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Literary Creative Practices as Sites of Redress

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Introduction: Literary Creative Practices as Sites of Redress

Michelle Coupal, Allison Hargreaves,
and Svetlana Seibel

There were some important firsts in Canada in 2021: notably, the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on 30 September, the coming into force through royal assent on 21 June of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and the "discovery" of unmarked graves found at multiple former Indian residential schools across Canada through ground-penetrating radar. At the time of writing this introduction, the remains of over 1,500 innocent Indigenous children from the Kamloops, Brandon, Marieval, St. Eugene's, and Kuper Island Indian Residential Schools had been found and mourned by Indigenous communities across the country.

For Canada, the "discoveries" appear to mark a watershed moment in national consciousness of the grim truth of Canada's genocidal schools. Dirk Meissner from Global News reported that the Canadian Press named the discovery of graves at the Kamloops school the news story of the year. He further called it a "countrywide awakening" that "shook most Canadians to their core." The fact that it took the unmarked graves of thousands of Indigenous children ostensibly to shake the country out of its somnolence about Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples is perhaps more shocking than the graves themselves, about which Indigenous communities have long known. This, despite thousands of pages of evidence and testimony recounted in both the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) in 1996 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2015, makes it all too clear that Canada has a long path ahead if it is ever to have a fulsome understanding of the truths of its historical and ongoing colonial violence and an even longer path to achieving true reconciliation.

Michelle Coupal argues in "Reconciliation Rainbows and the Promise of Education: Teaching Truth and Redress in Neocolonial

Canada" that "between truth and reconciliation is a gap that can only be overcome by cultural and judicial *redress*" (213). The adoption by Canada of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) should signal a turn away from the rhetoric of reconciliation and toward real change — to redress the genocide, abuse, theft of lands, and ongoing, day-to-day, both small and large violence and discrimination against Indigenous peoples. Central to UNDRIP is the elephant in the room that government and related stakeholders do not want to acknowledge: *land*. Article 26.1 of UNDRIP states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired." Article 26.2 goes further to state that Indigenous peoples have the "right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired." If these two articles do not make it clear enough that the lands occupied by Canada are Indigenous lands, then Article 28.1 leaves no doubt about what UNDRIP — which Canada has adopted — requires:

> *Indigenous peoples have the right to redress*, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent. (emphasis added)

One wonders what the Canadian government was thinking when it adopted UNDRIP. Did government officials and the prime minister read what the articles declare? If so, then was the adoption of a declaration as laudable and meaningful as UNDRIP purely performative, or do they have a consequential plan of action? The government's strategy remains unclear. In an interview with Rosanna Deerchild, the Honourable Murray Sinclair said that from time to time Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would ask him, "How are we doing"? He answered, "We're failing because you don't have a plan." In fact, in the same interview, Sinclair suggested not only that there is no plan but also that there is a concerted effort to obstruct change:

> There will be a very concerted and organized effort to stop reconciliation from coming about — to stop the equality of Indigenous people, to stop Indigenous people from having their rights instituted into the law or into the Constitution or protected in a way that can't easily be changed by a governing party that comes to power. That sense of privilege that exists out there is going to be very difficult to overcome until all Canadians actually recognize that as a problem. And to this point in time they don't. ("Reconciliation")

How Do We Relate (Better)?

Sinclair's words serve as a powerful call to governments and citizens alike to take responsibility. Many if not all of the contributions in this special issue address and foreground the importance of responsible relationality as a prerequisite for reconciliation. They demonstrate that Indigenous literary arts enact the Indigenous philosophy of "All My Relations," which, as Thomas King explains, "is an encouragement for us to accept the responsibilities we have within this universal family by living our lives in a harmonious and moral manner" (ix).

Indigenous literary arts model relationality grounded in this philosophy at the same time as they critically interrogate colonially constituted interruptions of relational connections and flows. In addition, the articles in this special issue look to Indigenous literatures for relational models that could help to overcome these disjunctions and that include redress in visions of reconciliation. These are models of relationality that have the potential to create a meaningful dialogue between Indigenous and settler cultures, whether through practices of decolonial listening, positionalities of "speaking nearby" (in Trinh T. Minh-ha's sense), or other strategies of accountability that emerge from and through Indigenous arts, critical practice, and thought.

