

preface

THE ESSAYS IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE on Indigenous Feminisms in Settler Contexts engage feminist politics from multiple Indigenous geographies, histories, and standpoints. What emerges is a panoramic view of Indigenous feminist scholarship's conceptual, linguistic, and artistic activism at this moment in time. We learn of praxis aimed at reclaiming Indigenous languages and ecological perspectives and the varied modes of resistance, survivance, and persistence. We also unpack the complex racial/gender politics of colonial encounters in contexts where white women cared intimately for Indigenous children, or where they helped to recover Indigenous oral traditions, and we note how modes of help can also reproduce imperial power relations. Some essays, art works, and poems extend the geographic ambit of critiques of settler colonialism beyond American contexts: they deploy feminist rubrics to critique the continuing violent settlement of Palestine and Kashmir to demonstrate that the occupation of "marginal" places is constitutive of state-society relations; others describe how Australian Aboriginal and Sámi artists engage the question of Indigenous visibility. In different ways, they each show how staying in place, against all odds, can be radical.

Our first two articles examine the politics of praxis. Michelle M. Jacob, Virginia R. Beavert, Regan Anderson, Leilani Sabzalian, and Joana Jansen analyze Indigenous feminist praxis surrounding Ichishkíin Indigenous language education. The "activism" of Sámi artists Maxida

and Timimie Märak, which expresses concern for land and water rights, gender and sexuality, and Indigenous rights in Northern Europe takes center stage in Kyle Bladow's essay. The next three articles interrogate historical records shaping Indigenous lives in northern Canada, southwest Pacific, and southwestern United States and Mexico. Val Marie Johnson examines how white women staff members' intimate care relations at residential schools for Inuvialuit, Inuinait, and Iñupiat peoples in Canada were bound up with the latter's dispossession. Carolyn J. Eichner recounts the encounter between the Indigenous Kanak people and Louise Michel, a feminist and participant in the revolutionary Paris Commune of 1871 who was banished to New Caledonia for seven years; Eichner argues that although Michel was staunchly anti-imperialist, her liberatory political project bore the temporal logics of colonization. Drawing on examples of Nahua reconfigurations of Christian scripture, Kenna Neitch proposes the language of "persistence" as a heuristic for avoiding the reactive, relational connotations that can pervade scholarly usages of "resistance" rhetoric. Next, our review essay by Jennifer McLerran describes recent Indigenous feminist scholarship that recasts the concept of sovereignty. Our News and Views piece focuses on modalities of occupation in the context of Kashmir: Nosheen Ali, Mona Bhan, Sahana Ghosh, Hafsa Kanjwal, Zunaira Komal, Deepti Misri, Shruti Mukherjee, Nishant Upadhyay, Saiba Varma, and Ather Zia argue that occupation is foundational to the making and reproduction of nation-states, and not exceptional to state power. The varied forms of resistance to occupation are examined by Sara Ihmoud in her article about how a group of Palestinian women, the *Murabitat al-Haram*, agitate for religious freedom simply by "staying in place." Rabab Abdulhadi comments on shifts in contemporary settler colonial discourse in Israel, noting the increasingly overt and unapologetic deployment of highly sexualized and gendered images. Marina Tyquiengco examines the art of Australian Aboriginal artist Fiona Foley, specifically her *Black Velvet* series. Art and myth are also fused in Shantell Powell's textual and visual rendering of Inuit memory. This issue features a range of poetry on topics such as language loss, human-land relationships, and sexual violence, written by Katherine Agyemaa Agard, Kei Kaimana, and Kai Minosh Pyle, and curated by our creative writing editor, Alexis Pauline Gumbs.

In "*Átaw Iwá Ichishkíin Sínwit: The Importance of Ichishkíin Language in Advancing Indigenous Feminist Education*," Michelle M. Jacob,

Virginia R. Beavert, Regan Anderson, Leilani Sabzalian, and Joana Jansen examine Indigenous feminist praxis surrounding Ichishkíin-language education. They critique how Western education systems inflict pernicious forms of violence within Native communities, engaging in practices of linguistic genocide and alienating Indigenous peoples from their homelands. In response, Native peoples, along with non-Native allies, are engaging in educational and political activism to reclaim and revitalize Indigenous languages and ecological perspectives. In examining the foundational teaching of Ichishkíin, translated as “in this way,” the authors discuss how Indigenous languages must be brought back into the center of educational systems that serve Indigenous students.

