

Centering Indigenous Women & Lgbtq2s siblings, an Introduction to Issue 2 by Melinda Kachina Bige

Tansi readers,

Masi cho, hiy hiy for viewing this second issue of the Octopus Spirit Journal. There is so much ferocious sparkle in this issue, we had a great team of reviewers and collaborators! I am in complete gratitude to those who are sharing their faith in this project, and trusting us with their art, and research.

This Issue centers Indigenous siblings, with clasped hands of women & lgbtq2s folks. We live in a patriarchal reality that challenges all of us with violence's that were not traditionally pressed upon our spirits. Many contributors, and reviewers feel the deep dissonance between the decolonial presence on the land today and the juxtaposed colonial reality. Part of decolonization is the daily understanding and revisiting of the balanced world; the understanding of the rhythms of the land itself that has informed our goings ons in our communities. The continuity of this amongst the violent realities is a regular grieving process, as the injustices are many. But this essence keeps us moving...

The Journal begins with Melissa Frost's work Theetrya' ts'a' gwiye'h'at choo / Copper and the Queen. As Melissa states this piece "symbolizes our relationship with the Crown, how we value copper and measure wealth". We decided to begin with this piece because of the incredible power it has in displaying truths. The aspect of these piece that is most memorable [for me] is the way in which the colonial value placed on copper is questioned, when in Indigenous societies the value of copper is seen through a different lens. I have been taught that copper assists us in keeping the truth, which is of high value in Indigenous societies. In Melissa's beautiful work, she embodies that truth; A beautiful way to start of this journal.

The first research paper of the issue is by Samantha Davis: The Effects of Colonialism of Indigenous Matriarchal Communities in Canada. This paper very directly highlights the relationship between Matriarchal societies, and the value and self-esteem of children. Davis highlights how Mothers and their children are intricately tied to healthy functioning Indigenous community and further articulates the value of the women in said communities' pre-colonization. Moving forward Davis points out how the Indian act serves to sever these relationships, and cause violence on Indigenous communities. This short essay directly states the effect by colonialism, and therefore the intent. Davis directly states the facts, and the harm caused as a result. We begin with this essay as it indicates the severity of violence on Indigenous women and that without addressing this violence Indigenous societies cannot be restored. A brave piece, and very poignant in the times we are in with the uncovering's of mass murder sites of children across the country.

The call for the issues Indigenous women face is not lost in this next submission, In Chera-lee's poem entitled Who I Am we feel her call to remember our essence. Chera-lee calls back who we are, where we belong and fierceness of spirt especially in the line "Raise up your feather now, powerful woman, embrace these medicines". We get a strong sense of the author in this poem, and a brave call to movement, and cycle breaking.

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From this poem we flow into the research paper by Lauren Petersen: Lii Medicine Gathering Medicine as Research Methodology. Lauren highlights the importance of self-location, and self-understanding in the placement of a researcher (herself specifically). She ties her Metisness into her proximity of research and methodology. This proximity is inter woven in her fierce way she has been thrust into leadership in this colonial reality. Paying close attention to the Michif language, she highlights step by step the importance of applying her teachings to her research methodology and responsibility to community.

From here we jump into Tawahum Bige's piece entitled Bury the Competition which speaks a great voice to the ashes, and concerns we all face in moving toward our dreams. If only our ancestors could silence our anxieties which screech out the past violence, but can't they?

The research paper by Laurie Schamber on Judicial Review Hearings and Reprieve from Breach Charges of Indigenous Offenders in the Yukon begins the non-Indigenous voice on Indigenous affected topics. Laurie Schamber brings a deeply legal perspective on the necessity of revisiting the extreme incarceration rate in the Yukon for incredibly minor offences. This paper highlights the inequality for offenses such as drinking in public, or failure to make a court date and how these small indiscretions create a lifelong relationship for Indigenous offenders with state prisons.

The piece intact spirit by Tawahum is an important poem to flow too after Schamber, as they move to the injustice of murdered Indigenous children. Particularly jarring in poetry, and even more horrific to live through and be murdered at the hands of priests and nuns in these institutions. Though these institutions very clearly have been built to break down the Indigenous presence on the land, Tawahum points out the impossibility at harming the spirit of the people, with these lines in particular: "They can burn their papers, bury our people but intact, never fractured".

In Thea Copeman-Hayes research paper a Colonial Contradiction: Unchanging Settler Colonial Conceptions of Identity and Property and Shifting Neoliberal Rationalities Ms. Copeman-Hayes breaks down the cultural roots of Indigenous and Western Societies as described by the infamous Vine Deloria Jr. Furthermore, Ms. Copeman-Hayes utilizes these concepts to break down the tenets of property laws, and privilege. A truly brave piece and important research which pinpoints the cornerstones of society, and shines a light on the fundamental conflicts between cultures. This piece flows nicely into Tawahum's atmospheric haze poem and finally taking on resurgence where by bold imagery of responsibility and destiny coincide. A great theme to leave this Issue and finish with the great Aisake's work which honors and shares stories of the interconnection of the land with Indigenous women and the MMIWG&2s. Conjoining the togetherness of community, and grief with those who were brutally murdered under the title of "Residential Schools" which were so clearly a genocide against children that is reverberated through community in today's world. Aisake pays a beautiful tribute to the spirits of the children, with her Rotuman community.

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Each piece submitted to the journal carried a thorough theme of addressing injustice, solutions, and Indigenous written pieces all had strong cultural ties and voice. The sense of purpose and direction is clear in Indigenous communities, there is much work to be done. To the transformation we all have a head in our journey and world. Let us carry forward with hope of tipping the scales back toward redistribution of wealth, resources, balance, and restoration of what was stolen through genocide because despite the theft, lies, secrets, and overt violence's Indigenous peoples and land continues on forever.