



Editors' Introduction

On Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty in a Chronically Mobile World

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Introduction

These are strange times to write about migration, anti-racism and Indigenous sovereignty. The world has long swung to an authoritarianism of disturbing proportions. As this special issue goes to press, we are swimming in and against a virus that has robbed more than one million lives globally, infected more than 82 million (Johns Hopkins University & Medicine, n.d.), and thrown countless into painstaking and enduring uncertainties, largely in authoritarian regimes, but generally as well. Populist nativism and anti-immigrant xenophobia casting othered bodies and cultures as diseased threats to nations are unapologetic and rampant (Chatterjee, 2020; Paradkar, 2020; CCNC-SJ, 2020). Infections, hospitalizations and deaths are disproportionately affecting racialized and Black populations – especially those who are poor – the working class and the elderly, and risking Indigenous peoples by adding to existing conditions of food insecurity, lack of sanitation and essential services (Gordon et al., 2020; United Nations, 2020). Nevertheless, grossly obscene profiteering off of alienation, immobility and illnesses envelop us instead of visions and concrete actions for a socially just recovery (de Genova, 2020; Hemingway & Rozworski, 2020; Barnea, 2020). In the 30th year of Oka crisis, military aggression on Indigenous communities for the pursuit of land, resources and profits remains relentless (see Ahmed, 2020; Robinson & Shaker, 2020; Unist'ot'en, 2020; Yellowhead Institute, 2020), as does police violence against Black and Indigenous peoples. As deaths, degradation and deprivation daily assault our sense of justice we indeed are grappling with “cruelty fatigue” even as the

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media, mental health and wellness industries insist on it being pandemic fatigue (Bannerji, 2020).

And yet, neither the threats of xenophobic authoritarianism or the shadows of a once in a century public health crisis could diminish the burst of vibrant popular movements re-igniting streets in North America, for Black lives, Indigenous land rights, justice for migrant workers, and non-status peoples and detainees criminalized by carceral states (Grattan, 2020; Migrant Rights Network, 2020; see also, Abolition, n.d.; Paradakar, 2020; Scholar Strike Canada, 2020a). Globally, from the new constitutional referendum in Chile to farmers protesting neoliberal policies deepening poverty, hunger and rising farmer suicides in India, boundary pushing critiques of state machineries of exploitation, along with carefully thought-out acts of care and solidarity, send an urgent message that for those desiring a justice rich society, the stakes are really high. This is not meant to celebrate a romantic narrative of triumph of humankind over a virus and capital, especially as we witness the fierce return of the social and economic status quo. After all, “the way we respond to the crisis,” Bayo Akomolafe (2020) writes, “is part of the crisis.” Clearly however, these circumstances also make it just the right times to be writing about migrant, anti-racist and Indigenous justice.

This special issue invited anti-racist scholars, educators, and activists to share how they conceptualize Indigenous justice and freedom in a world that is also “chronically mobile and routinely displaced” (Malkii, 1992, p. 24). What, we ask, are the theoretical, epistemological and methodological concerns in anti-racism with regards to the political citizenship of migrants, refugees and other displaced populations on occupied lands? Do their conceptualizations of justice explicitly engage Indigenous rights? Which questions are urgent and how is that urgency articulated? Which are relegated to the background? What are the discomforts and disagreements?

It’s been more than a decade since, in the Canadian context, Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua (2005) signaled the necessity for more research on conflicts and collaborations between Indigenous and anti-racist justice. Anti-racist and progressive struggles, they contended, are predicated on Indigenous erasure; indeed, “critical race and postcolonial theory... posit people of colour as innocent... [and not] settlers on stolen lands” (Lawrence & Dua, 2005, p. 126), and to correct this “antiracist complicity,” “theorists must begin to think about their personal stake in this struggle, and about where they are going to situate themselves” (p. 126).¹ In a similar vein, but

¹ For subsequent nuancing of this argument, see Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Lawrence, et al., 2020; Dharamoon, 2014; Jafri, 2012; Mathur et al., 2011; Phung, 2011, Sehdev, 2011; and more recently, Jean Kim, 2020; Nhu Le, 2019; Patel, 2016; Upadhyay, 2019, for conversations within and between racialized scholars about complicity and differential subject positions. On the other hand, see Sharma & Wright, 2008; Sharma, 2020, for consistent challenges to the framework of complicity and complicit racialized subjects. The literature we engage and refer to largely comes from USA and Canada. However, as a number of contributions suggest, similar conversations are happening across various sites.

with an exemplary engagement with postcolonial and subaltern studies, Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd (2011, p. xix) asked whether “arrivants and other people forced to move through empire” can exercise their democratic justice claims without pushing Indigenous dispossession “toward a vanishing point” (p. 3).² In critical Black studies on the other hand, Tiffany King (2014, 2016), Tiya Miles and Sharon Holland (2006), Christina Sharpe (2016), Rachel Zellars (this issue) and other scholars have complicated Black lives in the Americas away from histories and discourses of colonization, conquest and settlement, specifically focusing on the “abjection” of Black bodies from “the realm of the human” (Sharpe, 2016, p. 14), and thereby also exploding the category of the laboring subject as the harbinger of freedom and justice.

