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Land (Back) Acknowledgement

Author(s): Javney Mohr and Charissa Jaeger-Sanders

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Land (Back) Acknowledgement

Wherever you read this issue, you dwell on unceded, sacred, and traditional Indigenous territory. Likewise, this scholarly work is rooted in, produced on, and nourished by unceded, sacred, and traditional territories of Indigenous peoples and Nations. The Graduate Theological Union, the institutional home of the *Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology*, occupies the Land of the xučyun (Huichin), the original landscape of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone people, the successors of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County, who hold judicial rights and title to this Land.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have walked this Land¹ in a good way, harvesting foods and medicines and made good ceremony here. The abundance of the Lands and Waters extant today is due to the profound and sophisticated structures of governance, relationships of reciprocity, ethical codes of interdependence, and Traditional Knowledge systems by which Indigenous Peoples broadly and the Ohlone people specifically lived and live today.

For those who live upon Turtle Island (colonially named "North America"), this means we live on stolen Indigenous territory. Whether conscious of it or not, we each hold ethical

¹ Following the theoretical notion of language as a political strategy in anticolonial thought, the capitalization of words (or diminution of normatively uppercase words) is employed as an intentional anticolonial act; it is a linguistic rejection of colonialism. Colonialism de-sacralizes the more-than-human world and dehumanizes the native, the savage, the slave. Anticolonial thought, therefore, intentionally capitalizes those precise nouns and processes considered inferior by the white Western gaze.

responsibilities to the Nations and the people of the territory on which we live: *to abide by their sovereign jurisdiction and protocol alone - the original and natural Laws of the Land*. If you do not know in whose territory you reside, advocating towards the settler responsibility to dismantle the genocidal state project of colonialism by which the settler benefits, we encourage you to begin by learning about the Nations and peoples on whose traditional and unceded Land you reside: <https://native-land.ca/>.

As the founding ideological and material structure of the so-called United States and Canada, the settler-colonization of Turtle Island is both a historical and ongoing process – linked to settler psycho-social identity, nationalist pride, and (re)production of capitalism. Furthermore, the structure of colonialism occurs on a world scale, inculcating and maintaining Western imperialism today. While commenced by various European powers throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, the colonial impetus, its sociopathic imagination, and material implementation formed and forms the Western world. In the incisive words of Walter Rodney, "Europe is the creation of the Third World."² The existence and hegemony of the West, then as now, *takes place* via the theft of Indigenous land and labor, through the mass genocide of the people of the Global South and the Global South(s) within the Global North(s) - the "native, savage, and slave"³ as Tuck and Yang infer, or those located at the "extractive zones of the colonial difference,"⁴ as Gomez-Barris delineates. From Turtle Island to Palestine, the ever-

² Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2018.

³ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, 1-40.

⁴ Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1220n3w>.

expansionist continuation of colonialism is the ontological, epistemological, and material process of Western hegemony.

The disparities of material conditions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the imperial cores, the breaking down of planetary life systems, and the permanent de-development of the Global South, on whom Western wealth and geopolitical hegemony are derived, are due to the historical and ongoing theft and genocide of Indigenous lands, epistemologies, cosmologies, cultures, creative productions, and labor. However, "*wherever there is oppression, there is resistance*" is a core tenet at the heart of anticolonial thought. Indeed, despite the serial efforts of the "settlement" throughout history, anti-colonial and national liberation movements of the Third World unyieldingly uprise (*intifada*). Of greater historical force to the terroristic and terrorizing reality of life and Land under occupation and siege is the unyielding resistance of Indigenous people - historical resistance that spans the generations, armed and otherwise - and those in solidarity across the hemispheres. **No greater force exists than the just cause of liberation, the brilliance of Indigenous Knowledge systems, and love, the love of a people of a Land.**

Thus, as scholars Tuck and Yang clarify, decolonization is not a metaphor.⁵ Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life and futurity. It is the ethical imperative of non-Indigenous people living on Indigenous territory, structurally benefitting from genocidal occupation, to commit their lives to the abolition of the Western colonial world-order and see reparations in its place this generation. The human condition and moral imperative is to live by the jurisdiction and protocol of host Nations, enact the end of colonialism, and unequivocally support all

⁵ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 1-40.

Indigenous struggles for liberation in all their means, collectively bringing about a just, flourishing, and decolonized world – from Wet'suwet'en to Palestine, Lebanon to Venezuela, and Burkina Faso to Cuba.

The *BJRT* and this Special Issue aim to function as a concrete epistemic contribution to that work of revolt, revolution, and love. As the *Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology* and the Graduate Theological Union community, we stand in unequivocal support of all Indigenous people and people of the Global South fighting for self-determination, national liberation, and global decolonization by all means.