In one way or another, these relational practices address the tension within the discourse of reconciliation that many scholars and commentators have indicated. In the introduction to *Research and Reconciliation: Unsettling Ways of Knowing through Indigenous Relationships*, Lindsay DuPré notes that "It seems like there are two opposite things happening in reconciliation right now. The healing and moving forward, and the violence and moving back — and they're happening at the same time. The concerning part is when the moving back is being confused with moving forward and ongoing colonial violence is being masked as reconciliation" (in Breen et al. xiii). The notion of redress highlighted

in this special issue arguably works to address this tension, looking for ways to overcome discursive strands that threaten to co-opt the political project of reconciliation and render it unproductive. Relationality is an integral part of this, for reconciliation at its best centres on the question of how do we relate (better)? Crucially, the relationships in question are diverse and manifold, encompassing cultural, political, institutional, communal, interpersonal, and personal dimensions (Breen et al. xi).[1] Contemplating them includes interrogating knowledge and truth:

> Unsettling truths of settler colonialism involves many processes that uncover not only new information, but also new questioning and understanding of who we are in the world. We are challenged to reflect on our collective histories and to reconsider the ways in which we are in relation to one another. This navigation of relationality requires us to simultaneously hold space for the past, present, and future so that despite our different locations — both geographic and social — we can realign ourselves in more just ways. Research offers possibility to understand our ontological gaps, but can also create more confusion. (DuPré 1)

Literary arts in their various manifestations play a crucial role in these processes and negotiations through their ability to "hold space for the past, present, and future" for which DuPré calls. This shines through in much of the scholarship collected in this special issue. The two articles that engage the short film *A Red Girl's Reasoning*, by Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers, for example, highlight the dynamics of textual ancestry, relationality, and continuity between contemporary Indigenous storytelling and nineteenth-century Indigenous writers such as Pauline Johnson Tekahionwake. In their work, both Renae Watchman and Svetlana Seibel demonstrate how these connections are forged in ways that support Indigenous resurgence and uplift Indigenous women's voices, propelling them into the future by creating instances of transtemporal solidarity between women writers and their characters. Here claiming ties of literary kinship is showcased as a source of strength and resilience. This reading in terms of transtemporal relationality is reminiscent of Deanna Reder's understanding of Indigenous autobiographies "as classics that preserve Indigenous knowledge and specific tribal understandings for their descendants and subsequent generations" (170).

Another relationship stressed in Indigenous literary arts and critical discussions is the connection to land as enacted through land-based

practices and place-based relationalities. Marisa Lewis's article in this issue foregrounds this relational dynamic, engaging with Leanne Simpson's critical and creative work. Simpson's is one of the foremost voices that advocate for Indigenous land-based relationality, and her embodied theorizing follows her notion of "Nishnaabeg intelligence": "'Theory' isn't just an intellectual pursuit — it is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence and emotion, it is contextual and relational" ("Land" 6, 7). In her work, assumptions of an epistemic division between storytelling and theorizing that often underpin Eurowestern academic practice break down; instead, Simpson postulates deep relationality that links story, theory, and land — which Lewis reads as invested in discussions of redress and reclamation. This critical, intellectual, and creative stance that centres the relationship to land and place is one of the defining characteristics of Indigenous literary arts, and one that connects them to activist efforts on the ground that combat land degradation, water pollution, and extractive practices of colonial-capitalist states.