Kyle Bladow’s “‘Never Shut Up My Native’: Indigenous Feminist Protest Art in Sápmi,” shares the activism of Sámi artists Maxida and Timimie Mårak to demonstrate how they create new intergenerational forms of Indigenous visibility in order to express concern for land and water rights, gender and sexuality, and Indigenous issues in Northern Europe, particularly Sweden. The siblings adopt a range of interventions, from the striking act of cutting their dreadlocks at a touristy winter market in their hometown in order to recall the violence inflicted when Sámi were sent to residential schools, to *joiking*, a traditional form of singing, reworked for contemporary times. Bladow analyzes the recent Swedish TV series *Sápmi Sisters* to highlight the gendered aspects of the Måraks’ art and activism, including their participation in Sápmi Pride as well as Maxida’s embrace of her motherhood in discussing women’s rights.

In “‘I’m sorry now we were so very severe’: 1930s Colonizing Care Relations between White Anglican Women Staff and Inuvialuit, Inuinait, and Iñupiat People in an ‘Eskimo Residential School,’” Val Marie Johnson focuses on how white women staff members’ intimate care relations at residential schools for Inuvialuit, Inuinait, and Iñupiat peoples in Canada were bound up with the latter’s dispossession. Using archival material from the Anglican Church, Johnson provides a contextualized analysis of the records that two staff members compiled about their relationships with children and adults at a school on the Arctic coast in the 1930s. Illustrating the key role of white women with good intentions in Canadian settler colonialism and white supremacy, as well as how Inuit people contributed to missionaries’ survival, Johnson considers colonizing care relations and resistance from both parties. These relationships unfolded in the context of inequities operating among Inuit and white

staff, children, and adults as well as long-term European/North American intrusions on Indigenous lifeworlds and the racist arrogance that undergirds colonization.

Carolyn J. Eichner's "Language of Imperialism, Language of Liberation: Louise Michel and the Kanak-French Colonial Encounter" focuses on the early French feminist, anarchist, and participant in the Paris Commune of 1871. Staunchly anti-imperialist and anti-carceral, Michel was banished for seven years to New Caledonia in the South Pacific, which is home to the Indigenous Kanak people. Michel was one of the first Europeans to realize the importance of orality in Kanak narratives, but her ethnographies, newspaper essays, and story collections nevertheless reproduced racialized temporalities. Ultimately, Eichner argues, Michel's representation of Kanak lives was a Europe-facing political project in which her hopes for Kanak liberation proved inseparable from French imperial power.

In "Indigenous Persistence: Challenging the Rhetoric of Anti-colonial Resistance," Kenna Neitch describes the limits of "resistance" rhetoric, which is limited by its reliance on the relationality of oppression. She describes instead the case for reclaiming "persistence" as a term to characterize Indigenous cultural tropes that pre-date and endure despite colonial interventions. Drawing on examples of Nahua translations of Christian scripture and theatrical renderings of the Christ-Sun and Mary, Neitch examines how transgressive Indigenous cosmologies live on. This essay is a co-winner of the 2018 *Feminist Studies* Award for the best article written by a graduate student.

Jennifer McLerran's review essay focuses on recent Indigenous feminist scholarship on sovereignty, highlighting the important contributions of several towering figures in the field, including Joanne Barker, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. In particular, McLerran focuses on how each author centers Indigenous epistemologies in their reconfiguring of sovereignty. The essay underscores how these books exemplify epistemic resistance and a "radical resurgence" of Indigenous culture.

A cluster of articles in this issue extends the critical feminist lens on settler colonialism to South Asia and the Middle East. On August 5, 2019, the government of India abrogated an article of the Indian constitution that had guaranteed semi-autonomous status to the state of Kashmir,

thereby jeopardizing its long-held special status; it also amended the law to designate anti-government protesters “terrorists” and deployed a massive military force to squelch dissent. In their timely News and Views essay, “Geographies of Occupation in South Asia,” Nosheen Ali, Mona Bhan, Sahana Ghosh, Hafsa Kanjwal, Zunaira Komal, Deepti Misri, Shruti Mukherjee, Nishant Upadhyay, Saiba Varma, and Ather Zia argue that such occupations are foundational, rather than exceptional, to the making and reproduction of nation-states. The collective incites feminists to recognize occupation as a zone of contact between margins and centers, to interrupt the gendered and racialized logics often at play in struggles for liberation, and to forge transnational solidarities.

In “*Murabata: The Politics of Staying in Place*,” Sarah Ihmoud offers a powerful ethnographic account of how a group of Palestinian women known as *Murabitat al-Haram* engage in an embodied politics of place. The women view themselves as protectors of the holy grounds of the *Haram al-Sharif* (the noble sanctuary) located in the Old City of Jerusalem—a place that is home to Islam’s third holiest site after Mecca and Medina and central to Palestinian identity. Though formally outlawed by the Israeli state, *Murabitat al-Haram* members continue to go each day to defend the holy site despite being arrested, beaten, brutalized, and sexually degraded as well as forced to pray outside in the streets. Ihmoud argues that theirs is an ethically based form of everyday resistance to Israeli settler colonialism: *Murabitat al-Haram* have pushed themselves into new roles in their families and community, achieving a sense of power in everyday life. Ihmoud argues that their religious practice animates collective politics outside of the liberal rights-based framework, working toward a “popular sovereignty” that aims to subvert “a regime of unending dispossession.”

