

## Teaching Immigration for Reconciliation: A Pedagogical Commitment with a Difference

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### Abstract

This essay takes as its point of departure the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's recommendations for facilitating understanding of reconciliation between "Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians," specifically, the recommendations meant to educate newcomers/immigrants about Indigenous issues. While these and similar educational initiatives deeply inform reconciliation measures across public post-secondary institutions, I suggest that the disconnect between immigrants and Indigenous peoples has more to it than mere lack of education, and that their relationship is better conceptualized as a series of tensions between land and labour rights that reproduces settler colonial capitalist nationalism. I further suggest the post-secondary classrooms as important sites for working with these tensions. In this essay I discuss a fourth-year social work elective course on immigration where I attempted to explicitly engage with some of these tensions and their productive role in settler colonial nationalism. I conclude with some thoughts on what moving beyond education for reconciliation could look like in our teaching on immigration, with specific recommendations for the discipline of social work in which such a pedagogical shift is long overdue.

*Keywords:* immigration, Indigenous self-determination, social work pedagogy, reconciliation, education for reconciliation

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As a scholar and educator of migration and nationalism whose site of critical inquiry is a settler state, I frequently wonder and actively write about the nature of the relationship between immigration, anti-racist claims of migrant justice, and Indigenous self-determination. I consider this a crucial nexus to grapple with in a global economic order that thrives on simultaneous dispossession of people (largely, although not exclusively, in the Global South) and their (precarious) re-settlement as immigrants<sup>1</sup> in various late-capitalist nation-states of the Global North (McNally, 2013), including in countries with large numbers of internally displaced populations (see Byrd, 2011; Coleman, 2016, for discussions of the conflicting projects of diaspora and Indigenous rights in settler states). The cycle of immigrants and

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to clarify that *immigrant* is a racialized category, especially in Canada following the 1962 liberalization of immigrant recruitment policies. Immigrant labour recruitment and exploitation in the context of settler nationalism, however, cuts across racial categories, more so as the larger project for the settler state is to expropriate Indigenous lands.

Indigenous peoples meeting in the contested geopolitical territory of Canada, for example, is long-standing and continuing; leaving communities, professionals, and educators with the complex responsibility of carving out a common workable future via their research, pedagogy, and community development practices. In this regard, the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada ([TRC], 2015) is a document of monumental significance, a touchstone for scholars, educators, social- and human-service practitioners, and also government and other institutions, as they try to conceptualize reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians<sup>2</sup> in their respective area of practice.

Among the TRC's 94 recommendations for reconciliation, two are specifically meant for newcomers/immigrants to Canada and are aimed to build knowledge and understanding of reconciliation among new immigrants:

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools. (TRC, 2015, p. 10)

It is not the efficacy or outcome of such recommendations that interest me here. I want to rather draw attention to the way a focus on education (as information) for reconciliation has been adopted by the Canadian state and its educational policy machineries, especially the post-secondary institutions. Indeed, in the last decade or so, a liberal discourse of education and cultural recognition has come to dominate the Canadian state's and the post-secondary actors' attempts for reconciliation. I, however, wonder: Why is it that new immigrants do not know (or do not know enough) about Indigenous genocide and land expropriation? What does their lack of knowledge, or non-knowledge, or certain selective knowledge allow them to do or get away with? Who or what does this disengagement benefit? Further, since colonial, Eurocentric education (among other factors) historically secured the project of settlement, what are the stakes for a settler state in facilitating education for reconciliation now? Is education for reconciliation meant to address what lack of education previously allowed? That is, is it going to address settler colonial dispossession? This brings me to my final question, which is whether the relationship between newcomers/immigrants and Indigenous peoples is shaped by a lack of knowledge or appreciation of each other's histories, or, it is better conceptualized as a series of tensions that reproduces and expands settler colonial capitalist dispossession? In other words, I want to argue against a

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<sup>2</sup> I use TRC's terminology of "Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians" for the sake of consistency. This does not mean I necessarily approve of the terms or do not appreciate their incomplete nature. Also, within "non-Indigenous Canadians" I specifically focus on the TRC recommendations for newcomers/immigrants. My objective in this paper is not so much to engage the politics of state identity categories as it is to reflect on a pedagogical practice that is invested in separating Indigenous and immigrant issues in settler nations.