Relationality and Redress

In "Do Berries Listen? Berries as Indicators, Ancestors, and Agents in Canada's Oil Sands Region," Janelle Marie Baker draws from her learning as a researcher working in collaboration with members of Fort McKay First Nation and Bigstone Cree Nation. Her research speaks powerfully to the sentience of the land and to the agency of all beings on it. Agency can be expressed in many ways; in the research that Baker shares, berries express agency through reciprocal and communicative relationships with human and non-human beings in which berries "listen to how you speak about, and to, them, and respond accordingly" (274). There is much here to which we should pay attention, but one important implication of Baker's collaborative work is how it opens up an invitation to consider "reconciliation" outside the dominant liberal paradigm of accommodation. For instance, in the closing paragraph of her essay, Baker says that

> Many of us are now considering what reconciliation means to us and how to do research, teaching, and writing in the spirit of reconciliation. I would like to propose that appreciating the ability of berries to listen be an example of what reconciliation can look like. What I mean is that we consider that berries and other beings that animate the landscape can actually hear us. That we need to show

> respect and are careful with our words and behaviour while on the land. (290)

This is a profound invitation — bound up in questions of ontology, values, and beliefs — with wide-reaching implications for the practices of large-scale resource extraction documented in Baker's work. Yet it is also a very practical invitation whose intimacy and elegance amplify its power. What could reconciliation look like as a material practice of relationality rather than a conceptual paradigm, a policy discussion, or an environmental impact assessment?

In focusing on what berries and other beings *hear*, Baker implicitly complicates normative understandings of reconciliation as a human-centred truth-telling project geared to non-Indigenous listeners whose education and conscientization are at stake. Instead, listening is revealed as a dynamic, multidirectional process enlivened by the agency of both human and non-human actors. The radical interdependence of these actors is a matter of course. The practice of showing respect and care results from this knowing. In this sense, Baker's example of "what reconciliation can look like" articulates an intimate practice of relationality that moves beyond or outside the realm of consciousness raising. To appreciate the ability of berries and other non-humans to listen, and to make this appreciation a core practice of reconciliation, are to actualize in embodied and material relations the transformation of settler colonial ways of being and knowing that maintain violent and extractive relationships with Indigenous lands.

Critics such as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang have asserted the limitations of engaging with decolonization through metaphorical means, defining decolonization as nothing less than the "repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (1). In this paradigm, the sphere of critical conscientization (with which literary arts are sometimes associated) might seem to lack any capacity for material forms of repatriation or redress. Yet what interests the contributors to this issue is precisely how the literary arts constitute sites where transformative possibilities are invited, fostered, modelled, and practised in material ways and with lived implications — both by writers and artists themselves and by the community of readers and listeners who gather to hear them. As Simpson writes in *A Short History of the Blockade: Giant Beavers, Diplomacy, and Regeneration in Nishnaabewin*, "stories not only fill our worlds, they make our worlds" (6). Métis literary critic Jo-Ann Episkenew likewise knew this to be true, and in *Taking Back Our Spirits:*

Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing she argues not only for the world-making and ultimately healing properties of Indigenous literature but also for its power to "change the world": "by documenting Indigenous people's reality in a way that promotes empathy and understanding, Indigenous literature also has the ability to shape history, politics, and public policy" (186).

An example of empathy's transformative power for readers is provided by Sam McKegney in this issue. He points out that in Richard Wagamese's *Indian Horse* readers are "encouraged" to identify with Father Leboutilier:

> Many settler Canadians, because we tend to perceive ourselves as caring, justice-oriented, and generally ethical, will read that character and think, 'Oh, if I were a teacher in residential school, that's the kind of teacher I'd be. . . .' By exposing Father Leboutilier at the end of the novel as a sexual predator and the primary source of Saul's trauma, Wagamese tactically provokes a reckoning for the settler reader. (29)

Here empathy creates a radical provocation for settler readers to imagine themselves as sympathetic to a predacious priest in a residential school. This internalization of complicity with the genocidal schools is the sort of emotional reaction that Episkenew argues can foster real-life change. Significantly, the empathic process is not one of appropriative identification by settler readers; rather, it becomes one way in which these readers can come to know themselves within a historical and ongoing set of colonial relationships — and to reckon with rather than disavow what philosopher Alexis Shotwell calls "bad kin." Working from the premise that there are "modes of relationality that might allow us to understand the histories we inherit and the webs of connection that shape the social situations within which we exist," Shotwell asks what it could mean "for those who benefit from oppression — white people, and settlers more generally — to claim kin with oppressors" (8). Wagamese's novel is one example of how Indigenous literature engages this possibility with the goal not only of fostering critical consciousness among readers but also of transforming associated relations of power. If settler colonialism is defined in part by its violent and persistent disavowal of relationality, then the reinstatement of those relations (in all their complexity) is part of the project of wise and grounded resistance. This is true for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers who, according to Episkenew,

arrive at stories like Wagamese's from different perspectives, knowledges, and histories — but with a shared call for holistic and "relationship-oriented" ways of being (194) that Baker likewise signals when she asks (and answers), "Do Berries Listen?"