The incommensurabilities of anti-racist and Indigenous justice and politics are many. Jodi Byrd (2011, p. xvii) offers an expansive account. While written in the context of the US empire, Byrd’s concern is “much larger”:

American studies, queer studies, postcolonial studies, American Indian studies, and area studies have all attempted to apprehend injury and redress, melancholy and grief that exist in the distances and sutures of state recognitions and belongings... As liberal multicultural settler colonialism attempts to flex the exceptions and exclusions that first constituted the United States to now provisionally include those people othered and objected from the nation-state’s origins, it instead creates a cacophony of moral claims that help to deflect progressive and transformative activism from dismantling the ongoing conditions of colonialism that continue to make the United States a desired state formation within which to be included. That cacophony of competing struggles for hegemony within and outside of institutions of power, no matter how those struggles might challenge the state through loci of race, class, gender, and sexuality, serves to misdirect and cloud attention from the underlying structures of settler colonialism that made the United States possible as oppressor in the first place. As a result, the cacophony produced through US colonialism and imperialism domestically and abroad often coerces struggles for social justice for queers, racial minorities, and immigrants into complicity with settler colonialism. (Byrd, 2011, p. xxxviii)

Albeit emerging in the wake of liberal democratic nation states, Byrd’s concern that a “cacophony of competing struggles” “misdirects” from the primary violence of settlement can only be brushed aside by anti-racist scholars of migration and mobility at our own peril; even more so, as Byrd also acknowledges that,

it is all too easy ... to accuse diasporic migrants, queers and people of color for participating in and benefiting from indigenous loss of lands, cultures and lives and subsequently to position indigenous otherness as abject and all other Others

² Drawing on Camau Brathwaite’s *Arrivant* trilogy, Byrd uses this term “to signify those people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonization of the “New World” (2011, p. xix). All references to the notion of “arrival” in this piece are credited to Byrd.

as part of the problem, as if they could always consent to or refuse such positions or consequences of history. (Byrd, 2011, p. xxxix).

Along this line of thought, Byrd's recent work articulates the indivisibility of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism in the formation of the American empire (Byrd, 2019). To make various arrivals legible within the framework of settler colonialism, they bring Indigenous phenomenologies and epistemologies into conversation with critical theory, and remain, along with Glen Coulthard (2013, 2014a, 2014b; Podur, 2015; Walia, 2015), Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (2016; Dixon, 2006), Eve Tuck & Wayne Yang (2012), and a growing body of critical anti-racist scholarship (some of which we cite above and others we continue to come back to throughout this essay), a major influence on how we envision the relationship between anti-racist and Indigenous justice.

We start the following section by placing ourselves and this work at the intersections of anti-racist and Indigenous justice. We understand the way we formulate the special issue activates a number of broad categories, most notably, anti-racism, migration and mobility, and Indigeneity on the one hand, and the respective subject positions, such as Indigenous, immigrant, racialized, Black, etc., on the other. We also mobilize notions such as anti-racist, migrant (we tend to use these two interchangeably) and Indigenous justice and politics. Each of these encapsulates multiple meanings and conceptual trajectories. As such, this section also offers clarity and addresses concerns over some necessary generalizations, either by placing them within relevant social and political phenomena and literature, or by offering explanations or definitions we chose to work with. We follow this with an outline of the thematic organization of the special issue. We conclude with a sense of appreciation and wonder about where anti-racist scholarship currently stands, and what needs to shift or re-orient in anti-racist engagement with Indigenous justice. We also propose further and deepened conversations across theoretical and epistemological frameworks.

Floating in the Diaspora: Situating Ourselves and this Work

Soma

I envisioned this special issue as a freshly minted Assistant Professor, coming out of a doctoral project exploring the devaluation of skilled immigrants' labour in relation to post-liberalization Canadian nationalism. During the six years of my doctoral study, I was asked many times about how my project on immigration, labour and nation building sits in relation to Indigenous self-determination. Indeed, this question was an absent presence in my political and intellectual horizon, a problem of epistemology as I now understand. As such, examining the constitutive relations between immigrants' economic

integration – the cornerstone of my doctoral work – and Indigenous colonization became “a core political and ethical task” for me (Chatterjee, 2018a, pp. 1-2).³

Being an immigrant researcher and educator of migration and nationalism in an era of recognition and reconciliation, I also came to appreciate, is a politically charged position. I was alerted to the troubling separation between anti-racist studies of migration, Indigenous and settler colonial studies while teaching in Canada, and in social work where instrumental concerns of reconciliation and Indigenization outshone a necessary focus on the largest ethico-political project of decolonial freedom that was historically conceptualized as international and anti-empire (see Getachew, 2020).⁴ As such, teaching, discussing and thinking about migrant and Indigenous justice relationally were hard (see Chatterjee, 2018b). In sync with the operations of the neoliberal academic industry, conversations were also taking place in closed circles of scholars, communities, activist and disciplinary networks, not always mutually accessible. This special issue for me was an effort to partake in and also encourage intersectional conversations, contestations and movements that were emerging across multiple disciplinary and theoretical homes, embarked on with the realization, particularly following my own problematic generalization of racialized labour in an article I wrote, that this is work I could not or should not do on my own. I was thankful when Tania agreed to join me.

Tania

As a Marxist, I had a theoretical understanding of the connections between my struggles and those of Indigenous, Black and other minoritized and oppressed peoples. What I had an incomplete understanding of was how divided we are and how unequal we are amongst ourselves. This recognition has deepened through my engagement in feminist debates and my participation in anti-racist activism in Toronto, a city I have lived in for most of my life. Pulling together a coalition among South Asians to fight “Paki bashing” in the mid-70s was an accomplishment, although contested in a post-9/11 Islamophobic world. In the mid 1980s, I was part of a coalition which brought together Indigenous, Black and Asian women in fighting racism and sexism in Ontario. Looking back today, some might acknowledge

³ All the while during this time of reckoning, decades of aggressive neoliberalization of economic and social spheres in India (where I come from) was providing an ever-fertile ground for what is currently a deeply fascist government, socially and politically evicting all but caste Hindus from the geopolitical territory and the idea of India. Having witnessed postcolonial India’s spiraling down into anti-Muslim xenophobia and venomous hatred against anything and anyone deemed “foreign” made me thoughtful about our conceptualization of nation state decolonization.