transcendental frame of analysis that seems to claim the pursuit of education as the key condition for reconciliation.<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere (Chatterjee, 2018) I have discussed how the practices of Indigenous land dispossession and immigrant labour exploitation allow the accumulation and expansion of settler colonial property, and have argued for an analysis of settler colonialism that holds questions of land and labour in dialectical tension instead of in neat and clean separation. Such focus on social contradictions and their outcomes is at the heart of critical theories (Antonio, 1981). In this essay, I discuss an attempt to extend and apply this analysis to a post-secondary course on migration and immigrant and refugee settlement. It was an important intellectual undertaking for me in the context of Canada being one of the most diverse countries of the world, and also a settler colony where there has recently been significant state and post-secondary engagement and investment in reconciliation (Coulthard, 2014). Indeed, contemporary Canada is akin to what Pratt (1990/1991, p. 34) conceptualized as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power such as colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.” An immigration and refugee protection course—with its focus on myriad diasporic formations—was well suited for discussing the productive contradictions of immigrant labour recruitment and exploitation and Indigenous dispossession in a reconciliatory state.

The paper is organized as follows: First, I discuss the conceptual framework that shaped my pedagogical commitment to teach about immigration not in isolation, but in its profound entanglement (in the sense of both contradictions and commonness) with Indigenous dispossession, as a way to trouble the straightforward narrative of education for reconciliation. Secondly, I discuss the pedagogical strategies I deployed to bring the seemingly disparate issues of immigration and Indigenous self-determination into a common dialogic space. Here, I specifically focus on a field trip meant to highlight what I am calling the politics of visibility of immigration and immigrants and of obscurity of Indigenous peoples and their histories. Next, I draw from teaching notes and observations to chart out a pedagogical pathway for what I have chosen to call “teaching immigration for reconciliation.” This is a pedagogy not susceptible to the liberal zeals of education for reconciliation; rather, it exposes the tensions and contradictions between immigrant and Indigenous justice claims as

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<sup>3</sup> Transcendental and immanent arguments have a long and complex history in Western political thought, starting from Plato and shaped by Kant, Hegel, Marx, and later critical theorists of the Frankfurt School. Transcendental arguments are underpinned by a foundational claim, whereas immanent arguments draw from the conflicts and contradictions of social relations and processes. My intention is not to launch a philosophical argument or even to draw attention to these traditions, but since the focus of reconciliation measures seems to be on education, I consider it important to refer to the fundamental distinction between these two traditions that continue to inform social scientific inquiries and responses to social issues of our times. In this regard, it is important to note that in a keynote speech given at George Brown College’s 6th Annual Tommy Douglas Institute (2018), Senator Murray Sinclair, the head of the TRC, mentioned reconciliation involves four *As*, “awareness, atonement, apology and action,” thereby making education but one, indeed a rather preliminary, component of the reconciliation journey.

integral to the inner political dynamics of contemporary settler nationalism. This final section includes some specific recommendations for social work, a discipline I teach in, and which, while committed to the recommendations of the TRC, has shown sparse engagement with the entanglements of migration and Indigenous self-determination. Throughout, I take the TRC's model of education for reconciliation, currently deeply embedded in the Canadian state and post-secondary initiatives for reconciliation, as my point of departure.

### **Immigrant Labour and Indigenous Dispossession as the Lifeblood of Settler Colonial Nationalism: Conceptual Framework Informing the Course**

The course was an upper-year social work elective offered at a large public university in the city of Toronto, which is a key immigration destination and a meeting place for largely racialized immigrants, White Canadians (ideologically constructed as national subjects), and Indigenous peoples; a “contact zone,” to borrow from Pratt again (1990/1991, p. 34). It is a popular course among students preparing to work with the city's highly diverse immigrant and refugee populations. Given the politically vibrant and potentially transformative moment of Indigenous resurgence and reconciliation sweeping through contemporary Canada, and in which the post-secondary sector is positioning itself as a key actor, I envisioned the course as a space in which to discuss the relationship between immigration and Indigenous self-determination. An apparently simple proposition to seize on the politics of the time to generate a much needed discussion on immigration and Indigeneity, however, became quite complex due to my multiple, conflicting and cross-cutting subject positions, e.g., as an immigrant to an occupied land,<sup>4</sup> as a faculty member in a School of Social Work (a discipline engaging in tortuous self-reflection on its historically violent relationship with Indigenous peoples; see Baskin & Sinclair, 2015), and as a post-secondary educator at a time of institutional commitment to reconciliation.