In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith envisions a multi-faceted approach to the "terrain of struggle" that does not privilege or discount the role of critical consciousness raising but sees this "awakening" and the related project of "reimagining the world" (201) as integral to the struggle for decolonization. Although she argues that imagination on its own is not inherently emancipatory, it can and does animate political projects and "allows us to strive for goals that transcend material, empirical realities" (203). Each of the articles that follow reflects in some way on the possibilities and limits of creative practice as a site of redress where material questions of land, life, and community are concerned. And many of the pieces look to resurgent Indigenous frameworks for direction, leaning away from or otherwise critiquing dominant politics of recognition and reconciliation. The contributors — and the writers and artists with whom they engage — together assert a direct connection between representational acts of imagination and embodied expressions of place-based knowledge, memory, and sovereignty.

In This Issue

The articles in this special issue provide valuable perspectives on questions of reconciliation, redress, relationality, and Indigenous literary arts. In "Called to Relationship and Reckoning through Story: Reflections on Reading, Teaching, and Writing about Residential School Literatures," Michelle Coupal and Sam McKegney offer a transcription of conversations between them that trace the trajectory of residential school literature over the past fifty years while also productively and, at times, provocatively intervening in critical discourses of survivorship, trauma, and healing. They suggest that residential school literature exceeds the boundaries of its genre in its sustained ability to look forward and beyond victimry as it defiantly asserts Indigenous resistance and sovereignty.

Stories of colonial violence, including residential schools, require more than analysis as an art object. Rather, they advocate the idea that, whether fictional or non-fictional, the stories are true and need to be

approached with tremendous responsibility, empathy, respect, honesty, and admiration. Coupal and McKegney suggest that we need a different kind of critical practice that supports writers and Indigenous communities. Their concluding conversation focuses on teaching strategies that foreground place, positionality, and engagement with Indigenous communities as important entry points for settler students into the literature. In a coda to the article, Coupal and McKegney remind us that, despite the discoveries of unmarked graves at numerous residential schools, "settler Canadians are quick to express outrage and sorrow, but slow to register complicity and even slower to relinquish resources and privilege" (43). This is but one of the reasons why residential school literature is key to settler reckoning with genocidal colonialism in Canada.

Ken Wilson, in "Indigenous Practices and Performances of Mobility as Resistance and Resurgence," drawing from his compilation of a 218-page annotated bibliography of published accounts of Indigenous mobility — walking, running, paddling, riding — that are political, diplomatic, sacred, and/or communal acts that resist settler colonialism, examines three Indigenous walking practices: Cree-Métis artist Cheryl L'Hirondelle's 2001 *cistêmâw iyiniw ohci* (*For the Tobacco Being*), Anishinaabe artist Leo Baskatawang's 2012 *March 4 Justice*, and the Nishiyuu Walkers (2012). L'Hirondelle did a marathon run across Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation to honour cistêmâw iyiniw's many runs in the past. It was a recorded performance that included Joseph Naytowhow, Sky Dancer — Louise B. Halfe, and Cheli Nighttraveller. But the performativity of the event was subsumed in the community's perception of and participation in the event as something memorable — a place of protocol, storytelling, resurgence, and sovereignty. In 2012, Baskatawang, with a copy of the Indian Act chained to himself, undertook a 4,400-kilometre walk with Ashley Bottle along the Trans-Canada Highway. As ball and chain, the Indian Act was repeatedly damaged during the walk — symbolizing a future of transformation for Indigenous peoples in an act of political resistance, community building, identity reclamation, and spiritual resurgence. Perhaps the best-known walkers whom Wilson discusses in the article are the Nishiyuu Walkers, seven Cree youth who walked 1,600 kilometres from Whapmagoostui, Quebec, to Ottawa in the winter. The walk was a journey of activism, grief, healing, unity, and restoration of traditional trade routes.