⁴ For example, education for reconciliation appeared much more compelling for a profession anxious to reconcile its long history of structural violence against Indigenous communities.

the coalition as a nascent recognition of our common struggles and a call to action, but also a failure to question what “equity” meant to Indigenous peoples and thus an assumption of sameness and of innocence.⁵ I was part of interesting debates in the pages of feminist journals around “whose Canada is it?” (Das Gupta & Iacovetta, 2000), whether we (immigrant women) should claim our rights as “nation-builders” (Ng & Das Gupta, 1981), and activist discourses around claiming our rights as “Canadians” or as “immigrant women.” While we were busy pointing out racism and racial difference among women, we were incognizant of our own anti-Black racism and our role within settler colonialism. Later, at York University, colleagues were avid proponents of a degree program that brought together Indigenous Studies along with Race, Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora Studies, albeit with mixed success. When Soma presented an opportunity to delve into these and other related questions in this special issue, I was eager to participate and thankful for the invitation to do so.

This is the personal, professional and intellectual climate within which this special issue was conceived. As mentioned above, we were thoughtful of the weight of the subject and the rich conceptual register it invokes. Some of these concepts, for example, sovereignty, migration and mobility, anti-racism/anti-racist and racialized subject and Black, Indigenous, carry marks of long and violent histories and complicated debates. As anti-racist scholars with diasporic ethos, we struggle for example with the limits of sovereignty, or territorial decolonization (Getachew, 2020; Scott, 2004; Sharma, 2020). And yet, in a project such as this where scholars were specifically invited to reflect on their engagement with Indigenous justice, sovereignty – especially in its clash with migration and mobility – demands careful attention. We looked toward Thomas King (2012) who sees no way around talking about sovereignty when it comes to Indigenous issues in North America, a range of scholarship on the varied conceptualizations of sovereignty (see Brown, 2018, for a useful review; see also Lyons, 2015), and also (again) Jodi Byrd (2011, p. xvi) who, building on the Chickasaw migration story, opens up the notion of sovereignty beyond its western canonical conceptualization, proposing that sovereignty “is found in diplomacy and disagreement, through relation, kinship, and intimacy... [and] in an act of interpretation.” In this spirit, we carried our focus on migration and mobility with a commitment to placing it in a dynamic relation with Indigenous sovereignty.

Similarly, it is insincere to talk about migration or migrants without nuances. After all, we live in a world where thousands perish trying to cross borders (The Migrant Files, n.d.); a world where “borders never leave [some] alone” while others “traverse them practically at will and with very little thought” (Sharma, 2006, p. 4). This dynamic of ceremonious welcome and

⁵ Decades later, Nicole Penak, then Indigenous Caucus chair at York University, speaking on a panel organized by the Race Equity Caucus of YUFA clarified that Indigenous peoples are not an equity seeking group in the way that racialized groups, women and people with disabilities are. I thank her for that simple truth.

precarious incorporation is a key technology for maintaining racialized class relations within the borders of major western jurisdictions.⁶ As such, we consider migration both as state engineered formal pathways, typically (but not always) leading to less precarious immigrant subjects, and the informal paths to sealed doors, fortress like nation states, “illegal”izing and endangering migrant subjects, and further cheapening their labour. Nothing underscored migration and migrant labour as key planks of settler nation building with more clarity than the Covid-19 pandemic. While global migration indeed came to a standstill, the reliance of real estate and construction boom on transnational mobility, and the absolutely crucial role of migrant workers in food production, supply and delivery, meat packing, retail services, warehouses, transportation, child and elder care, etc., lay exposed (Agopsowicz, 2020; Das Gupta, 2020). Thus, even as the pandemic challenged a fundamental assumption we started this work with – that the world is chronically mobile – questions of mobility and the legislative power of the nation state over movement, we suggest, remain more pressing than ever.⁷

Similar clarity, we understand, is needed with regard to our references to Indigeneity and Indigenous. There are risks in working with a category as broad as Indigenous, given there are hundreds of Indigenous nations in the continent of North America alone, with vastly different treaty relationships, and historic and ongoing negotiations for sovereign access over land and resources. However, in a project such as this Indigeneity was conceptualized in relation to migration and mobility. This is not to cast Indigenous peoples as essentially spatially rooted but to pay heed to the central significance of land and land-based relations in Indigenous epistemologies, more so in the context of migration and settlement being key building blocks of settler colonial state structures of legitimation. A number of contributors, as we discuss below, focused on this relational dynamic as being at the centre of their critical inquiries.

Finally, we were conscious also about how we understand and define anti-racist and Indigenous scholarship, both in their unique focus on immigrants’

⁶ A number of observations from Canada (where we work) are instructive here. For example, the federal government announced a record high immigration level as crucial for economic recovery (Keung, 2020). In the early days of the pandemic, there was an outcry from growers (employers of the migrants who come under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, Farm Worker Program and the Low Skilled Agricultural Worker Program), who considered border closure a threat to food security, indeed a threat to the nation, even while the workers’ exploitations exacerbated under the pandemic (Scholar Strike Canada, 2020b). While ordinary people’s mobility was drastically restricted or threatened, elite migrants (including some postsecondary international students whose revenue generating potential Canada is increasingly dependent on), continue to travel and move their capital around for investment purposes (Springer, 2020), including into oil pipelines on unceded lands.

