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A Note from the Editors

Lydia Macy
Macalester College, lmacy@macalester.edu

G. Bender
Macalester College, gbender@macalester.edu

Louie Siegel
Macalester College, lsiegel@macalester.edu

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A Note from the Editors

Lydia Macy, G. Bender, Louie Siegel

Grief and outrage have defined the course of our Macalester experiences. For many of us, our classes started via zoom, behind screens in the isolation of our single dorm rooms. The COVID-19 Pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and the construction of Line 3 had either just occurred or were actively unfolding as many of us arrived for our first year, defining the cultural landscape of Macalester College and Minnesota at large. Our task was to find our place and role in dealing with these local and global crises while simultaneously trying to fulfill our academic and personal responsibilities.

There was a profound dissonance between our experience in college classes and the realities that were unfolding just a few miles away from campus. Participating in protests against police violence and engaging with mutual aid networks felt incompatible with keeping up with Macalester's status quo and business-as-usual culture. It was in the midst of all of this madness that we found our way to the American Studies department. More than any other discipline, American Studies has provided a place for us to grapple with and grow our understandings of how to confront the systems of oppression that this country continues to uphold. It was a place where we could draw upon Ruth Willson Gilmore and Angela Davis's scholarship and activism to see that we do not need to abandon our activism for scholarship, but rather that our theory and praxis could support each other in creating a more just world.

American Studies has been a project of contextualizing our experiences and the tragedies that we have witnessed on a daily basis. All of this violence is deeply connected and carried out by an American Empire lusting for power and profit at any cost. As we demonstrate in our papers, which cover a vast array of topics, there are a myriad of mechanisms that work together to uphold the American Empire. Thus came the title of our tapestry journal: "Bury the Empire: Cultivating Resistance." Our title points you, the reader, to the common threads that weave our volume of Tapestries together: the interconnectedness of all systems of supremacy and the ongoing legacies of liberation work that have long resisted these looming systems. We owe our continued hope and

fight for liberation to those who came before us and paved the way to where we are now, giving us a roadmap to imagine a truly just world into existence. We chose a title that draws upon land-based and agricultural metaphors to allude to our appreciation of the teachings of the natural world, about cycles of death, renewal and resilience. Check out Sofia's article, "It's in the Weeds: 'Pesky' Plants as Teachers in Imagining Decolonial Futures" for more analysis of these metaphors.

Specifically during this semester, we are bearing witness to the Israeli government's ongoing genocide¹² of the Palestinian people, and many of us have been involved in solidarity work with the fight for a permanent ceasefire and an end to Israeli occupation. Our responsibility to fight for the liberation of Palestinians has been made abundantly clear to us as the United State's involvement and support of the Israeli Occupation has become increasingly lethal. The United States is all too involved: since World War II, we have given \$260 billion in military and economic assistance to a government³ that, since October 7th alone, has murdered almost 20,000 Palestinians as of December 19th. This number devastatingly includes nearly 8,000 children.⁴

Witnessing a U.S. backed genocide while we write our culminating papers has disillusioned us even more to the violent functions of the American Empire and made us question our own roles in complicity and resistance. As stated above, attending an academic institution can result in great levels of dissonance. However, this semester, many of us have found our papers to be places to explore our intellectual understandings of this genocide and its connection to all other systems of violence and supremacy within and beyond the United States. We have found meaning and pathways forward in our research, which is what academia should ultimately be about. We have supported each other in and out of the classroom, both on our papers and with processing the noise of the world. We have shown up to marches and rallies together and supported each other's organizing efforts. Making it to the finish line of this

¹Niamh Kennedy and Richard Roth, "UN Experts Warn of 'Genocide in the Making' in Gaza. Israel Condemns the Statement," CNN, November 18, 2023, https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-17-23/h_5f54936fa763f69532c73c0613a541a6.

²"Former ICC Chief Prosecutor: Israel's Siege of Gaza Is a 'Genocide,'" Al Jazeera, December 1, 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/upfront/2023/12/1/former-icc-chief-prosecutor-israels-siege-of-gaza-is-a-genocide>

³Christopher Wolf, "How Much Aid Does The U.S. Give To Israel?," U.S News, October 10, 2023,

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2023-10-10/how-much-aid-does-the-u-s-give-to-israel>.

⁴AJLabs, "Israel-Gaza War In Maps and Charts: Live Tracker," Al Jazeera, December 15, 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>.

semester and publishing this journal once seemed impossible, but here we are, made better by the work we have done in community with each other. Our journal is a tapestry in the truest sense of the word. Each article and paragraph is a thread that has been woven together creating a full and cohesive picture, not necessarily of all that makes up the American Empire and the resistance to it, but of our unique passions, interests and identities.

We owe an immense amount of gratitude to the people who brought us to the finish line. Thank you to the small but mighty group of American Studies Professors for their invaluable mentorship and guidance, getting us through the tough moments with love and laughter. Thank you to Dave Collins and LouAnne Terveer for their assistance in helping us publish our capstone papers to the worldwide web. Additionally, many thanks to the numerous professors beyond our department for imparting their knowledge and wisdom through their classes and office hours.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank our wonderful Professor Duchess Harris for guiding us through the collaborative process of creating this journal and rooting for us the whole way. We are honored to be continuing the legacy of American Studies' open access journal, *Tapestries: Interwoven voices of local and global identities*. This annual publication of student work in an open access journal speaks to the department's values of accessible scholarship and amplification of student voices.

Thank you for taking the time to read our work. We hope our words inspire you to pick up the shovel, scoop up some dirt, and toss it on the grave of the American Empire.

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