"'Walking Backwards': From Truth to Reconciliation," by Josh Dawson, begins with a helpful, broad tracing of truth and reconciliation discourse and government processes (e.g., RCAP and TRC) in Canada and mobilizes the TRC's understanding of reconciliation — the "ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples — as a framework for understanding residential school literature (65). Through Dylan Robinson, Keavy Martin, and Sam McKegney, Dawson reiterates that residential school literature moves beyond aesthetic considerations to make meaningful contributions to reconciliation. He works primarily with Sky Dancer — Louise B. Halfe's *Burning in This Midnight Dream*, which he puts in brief dialogue with Rita Joe's "I Lost My Talk" and Billy-Ray Belcourt's "At the Mercy of the Sky." Dawson argues that there is a forward thrust to both Stephen Harper's and Justin Trudeau's apologies at odds with the goals of the TRC and challenged by Halfe's image of walking backward, which Dawson reads as a comment on the limits of reconciliation and the need to confront the past. He ultimately argues that truth, in all its complexities, should come from settlers as well as from Indigenous peoples: "The confrontation of whitespace and Cree in Halfe's poetry is but one example of a space in which critical self-reflection and the seeds of action might be planted" (81).

Indigenous intellectual traditions often do not postulate a sharp separation between story and criticism (e.g., as demonstrated by Craig Womack). In her article "Spin the Tale Inside: Opacity and Respectful Distance in Lee Maracle's *Celia's Song*," Valentina De Riso explores how Maracle's novel acts as critical practice. Considering models and modes of relationality, De Riso invokes postcolonial scholars Édouard Glissant and Trinh T. Minh-ha and their respective notions of "opacity" and "speaking nearby," putting these concepts in dialogue with models of relationality offered in *Celia's Song*. In the course of this analysis, respect for "incommensurability" and incompleteness of understanding emerges as a prerequisite for positive relationality in all its different incarnations, including reconciliation — an interpretation that connects in certain ways with Audra Simpson's theory of "ethnographic refusal." Similar to Deanna Henderson's article, De Riso's analysis emphasizes listening as a critical and relational practice that is positioned and therefore necessitates an accommodation of refusal. Telling, singing, listening, and knowing (or not knowing or knowing only partially) are inextricably

linked in Maracle's "spider storytelling" (90), De Riso shows, and relationality emerges and is renewed in the course of their spinning.

Deanna Henderson's "Indigenous Refusal and Settler Complicity: Listening Positionality and Critical Reorientations in Helen Knott's *In My Own Moccasins: A Memoir of Resilience*" explores the critical potential of listening as an essential but often overlooked relational practice. Ruminating on *In My Own Moccasins*, Henderson foregrounds how Knott's memoir prompts settler readers to search for ways of becoming "more attuned listeners" (109) able to engage respectfully with refusal. Throughout the article, Henderson focuses on the politics of refusal as practised by Knott in her memoir, particularly in its introduction, and how such politics interrogate settler "listening positionalities" (109). Relying on the work of Dylan Robinson, Henderson presents listening as a form of "disciplinary redress" (Robinson 11). The approaches of both Knott and Robinson to delivering their introductory words demonstrate how modes of listening influence modes of speaking and vice versa, presenting attention to speaker-listener relationalities as an Indigenous critical practice. In addition, Henderson's line of inquiry affirms Indigenous literatures as possessing their own resonance that requires a special kind of ethical and reciprocal listening.