⁷ Alex Aleinikoff, the director of New York-based Zolberg Institute for Migration and Mobility, wrote: “with the ability to move about freely sharply curtailed in nearly every country in the world, immigration scholars will need to think hard about a fundamental assumption of the field: that we are living in an ‘age of mobility’” (Aleinikoff, 2020).

civil rights and sovereignty respectively, and their distinction from and intersections with anti-capitalist (Marxist) scholarship, especially in the earlier years of anti-colonial movements. We understand each body of scholarship to have been committed to vastly different political projects, and are aware also of recent critiques of racism being conflated with colonialism.⁸ Following from these deliberations, our references to racialized, diasporic, Black, and Indigenous subjects at various points in this editorial are purposely non-specific, but never unthought. “Terminology,” Thomas King (2012, p. xiii) writes with his usual and piercing precision, “is always a rascal.” We also believe that terms come to be through elisions, erasures and essentialisms. This project aimed to continue and strengthen the work of thinking through the relations between Indigenous and various arrivant subjectivities. We take responsibility for any confusion and acknowledge multiple specificities that remain unaddressed in this work.

We bring you a collection of 10 articles, five dispatches, one book review and a creative intervention, most from self-identified racialized and Indigenous scholars, all engaged in thinking about relational dynamics of migration and Indigenous sovereignty. Disciplined readers looking to deepen their understanding of one clear theme could be disappointed. Although rooted in the conversations in Canadian anti-racist scholarship (another limitation we are working with and in), contributors come from and engage with various sites where similar questions are being asked, and similar dynamics are underway, namely but not exclusively Australia, New Zealand, The Pacific Islands and parts of the postcolonial South, including Latin America. We also fostered a resolutely interdisciplinary stance, so the works presented are from widely diverse disciplines, and social, political and epistemic locations. Archives are drawn from local institutional and transnational histories, personal narratives and reflections, existing literature, disciplinary discourses, state policy and non-profit initiatives, teaching practices and international humanitarian crises. The writings as well are distinct – including in regard to language, semantics, style, etc. – as vehicles for ethics and politics. As such, various conventions are applied to naming places, identifying scholars, and acknowledging authors’ own social locations on the lands or countries they are working from. As editors, we did not make any conscious effort to smooth over or standardize this unevenness, but rather let contributors attend to the demands of the subject as per their own political convictions and ethical compass.

The following section walks through this rich and varied array of works, organized according to the themes of “*Space, Place, the Nation and the Postcolonial*,” “*Internationalizing and Indigenizing in Settler Nation Building*,” and “*Being in Just Relations or Solidarity*.”

⁸ See Jodi Byrd (2011 & 2019) on this; see Cheryl Harris (2019) for an insightful discussion of and challenge to the analytical separation between racism, colonialism and sovereignty. We gesture toward this as literature we have come across in the process of working on this collection, although its intricacies remain outside of the scope of this introductory essay.

Indigenous Sovereignty in a Chronically Mobile World: Critical Perspectives from Anti-racist Scholars of Migration and Mobility

In the parlance of knowledge economy, close to two years dedicated to a special issue seems sacrilegious, but we carried on with the faith that anything worthwhile takes time. Little did we know that 2020 would further derail and delay editorial work. The time it took to summarize works we read and discussed so many times also came as an interesting surprise, teaching us how the labour of selecting, reading and editing works is vastly different than that of placing them within an overarching vision (see Tuck & Yang, 2018, for beautiful discussion of the rewards and challenges of such work). This is not to say that we were keen to categorize the contributions. Such an act, instead, goes against our commitment to break the silos between theoretical, political and epistemic orientations, an issue we come back to at the end. The themes that follow are porous also, making the works fall under multiple themes. In brief, while we do present a thematic organization below this is not a reflection of our understanding of the respective contribution made by each author.

Theorizing Space, Place, Nation and the Postcolonial

We invited anti-racist scholars of migration and mobility to think through how they are grappling with Indigenous self-determination in their respective areas of research, practice, scholarship. Not surprisingly, the dynamics of place and space, commitment to understanding one's place on Indigenous lands, and the allied questions of place or nation, space, and nation state freedom were actively and conscientiously engaged.

Madelaine Cahuas and *Alexandra Matute* engage women and non-binary Black/Afro-Latinx, Indigenous and Brown Latinx community workers in the city of Toronto who practice a "way of being in place" (in the absence of any other mode of legal recognition than from the Canadian state) that nevertheless refuses the standard citizenship label of "proud Canadians." Theirs is an important challenge to the deeply entrenched desires for economic settlement and multicultural citizenship that circumscribe justice and politics for many racialized immigrants, bringing migrant and anti-racist justice into deep and disturbing tensions with Indigenous sovereignty. This politics of refusal involves actively creating spaces for decolonial conversations (e.g., *Tales from the South*, an initiative of PODER & Working Women's Community Centre), both on the everyday manifestations of and contestations to settler colonialism in Canada, and the racial, colonial hierarchies imposed by "mejorando la raza" (notion of improving the race) that "haunts" the Latinx diaspora. *Abdelfettah Elkchirid*, *Anh Ngo* and *Martha Kuwee Kumsa* speak from varied locations within the circuits of empire, namely Ethiopia, Morocco & Vietnam. Their placelessness, which

