From the Editors

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For Native women there is no one definition of Native feminism; rather, there are multiple definitions and layers of what it means to do Native feminist analysis. However, as Native feminists, our dreams and goals overlap; we desire to open up spaces where generations of colonialism have silenced Native peoples about the status of their women and about the intersections of power and domination that have also shaped Native nations and gender relations.


The work of education is both global and local. To do the work, then, is to examine our practice, our relationships, and ourselves from various perspectives. Educators are challenged to think about the tapestries of our classrooms through countless lenses, examining patterns that reveal themselves in myriad contexts. We can, therefore, explore this metaphor by considering our classroom fabrics from different perspectives. Spread the tapestry of your class and imagine seeing it from a stepstool, then a rooftop, and then a helicopter. Imagine that tapestry bordered by the tapestries of other classrooms, until it becomes visible from space. Now envision how the tapestry might look close up, if you gazed on it while resting on your hands and knees. Next lie flat, and investigate the threads, and the frays of the threads, and see what they reveal. The tapestries of our classrooms are woven in our daily interactions; they are sensitive to heat, light, and tension. They can warm and protect us, and sometimes they can smother us.

Teachers are always toggling among such perspectives, getting to know our learners close up, one on one, as well as who they are when interacting in larger communities. We understand the need for flexibility as well as the benefits of loose and tight stitches. We know that strength comes from interconnectedness, and that when beauty is hard to see we need to first examine the limitations of our own vision.

When guest coeditors Eve Tuck and Karyn Recollet suggested an issue of EJ focused on Native feminist texts, we were delighted and inspired—delighted by the possibility of reflecting on these important aspects of secondary English education and inspired by the opportunity to extend (and share) our knowledge in these areas. Echoing the concepts that frame it, this issue presents particular perspectives on texts and the experiences that generated them, as well as the responses they engender. Texts are defined broadly, as film, poetry, treaties, and architecture. Texts are co-created and communally critiqued. And texts are oral, written, recorded, portrayed, and played.

We hope that you will love this issue as much as we do, and that you will read and reread it in ways that expand and contract the aperture of your practice. Analyze microscopically and gaze telescopically. As you begin this academic year, the themes in this issue may help you contemplate the tapestry of your classroom from unexpected perspectives that have been ignored by, or erased from, historically
dominant viewpoints. As Goeman and Denetdale note in the excerpt that precedes this editorial, Indigenous women's struggles are both disparate and common. They are particular, local struggles that can teach us about and lead us toward global liberation. So when the work of teaching makes you feel like you’re hanging on by a thread, inspect that thread and see what it might teach you. We wish you the courage to follow where it might lead. 

Work Cited

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That Girl

Inspired by Thomas Lux’s “The Swimming Pool”

I see her everyday
Her name is Ana
Alejandra
Estefanie
Mary
When she walks in a room
All the world tears at her
With their eyes
She was 13 the first time
It happened
Or 12
11
Maybe 10
She’s weary
And it’s happened
So often since
A car full of guys
Men
A car full of men
Idled next to her
“Damn girl, you look good!”
They tore at her with their eyes
She wavered, uncertain
They drew nearer

She backed away
She ran
Clutching her clothes to her
She ran home to tell her dad
To tell her mom
But she didn’t know how
She didn’t know what
She didn’t say
Anything
Next time
She ran faster, then faster
But the faster she ran
The more excited they became
Breasts heaving
Skirt lifting in the wind
She looked like
What they wanted her to be
So she started wearing less clothing
For their eyes to tear at
When she walks in a room
The boys at school turn
And stare
The teachers notice
She is trouble
It becomes her

—Kristin Gifford
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