In "Anishinaabemowin in *Indianland*, *The Marrow Thieves*, and *Crow Winter* as a Key to Cultural and Political Resurgence," Petra Fachinger centres literary engagements with Anishinaabemowin in works by Lesley Belleau, Cherie Dimaline, and Karen McBride, tracing their conversations with theories of language revitalization and Indigenous resurgence. Fachinger convincingly shows how the use of Anishinaabemowin in the context of literary arts connects to and supports land-based and language-centred practices of resurgence. This link demonstrates deep connections between Indigenous literary practice and the expressly political project of decolonization through resurgence. To frame her reading in these terms, Fachinger activates Leanne Simpson's argument asserting that political resurgence and cultural resurgence, though often artificially separated in settler discourses of reconciliation, are one and the same in Indigenous understanding. Fachinger shows that Anishinaabe literature follows and promotes the same understanding of resurgence as a process in which culture, politics, and land are intertwined in profound ways. In so doing, Anishinaabe literature asserts itself not only as a creative practice reflecting the philosophy

of resurgence but also as one of the agents in its enactment, storying resurgence into being.

In "Finding Indigenous Place in Colonial Spaces: Place-Based Redress in Leanne Simpson's *This Accident of Being Lost*," Marisa Lewis foregrounds questions of land, embodiment, and place-based knowledge in the discussion of redress. In conversation with scholars such as Glen Coulthard, Eve Tuck, and Marcia McKenzie, Lewis explores differences between Indigenous and Eurocentric "ontologies of place" and considers Simpson's vital contributions to this conversation in *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* and *This Accident of Being Lost*. Through an engagement with Simpson's "Plight" and "Circles upon Circles" specifically, Lewis animates how dominant colonial politics of recognition and reconciliation have failed to address land and place-based relationships with it. An important antidote to this evasion, she argues, is located in the creative practice of storytelling as a site that can "imagine, exhort, and materialize a decolonizing politics of place and land" (151). With a particular focus on the poetics of place making in *This Accident of Being Lost*, Lewis looks to the literary as a site of both discursive and material reclamation where land and land-based practices are concerned.

Julien Defraeye's "« Ce que tu dois savoir, Julie. » Épistémologies et réparation dans *Shuni* (2019) de Naomi Fontaine" is summarized here by Marie-Eve Bradette. Pendant longtemps, au Canada, les savoirs autochtones n'ont pas été envisagés comme des vérités, mais bien comme des objets anthropologiques figés par une historiographie univoque. La colonisation des Amériques s'est ainsi appuyée sur une relation de domination immédiate et sur une coercition épistémologique, celle-là même qui supposait une passivité inhérente aux peuples colonisés. Dans cet article, l'auteur remet en cause cette vision colonialiste et hégémonique du savoir par une lecture critique du roman *Shuni. Ce que tu dois savoir Julie* de l'auteure innue Naomi Fontaine. Il énonce l'argument que, dans sa forme épistolaire, le roman de Fontaine participe à un mouvement de revitalisation des savoirs traditionnels autochtones en s'attaquant aux représentations erronées véhiculées à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de la communauté innue. Ce faisant, l'auteur de l'article suggère que Fontaine propose une voix alternative afin de disséquer les formes de savoir à l'épreuve de la modernité, et qu'elle s'engage ainsi dans un processus de rééquilibrage de l'épistémé.

In "'And Whom We Have Become': Indigenous Women's Narratives of Redress in Quebec," Sarah Henzi explores how Indigenous women's artistic and literary practices have long contributed to a critical conversation about gendered colonial violence in Canada. Significantly, Henzi's discussion enriches the ongoing national conversation with a focus on the specific context of Quebec. Although the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls received relatively widespread media coverage following its release in 2019, Henzi finds a parallel point of departure in a lesser-known provincial inquiry — under way in Quebec since 2016 — that focuses on Indigenous people's experiences of the province's public services (including interactions with police, justice, correctional, and healthcare services). Given the province's refusal to acknowledge systemic racism, Indigenous women artists and writers have issued powerful calls to action and commemoration. In her discussion of this work, Henzi draws from critics such as Eve Tuck, Leanne Simpson, and Glen Coulthard to emphasize Indigenous presence, memory, and accountability. Analyzing the work of Innu artist and curator Sonia Robertson, Innu writer An Antane Kapesh, Anishinaabekwe artist Rebecca Belmore, and many others, Henzi pays attention to how these creators manifest an abiding resilience — and the assertion of memory beyond loss — that command the public's attention and reframe redress on Indigenous terms.