Elkchirid articulates as “deep in my soul and deep in my body” is at the centre of diasporic experience, allowing critical empathy with the project of Indigenous decolonization, while also troubling belonging, especially from within a liberal, Eurocentric, inclusionary framework based on human rights. While inflected with the practices and pedagogical concerns in social work (particularly following the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), they highlight a spatial dynamic frequently neglected in the deeply nationally-demarcated discipline. Working from within the established analytic of settler colonialism as a regime that destroys to replace, *Karen Soldatic* articulates how Indigenous and migrant population management in Australia is a biopolitical exercise. Forefronting apparently disparate sites – governing of Indigenous peoples via statistical and income management regimes, migrant detention practices, and migrant labour employed in disability care work with Indigenous peoples – that are entangled by processes of “deep colonization” (Deborah Bird Rose, 1999, in *Soldatic*, this issue), their article is a necessary step toward bringing migration and critical disability studies into conversation with Indigenous sovereignty. *Paloma Villegas, Patricia Landolt* and their co-authors bring us close to “home” to Scarborough (a racially and ethnically diverse neighbourhood in Ontario) to demonstrate convergent and divergent narration of migrant and Indigenous presence. Informed by the interdisciplinary workshop “Crossing Scarborough,” their article engages assemblage methodology and archival portraits by *Victoria Freeman, Joe Hermer, Ranu Basu* and *Bojana Vidakenic* to demonstrate the dynamic of invisibilization and hypervisibilization regulating migrant and Indigenous presence in Scarborough. Their work is productively read alongside *Soldatic* who mobilizes the notion of “circularity” to underscore how the Australian settler colony reproduces itself through strategic presence (e.g., presentation of statistical data), absence (e.g., placing disability out of sight, banishing) and erasure (e.g., practices of eugenics and other forms of reproductive control) of the category of disability, and creating impairment in the process of eliminating it. Both offer crucial reminders that settler colonialism is not an abstraction; rather the state and its institutions of legitimation are its arbiters. *Jaspreet Ranauta* draws on the modernity/coloniality framework to think through the transnational imperial linkages informing migration from Indian British canal colonies in Punjab to British Columbia, Canada, and the possibilities of telling these migration stories without silencing Indigenous histories and presence. *Sedef Arat-Koc* expands our understanding of why refugee protection and broader international relations should be brought into conversation with Indigenous decolonization as they propose that the development of a critical refugee studies requires conversations with Indigenous Studies, especially in regard to place-based politics, land loss and planetary alternatives. In a vastly different challenge to place and land-based politics, *Nandita Sharma* locates the very notion of Indigeneity as an imperial construct rooted in autochthony. Drawing on examples from disparate sites

and asynchronous times – e.g., the British imperial rule in India, the Rwandan genocide, and the more recent crisis facing the Rohingya peoples in Myanmar – Sharma investigates “the intersection of claims of autochthony with the hegemonic global system of national sovereignty” that have and continue to fuel deadly conflicts. These are grounds on which they question “the hegemonic association of national territorial sovereignty with decolonization.”

Internationalizing and Indigenizing in Settler Nation Building

A smaller cluster of articles and dispatches draws attention to the growing nexus between migration and internationalization of higher education in settler colonies. Internationalization, currently a key source of revenue for resource-strapped higher education, sits in curious but productive contradiction to Indigenizing higher education (something we are witnessing in Canada as we write). From Aotearoa New Zealand, *Vivienne Anderson* and Maori scholar *Zoe Bristowe* posit internationalization of higher education as a key instrument of settler colonial nation building in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Critiquing internationalization’s foci on trade relations and human capital, they support a place-based ethic of care reaching back to mātauranga Māori and Oceanic epistemologies that predate colonialism. At the same time however, internationalization creates opportunities for Indigenous and diasporic subjects to be in conversation. Moana (Pacific Islander) writer *Kabini Sanga* and *Martyn Reynolds* transmit a dispatch about one such example, Leadership Pacific, a space in which Moana academic migrants recreate “tok stori” (a Melanesian form of communication) or “storying” sessions inculcating alternative pedagogies of relationality and dialogic leadership. *Adrian Downey*, a Mi’kmaq scholar from Nova Scotia, Canada, in a related vein, reflects on what they call “two constants” in their life: conversations with “recent settlers” and “a journey to understand what it means to be Mi’kmaq in the modern world.” *Bianca Gomez*, an international doctoral student in Toronto, Canada, contributes a dispatch about being an aspiring permanent resident, and simultaneously a precarious and deportable racialized temporary worker-student whose labour conditions are stringently monitored by the state. Problematizing the settler-Indigenous binary, *Gomez* wonders about their agency in movements for decolonization.

Being in Just Relations or Solidarity

As this project was unfolding there was a groundswell of solidarity in the form of collective action against intense police brutality directed at Indigenous and Black communities, a litany of Black deaths in police encounters, and in defense of Indigenous land rights. We feel a sense of deep

gratitude for the fantastic and honest actions and conversations on solidarity between Black, Indigenous and other racialized populations. Indeed, the tensions and contradictions within various projects of justice, which Black studies scholar Andrea Davis (Lawrence et al., 2020) calls “competitive citizenship,” in which justice becomes a zero-sum game so “one can gain only when another loses,” was foundational to the special issue. It was heartbreaking and inspiring at the same time to witness the urgency and challenges of solidarity becoming the political conversation of our times and also a theme occupying a number of contributions.

