclusively

integrating Indigenous perspectives in ways that hold transformative potential (Kuokkanen 2008). This shift actively empowers and revitalizes Indigenous communities, fostering a more inclusive and respectful approach to Indigenous cultures (and spirituality) within and outside academia. Likewise, movements like the aforementioned Idle No More and #NoDAPL testify to Natives' willingness and need to reshape their current relations with settler societies. They often do so by suggesting ways of living (in relationship with the human and non-human) that are not dominating nor exploitative, and hence intrinsically anti-capitalistic, rooted in Indigenous traditions.

Therefore, this issue aims to reflect on how this urge to reshape the existent relations with settler societies has influenced many Indigenous texts, often opening up opportunities for what Simpson (2017) defined as "constellations of coresistance" (9). As the scholar also wrote, "[c]onstellations in relationship with other constellations form flight paths out of settler colonial realities into Indigeneity. They become doorways out of the enclosure of settler colonialism and into Indigenous worlds" (Simpson 2017, 214). Hence, in its attempt to map some of these "constellations," this issue does not engage with a nationalist reading of Indigenous literature, but it adopts what Chadwick Allen (2012, n.p.) has defined as a "transnational" method, as the *trans-* prefix indicates "the sense of across, beyond, and through, but not limited to national borders, and certainly not limited to the national borders of contemporary (settler) nation-states."

ISSUE OVERVIEW

This special issue explores how Indigenous cultural production enacts resurgence by imagining and generating alternative worlds—through story, poetics, spatial practice, and ecological care. Each contribution traces distinct constellations of Indigenous thought and resistance, grounded in place-based knowledge and artistic sovereignty. Together, these essays illuminate how Indigenous creators challenge colonial structures and envision pathways to futures rooted in relationality, land, and artistic sovereignty.

The issue opens with Martina Basciani's essay "Resurgent Water in Nishnaabeg Storytelling." Basciani turns her attention to two texts published by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, her song "She Sang Them Home," published in her debut collection

Islands of Decolonial Love (2015), and the short story "Big Water," featured in the collection *This Accident of Being Lost* (2017). In her analysis of these two works, she investigates how Simpson's fluid poetics introduces readers to a Nishnaabeg decolonized universe, re-imagining water in relational terms to question Western extractivist approaches to aquatic matters and advance ethical alternatives.

Extending this environmental and relational focus into the Pacific context, Ana Cristina Gomes da Rocha's essay, "Epistemologies of Care: An Ecopoetic Conversation between Craig Santos Perez, Jamaica H. Osorio and Sia Figiel," analyzes how Indigenous poets in the Pacific Islands confront ecological degradation through poetic practices rooted in ancestral knowledge and political care. Through an ecocritical lens, Gomes da Rocha examines three Indigenous poems—"Green Washing and White Dollar Policy" by Jamaica H. Osorio, "Praise Song for Oceania" by Craig Santos Perez, and "In-Land-Ness" by Sia Figiel—to pinpoint how these authors living in the Pacific Islands share similar concerns about the current environmental degradation. In her discussion, Gomes da Rocha highlights how these poets trace the origins of the contemporary ecological crisis back to the first colonial encounters, arguing that global imperialism should not be addressed exclusively in economic and political terms, but also ecological ones. In her reading of the poems, the author argues that these poets aim to portray an alternative complex and sustainable relationship with the environment, rooted in traditional Indigenous practices. Her reading suggests that these poetic texts articulate an alternative, complex, and sustainable relationship with the environment—one deeply rooted in traditional Indigenous practices and ways of knowing. By doing so, the poets participate in the broader project of resurgence, offering ecopoetic visions of Indigenous worlds beyond colonial extraction and destruction.

Expanding the inquiry from decolonial imaginaries to spatial sovereignty and closing the issue, Hend Ayari's essay, "Narrative Cartographies of Indigenous Resurgence: Women's Self-Construction, Transmotion, and the Decolonization of Spatial Inquiry," engages the spatial dimensions of Indigenous resurgence, exploring how Native women's storytelling functions as a decolonial praxis that reclaims geography as a site of Indigenous agency, mobility, and political presence. Drawing on

Gerald Vizenor's concepts of transmotion and survivance, Ayari examines how several Native American women writers—Harjo, Jensen, Elliott, Washuta, and LeGarde Grove—construct counter-maps to subvert the way in which American settlers have used geography to both dominate the land and marginalize Indigenous peoples. These narrative cartographies envision alternative worlds grounded in relationality, movement, and Indigenous sovereignty.

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