Renae Watchman's article, "Igniting Conciliation and Counting Coup as Redress: Red Reasoning in Tailfeathers, Johnson, and Lindberg," locates Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers' short film *A Red Girl's Reasoning* and Tracey Lindberg's novel *Birdie* within a broader history of Indigenous resilience that emphasizes community-led forms of action and redress — particularly by Indigenous women — in opposition to "reconciliatory plots and motifs" (226). In this project, E. Pauline Johnson's 1893 short story "A Red Girl's Reasoning" is a lively forebear that models in narrative form a response to "oppressive and violent colonial structures and relationships" (213) — named here as sexual violence and kinship rupture (214). Significantly, Watchman takes analytical cues from Indigenous "epistemes, legal traditions, and practices" (213). Nowhere is this more powerfully evident than in the closing section of the article: in reflecting on "Community-led Redress" (228), Watchman illuminates the material stakes of her discussion of gendered violence with reference to several grassroots initiatives that promote commemoration, action, and accountability. Alongside the literary and filmic

examples that Watchman traces, these forms of action place Indigenous communities and kinships at the heart of meaningful redress.

Svetlana Seibel in "'Forget What Disney Tells You': Redressing Popular Culture in Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers' *A Red Girl's Reasoning*" offers a reading of the short film through the lens of popular culture, exploring how redress can become manifest at the level of genre. Seibel interrogates both how the film critiques popular culture and its legacies and ongoing practices of misrepresentation and how it engages select aspects of popular culture, reinventing them for its own purposes. In terms of the former, the film offers a powerful rebuttal of uncritical, ahistorical narratives of the supposed romantic entanglement of Pocahontas with John Smith that mythologize conquest by laying claim to the land through Indigenous women's bodies. With regard to the latter, Tailfeathers' approach to the vigilante genre is of particular interest since it opens up questions about how genre and Indigenous literary arts interact. Seibel reads Delia, the film's protagonist, as a vigilante character who indigenizes the genre by reflecting on and foregrounding traditional Indigenous legal systems of redress in cases of violence against women and children and contrasting them with the wilful ineffectiveness of the colonial justice system in such cases. In this reading, redress becomes a gesture of jurisdictional reclamation as well as an expression of a politics of care. The article demonstrates what nuanced genre criticism can contribute to the study of Indigenous literary arts.

Conclusion

In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants*, Potawatomi writer, storyteller, and botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer tells the story of a woman who fell from the Skyworld with a bundle of seeds grasped in her hand. Having received extraordinary gifts of hospitality and care from the animals who greeted her — even as she fell — Skywoman comes to co-create the world from the "alchemy of all the animals' gifts coupled with her deep gratitude" (4). The Earth is formed from a "dab of mud on Turtle's back," and to this she adds the seeds that she carried from her former home in the Skyworld: "These she scattered onto the new ground and carefully tended each one until the world turned from brown to green" (4). The story instructs Kimmerer (and all who hear it) in lessons of reciprocity; Skywoman humbly accepts the gifts offered from other beings and lov-

ingly shares those that she brought with her (8). Moreover, Kimmerer says, when Skywoman scatters those seeds, she leaves teachers for all those yet to come: "The plants can tell us her story; we need to learn to listen" (10). We contemplate this directive as we gaze on the feast of strawberries that graces the cover of this issue. Conceived by Haudenosaunee artist Amberley John, *Awʌhíht'e* (Strawberry) has journeyed through several cycles of gifting itself and now takes on new life. With generous roots, ripe berries, and new flowers, this strawberry plant reminds us how "the navigation of relationality requires us to simultaneously hold space for the past, present, and future" (DuPré 1) — a task in which creative arts and literature instruct us repeatedly. Speaking to Sky Dancer — Louise B. Halfe's powerful poetry that opens this issue, these berries are a call for love.

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Note

[1] The introduction to *Research and Reconciliation* is partially in the form of a conversation among the three editors, with each having a turn to speak, so that the text includes individual remarks from each tied together into a jointly written introduction.

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