The question of theorizing one’s place as anti-racist feminist on an occupied land, *Elaine Coburn* argues, invites engagement with the rich body of Indigenous women’s scholarship. In a rigorous review of Indigenous feminist thought from 1985 to date, Coburn identifies the themes of “resilience”, “resistance” and “resurgence”, each of which brings Indigenous feminists into complicated relationships of solidarity with anti-racist feminists. Such acts of engagement, the author attests, should “aim to build relationships with anti-racist feminisms on lands that sustain us all” and comes with the responsibility to not “flatten out a wide range of voices... into a monolithic pan-Indigenous bloc.” Indigenous solidarity for detained refugees has served as a powerful interrogation of whose lands refugees are excluded from. Centering on “the logics and histories of settler colonial statism” in such diverse places as Brazil, Palestine, Kashmir, USA and Canada, *Harshita Yalamarty’s* dispatch points out the utility of borders, walls, identity documents and travel bans in land appropriation. They discuss how “asserting the sovereignty of Indigenous nations as opposed to colonial borders” in such slogans as “no ban on stolen land” (i.e., denouncing the ban against Muslim majority countries under Donald Trump), and the Indigenous passports issued for refugees detained by the Australian state in Papua, New Guinea, ground migrant and refugee justice in Indigenous sovereignty. Similarly, scaffolding their article with “taike” – a Punjabi term denoting kinship – *Ranauta* writes to forge critical kinship pathways based on “shared and interwoven colonial histories of oppression and power,” highlighting in particular how the Punjabi diasporic presence and economic activities in the Pacific Northwest have been entangled with British colonial projects in India and Canada. Different locales within the web of empire (see *Elkchirid, Ngo & Kumsa*, who are also grappling with this) are threaded together, an analytical stance crucial in understanding the challenges and promises of solidarity. *Cahuas and Matute* suggest that solidarity could emerge through a “de-colonial politic of belonging” evident among working class Latinx community members, refugees and exiles, who subscribe to a “citizenship of convenience” or a refusal (see *Simpson, 2014*) of what Davis in a 2020 conversation with *Bonita Lawrence* called “the terms offered to us by the nation,” indicating a disruption (see *Dhamoon, 2013*) to the politics of incorporation into settler-colonial logic. *Amar Bhatia*, a professor of law, builds on their experience of bringing Indigenous legal systems and treaties

into courses on immigration and refugee law. Their dispatch focuses on the need to “translate” ideas about Indigenous legal systems into activism and teaching, while cautioning about the “violence” of superficial incorporation.

A key pillar of solidarity thinking is confronting uncomfortable truths (see Lawrence & Davis, 2020; Lawrence et al., 2020), or as Jodi Byrd (2019, p. 207) suggests in the context of analytically centering Blackness and Indigeneity, to not glance away, to not make “too easy gestures of presumed affiliation and equivalency.” Following that route and building on Tiffany King’s call to think through the place of Black discourse of conquest in contemporary discussions of genocide and settler colonialism, *Rachel Zellars* explores the “unthought”: the well-rooted “‘bare life’ of anti-blackness in our relations.” Positioning Black struggles on Turtle Island within an abolitionist framework, Zellars invites us to grapple with “antagonisms of history,” akin to Robert Warrior’s invitation to “pick up the trail” of the shared history of “black people and Indian people” (2006, pp. 322-323), as crucial to imagine a way of living “otherwise.”⁹ Sedef Arat-Koc also engages liberatory Indigenous scholarship on place-based sovereignty in their visioning for critical refugee studies, while also cautioning readers against any guarantee of solidarity between refugee and Indigenous struggles. In their untitled creative intervention, *Andile Gosine* “stitches together” the exploitation of the Caribbean diaspora and First People’s systematic displacement since the onset of colonization through a seamless network of images invoking shipwreck, the South Asian cultural practice of lighting deeyas, and First Nations beadwork. The “shared wreckage” of colonization, they say, entwines the “past, present and futures” of these communities. In their review of Manu Karuka’s book *Empire’s Tracks*, *Asmita Bhutani*, a doctoral student from Toronto offers an example of one such historic entanglement: between Chinese railroad workers and the Cheyenne, Pawnee & Lakota peoples on whose lands parts of the Central Pacific Railroads were built. The book is an impressive work not only on railroad colonialism, financialization of land and frontier logics, but also, as Bhutani writes, “a remarkable piece of scholarship that harbors the potential for informing activist agenda for anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggles not just in the US but also other colonized Indigenous nations as Canada, New Zealand and Hawaii among others.”

In the following, concluding section we transition to a series of summary observations, largely informed by our experience as editors of this project, our exciting, challenging, thoughtful and humbling conversations with the contributors and our very generous reviewers who pushed the boundaries of our thinking, but not least by our experience of being scholars and educators

⁹ Elaine Coburn in this issue also gestures via Dua and Amadahy towards the “often-occluded Black Indigeneity.” See also Robyn Maynard (2017), the recent conversation between Andrea Davis & Bonita Lawrence (Lawrence et al., 2020), and Leanne Simpson, Shama Rangwala & Robyn Maynard in conversation with Andrea Davis (Davis et al., 2020) on how to consciously and systematically engage in acts of solidarity between Black, Indigenous and other racialized subjects.

of anti-racism and migration committed to decolonial solidarity. We offer these as “visioning,” for us and our students, and also as invitations to colleagues with similar commitment and inquiries.