In “Israeli Settler Colonialism in Context: Celebrating (Palestinian) Death and Normalizing Gender and Sexual Violence,” Rabab Abdulhadi analyzes a notable shift in Israeli popular and official discourse that took place around 2014, which was defined by newly overt and unapologetic sexualized and gendered dominance over Palestinians. Abdulhadi makes two arguments to explain this: first, the rightward turn in global politics, and second, Israeli frustration about its failure to crush Palestinian resistance. Drawing on her field research in Palestine, and informed by debates among Palestinian intellectuals and activists,

Abdulhadi examines moments from visual popular culture produced in Israel over the last decade.

We turn now to the creative writing and art featured in this issue. Katherine Agyemaa Agard's piece "a reading lesson or, painting (in five flashes)" offers an example of how colonialism and diasporic flows impact the activity you are engaged in right now: reading. Agard has at once created an autobiographical narrative, a poetic dictionary, and an artist's statement on her painting practice, all of which find pleasure in the fact that "language is strange." As she traces the connection between her Indigenous Akan heritage and her heritage as a descendant of enslaved Africans, she offers the diasporic possibility that "the ocean does not separate, but joins us."

This optimistic reading is complicated by creative works in which the bodies and agency of Indigenous women are overwritten. In "Black Velvet: Aboriginal Womanhood in the Art of Fiona Foley," Marina Tyquiengco examines Fiona Foley's *Black Velvet* series as a critical engagement with sexuality, colonialism, and representation. Tyquiengco explains how "Black Velvet," an antiquated phrase for interracial sex between white colonizers and Aboriginal women, offers Foley an opportunity to critique ongoing dynamics of exploitation. She also describes how Foley has interrogated perceptions of Indigenous womanhood over the course of her career.

By representing the consequences of narrative and physical violence against Indigenous women, Kei Kaimana's poem "as the earth cradles water, we find our percentage" intervenes to offer a direct ceremony for survivors of settler colonialism and the embodied interpersonal violence pervasive in a society structured by rape. Kaimana imagines an Earth that we allow to be receptive as we become receptive despite everything. Kaimana asks us to recognize the water within ourselves as well as the planet, without ignoring how difficult this is to do. Reminiscent of June Jordan's poetic insistence that "though the world forgets me / i will say yes / and no," Kaimana notes that healing is made possible by a practiced, embodied relationship to the word "no," which is the most repeated word in this poem. Kaimana's second poem-set, "On Forgetting/part 2" speaks to violence, child sexual abuse, and trafficking and offers an example of incomplete memory as a practice of resilience. The exact sweetness that fuels the extractive, violent industries of colonialism — including the innocence of children coerced into sex work and the

supposedly “virgin” lands mined in Hawai‘i — becomes both a problem and a site for reclamation.

Shantell Powell’s “Skinfolk” uses storytelling and visual imagery to enact an Inuit feminist practice of making memory and legend. These stories, which highlight body hair, grandmothers who become men, the origin of anuses, and a time before vaginal birth, create an archive in which the ancient is also transgressive, disruptive, and cutting edge. Powell’s accompanying images speak to and deepen the implications of the hungers, desires, and survival strategies demonstrated in these stories. Her work is based on tales that Powell’s father told her in childhood and are given added nuance by her collaboration with Inuk knowledge-keeper Tauni Sheldon. Taken together, they remind us that the keys to a transformative, transgressive, resilient, and loving world are already there in Indigenous practice, not in a sentimentalized or ahistorical way, but alive with all the lust and messiness that brought many of us into critical feminist community.

In “apēkon ahkīhīh,” Kai Minosh Pyle imagines a multigenerational future in which the relationships between the people and the land — as well as the people and each other — are healed through practice. Prioritizing inter-Indigenous care and communion, the hospitality and stewardship Menominee people practiced in relationship to Pyle’s own Nishnaabe ancestors, Pyle creates a context where Indigenous precedent can source an abundant future. While reckoning with the consequences of colonialism and the violence of occupation, Pyle centers the visionary power and radical memory of young girls who bring a concept, phrase, and practice back into possibility by finding ways to live it. In Pyle’s vision, learning to love each other across internalized hatred and trauma is connected with learning to love the land — the life that emerges up through concrete. The piece itself is a ceremony and an offering for the intercommunal being-together that so many of us are seeking in these pages.

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