Within and Away from Anti-racist Scholarship on Migration and Indigenous Sovereignty

Migrant and Indigenous justice are structurally congruent but frequently appear to be nearly mutually exclusive and stripped off of mutual social relational entanglements in state policy realms, popular political discourses and non-profit governance. Until recently, this was true in academic research and scholarship as well. This disconnect, as we have made clear, was one of the key curiosities informing this project. And yet, following Byrd’s (2011, p. xxiv) caution about a liberal democratic apparatus shaping “freedom at the expense of another,” and Andrea Davis’ (Lawrence et al., 2020) invitation to think about “tak[ing] up space that does not deny other possibilities of life,” we were careful not to collapse issues that require specific attention, nuances of articulation and careful execution even as we remained critical of how identities and subjectivities have been harnessed in the service of colonial capitalism.

As we say this, our social locations, political affiliations and commitments, and historic entanglements raise crucial questions. Asian diasporic subjectivity is increasingly an important site of inquiry. The subject positions we each embody have been typically understood as aspirational, positioned between enslaved, indentured and other precarious labour as the “model minority,” with a steadfast mantra of what philosopher Lewis Gordon has identified as “be white; above all, don’t be Black” (see Jean Kim, 2020). More recently, Asian subjects have come to be referred to as non-Black, non-Indigenous persons of colour. If the former, aspirational subject has been weaponized for the purpose of the liberal multicultural nations of the west (Jean Kim, 2020; Davis et al., 2020), the latter two categories acquire meaning by important dis-affiliations. It was no surprise that questions were raised about the ethics and politics of us co-leading a project full of “cacophonies” (Byrd, 2011, p. xxvii) and contradictions. To put it plainly, while humbling, and opening up expansive horizons of anti-racist, diasporic and Indigenous social and political thought (that we remain committed to engaging further), this work also raised thorny questions, deep emotions and politics of identities. It is not an overstatement to say that the editors who started this project are not the ones who are bringing it to an end. Nevertheless, we noticed important themes (some reinforcing existing scholarly trends), exciting promises, and disturbing polarizations in anti-racist scholarship on migration and Indigeneity, which we outline below.

First and foremost, we noticed a stable commitment to solidarity, both in thinking about research, teaching and theorizing, reflections on subject

positions, and the responsibilities that come with it. Most contributors worked with keen awareness of anti-racism's epistemological disregard of Indigenous sovereignty, and offered some tangible pathways toward what is now understood as "a twofold commitment"; that is, to "considering how diasporic populations remain implicated in the ongoing violences of settler colonialism," and to "practicing an intersectional politics of decolonial solidarity" (Attewell et al., 2018, p. 192). In one way or another, all invested emotional and intellectual energies in conceptualizing their place in a land in which "the avenues laid out for immigrants' success and empowerment are paved over native lands and sovereignty" (Saranillio, 2013, p. 286). We remain excited about the ways divergent worlds – those of Indigenous, Black and racialized peoples, with all their diversities, and mutual knowns and unknowns – are coming together and making efforts to present a decolonial front.

We worry, however, about a relative inattention to the totality of the colonial project. Instead, a concern over complicity directs theorizing of one's place & place making, eclipsing, in the process what Nicholas de Genova (2020) simply but powerfully articulates as "the relations between human life and state power," manifest in this context in the tangible dynamics of land and labour in reproducing settler colonial property (see Day, 2016). In contrast, we remember, among others, Glen Coulthard's (2013, 2014a; Podur, 2015; Walia, 2015) unambiguous call for the death of capitalism, Eve Tuck & Wayne Yang's (2012) caution not to metaphorize decolonization, and Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's (2016; Dixon, 2006) reminder to not forget the importance of class & capital analysis as fundamental to opening up a meaningful horizon of anticolonial justice for Indigenous peoples.¹⁰

On a related note, we also draw attention to an overall slippage of anti-imperialist analytic from discussions of solidarity. Growing and crucial conversations around Indigenous and Black relations show how far these communities have come in terms of understanding their deep relationality as part of the settler colonial frameworks in the Americas. As our understanding of abolition and sovereignty as different but entangled frameworks of liberation deepen via these conversations, the diminishing role of racialized

¹⁰ While a detailed discussion of these concerns is beyond our scope, Dunbar-Ortiz's following response to a question about her politics in an interview with Chris Dixon (2006) could be instructive: "Well, I don't know any more in terms of coherent descriptions. I continue – mainly out of stubbornness – to call myself a Marxist. I still think it's very important to keep focused on capitalism and the importance of class analysis. It's in that sense that I still pay tribute to Marxism. It's sort of like if I was a physicist. All physicists are Newtonians. They are Newtonians plus everything that came after, but they wouldn't feel ashamed of that. That's the kind of debt I feel toward Marx, who clarified the role of capital. We have to build upon that, not forget it. I think it's forgotten too much in our social movements, or not even considered in the first place."

labour exploitation within the settler colonial edifice of destruction and replacement is troubling.¹¹

This is not to say all labour or labouring conditions are equal. We don't intend to homogenize the diverse ways in which land and natural resources are extracted, nor how our labours are deployed, but simply to indicate that they are all positioned relationally for the singular production of surplus and eventually capital. We write with careful observations of how the social reproduction of these extractive systems is ensured through heterosexist patriarchy, and by keeping aspirations divided (Bannerji, 2015; Smith, 2006; Smith et al., 2010).¹² In the context of the liberal Canadian nation state's enthusiastic embrace of discourses of recognition and reconciliation (Coulthard, 2014a), ceremonial acknowledgements of Indigenous land while continuing to aggressively protect extractive political economic relations, often via migration that sustains the racial regime of property relations (Bhander, 2018), this analytical slippage remains a major concern. Moving forward, we propose that anti-racist scholarship on relationality and complicity should develop an analysis that does not lose sight of the capitalist colonial project of simultaneous dispossession and precarious incorporation, a dynamic in which competing and cacophonous civil rights claims continue to take shape, and therefore, should be not only gestured toward, rather actively and concretely engaged with.

Secondly (and related to the above), we share concerns about anti-racist thought developing in vastly different trajectories. The one we discuss above embraces the urgency of decolonizing relations and articulates decolonization with recognition of Indigenous difference and sovereignty. The second trajectory, on the other hand, operates from within an anti-imperialist framework, one in which freedom means freedom from a world of ongoing dispossession of the poor and working class and those on the move, and postcolonialism is a new mode of global governance. Contrary to the first, it firmly places decolonization outside the rubric of sovereignty and launches a critique of Indigenous nationhood on grounds of its contradictory, arguably deadly, and possessive logic (Sharma, 2020; see Desai, in Byrd, 2011). An observation grounded in the deep and ongoing disappointments of the

¹¹ On this note, we draw attention to Iyko Day's conceptualization of settler colonial triangulation and yet the importance of place-based solidarity in anticapitalism. See also Attewell et al. (2018), an excellent book review forum on how Day's book *Alien Capital* has been taken up across disciplines in humanities and social sciences, including in Indigenous studies.

¹² We remember June Jordan's writing in the context of feminist organizing: "I know I am not alone. There must be hundreds of other women, maybe thousands, who feel as I do. There may be hundreds of men who want the same drastic things to happen. But how do you hook up with them? How can you interlink your own struggle and goals with these myriad, hypothetical people who are hidden entirely or else concealed by stereotypes and/or generalities of "platform" such as any movement seems to spawn? I don't know. I don't like it, this being alone when it is clear that there will have to be multitudes working together, around the world, if radical and positive change can be forced upon the heinous status quo I despise in all its overwhelming power" (Jordan, 1989; the quotation above is cited from the epigraph in Bannerji, 2005, p. 144).

postcolonial world, this line of thinking is in generative tensions with Byrd's concerns about "trap[ping] Indigenous peoples within the dialectics of genocide where the only conditions of possibility imagined are either that Indigenous peoples will die through genocidal policies of colonial settler states (thus making room for more open and liberatory societies) or that they will commit heinous genocides in defense of lands and nations" (2011, p. xxxiv). One also remembers Robert Nichols' (2020, p. 8) theorization (partially in response to the critique of possessive logic above) of "recursive dispossession" in which the dispossessed "are figured as 'original owners,' but only retroactively, a reflection of the peculiarity of the dispossessive process itself," as in "possession is the effect of dispossession" (see also Brenna Bhandar's 2018 discussion of dispossession as both a prerequisite and a consequence).

And yet in a global order in which immigrants, migrants and refugees continue to meet Indigenous nations in contested geopolitical territories, and thereby face the complex responsibility of carving out a workable and just coexistence, recognition and complicity which seem the dominant foci of anti-racist scholarship fall short as analytics. We should strive, rather, to envision justice and freedom in a world in which mobility is an always already condition – an aftermath of colonial and imperial displacement, a desire to move from the "zone of nonbeing" (Fanon, 1952, p. xii), a key pathway to freedom – that is, admittedly, accessed unequally by dominant and subaltern actors. Following Adrian Smith (Scholar Strike Canada, 2020b), we do not mean movement to be a mere act of crossing borders, rather, it is an act of "stealing back life against unfreedom, carcerality, against racism which lubricates capitalist profiteering." Workers, Smith compellingly says, "must continue to nestle everywhere, settle everywhere and establish connections everywhere."

However, we also remember Byrd's (2011, xiii) cogent critique of the poststructural challenge to the originary, of definitive appeal to anti-racist and postcolonial critiques: "in a world growing increasingly enamored with faster, flatter, smooth, where positionality doesn't matter so much as how it is that we travel there, indigeneity matters." It is in this context of world-wide migratory movements, colonial injuries, and contradictions of redress that we situate this special issue; to seek out, appreciate, and as needed, struggle over various conceptualizations of migrant-Indigenous relations in all its cacophonies and possibilities. Bringing different analytical pathways and scholarly commitments closer without losing their distinct foci, we attest, is of particular urgency at our current political moment.¹³ There is a need not

¹³ Jodi Byrd, for example, has shown us the potential of Indigenous and postcolonial theories and epistemologies in conversation. Their engagement with postcolonial, poststructural and subaltern theories, we note with respect, is against the grain in the context of Indigenous resistance to critical theory (see Byrd, 2011, pp. xxxi-xxxv for a discussion of this). Similar engagement is found in the works of Robert Nichols cited here. Conversations, as this discussion and others clearly show, are not easy to start, let alone sustain. However, they need to be committed to.

only to understand how we all find ourselves together, but also, as Simpson (Davis et al., 2020) has conceptualized, to forge a “constellation of co-resistances” to colonial sexual racial capitalism. We end with remembering Robert Warrior (2006, p. 325) writing about the future of Black and Indigenous relations in North America (an invitation that, we note, applies across times and spaces to various historic and contemporary relationships):

What seems clear is that, on the streets of this continent’s inner cities and on the roads and pathways that cross indigenous enclaves around the world, the black people and red people will keep unfolding a history that criss crosses, zigs, zags, and doubles back.

Such acts of caring and critical engagement, allowing us to embrace what is unthought or difficult, imagine living otherwise, appreciate shared past, present and futures, and informing a justice rich future, are what we continue to wish for and strive toward.

When so much remains to be done this end can only be a new beginning ...

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