As a scholar of migration and an immigrant myself, I am committed both to people's right to mobility and to the right to stake a claim to a particular territory they have lived in and taken care of since (in the context of Indigenous peoples) before recorded history.<sup>5</sup> The rights to mobility and staying located are cognate rights (see Bauder, 2016 for a review of the ancient right to mobility and its eventual diminution via the construction of national borders). To appreciate their conflicting claims in the settler colonial context, however, we need to develop a comprehensive

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<sup>4</sup> In a groundbreaking article in *Social Justice*, Canadian scholars Dua and Lawrence (2005) urgently called for more research on conflicts and collaborations between anti-racist/immigrant and decolonial/Indigenous politics. Following them, a series of articles (see Chatterjee, 2018; Dhamoon, 2014 for overview) engaged in envisioning how immigration to settler states sits in tension with Indigenous self-determination and attempted to conceptualize a political role for immigrants, conceived as “settlers on stolen lands” in securing a decolonial future.

<sup>5</sup> This should not be taken as an assumption of immobility of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples have moved for hunting, gathering, trades, and social or communal relationships across the Turtle Islands. More recently, the aftermaths of colonization has manifest in Indigenous people's movement to urban locales. What I refer to above is the right to stay located, especially on land that is under threat of further encroachment.

(not in the sense of “all-encompassing,” however) understanding of the practices of appropriation of Indigenous land and exploitation of immigrant labour as foundational to settler nation formation, an analysis marginal in the larger settler colonial and anti-racist scholarships (Chatterjee, 2018), and more so, in social work (a point I come back to in conclusion of this essay).

I, however, have been and continue to be very conscious that the discipline and profession of social work is highly committed to the project of reconciliation. In 2013, for example, the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) made it an accreditation requirement that the schools of social work “challenge the injustices of Canada’s colonial history and continuing colonization efforts as they relate to the role of social work education in Canada and the self-determination of the Indigenous peoples” (Kovach, Carriere, Montgomery, Barrett, & Gilles, 2015). The TRC called on the profession for responsible practice with Indigenous peoples and for a commitment to educating, especially those practising in child protection. Many schools of social work, including the one in which I teach, are committed to educating staff, faculty, and the student body in ongoing injustices that continue to disproportionately affect Indigenous communities.

Further, this project of re-thinking social work education is unfolding in the context of a larger but similar re-envisioning of post-secondary education, popularly known as “Indigenizing the academy” (MacDonald, 2016). Universities Canada, for example, has prioritized Indigenization, and currently offers 300 Indigenous programs (or programs relevant for Indigenous students) across its 97 member organizations (see MacDonald, 2016 for a fairly comprehensive review of recent Indigenizing initiatives in Canadian universities).<sup>6</sup> According to Universities Canada’s 2017 membership survey (Universities Canada, 2018), 78% of universities offer intercultural engagement opportunities, namely, “cultural activities, events, talking circles and cultural competency or reconciliation training.” Since 2013 there has also been a 55% increase in the number of academic programs that “include an Indigenous focus or are designed for Indigenous students.” Further, two-thirds of member universities are “incorporating Indigenous knowledge, methods and protocols into and teaching policies, programs and practices.”

I do consider the social work and the larger post-secondary initiatives to be important steps towards reconciliation. However, the course I taught emerged out of a desire to see a more substantial engagement with the question of migration (specifically racialized labour migration) and labour exploitation as one of the key political economic foundations for settler nationalism. In other words, I was looking for a more immanent (in the sense of materially and historically grounded in social relationships of conflict and contradictions) as opposed to a transcendental frame of

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<sup>6</sup> In my recent work on this subject I have started comparing and contrasting this focus on Indigenizing with the post-secondary sector’s internationalizing initiative leading to significant numbers of student migration to and eventual settlement in Canada. This is following my suggestion in this essay that we need to pay attention to how the settler state continues proactive policies for securing labour, even as it launches claims of Indigenous recognition and reconciliation. Education for reconciliation, in this larger political economic context, answers only half of the puzzle, more so in a class on immigration and refugee protection.

analysis. What I was conscious of and acted on during the planning of the course is that a merely enhanced understanding of Indigenous history and cultural practices—typically symbolically added in through a week or so of Indigenous content—will leave untroubled the constitutive role of Indigenous dispossession and racialized labour exploitation in securing settler futures (see Tuck & Yange, 2012, on “settler futurity”). The core task for me, therefore, was to hold land dispossession and labour exploitation in dialectical tension to reveal the foundational elements, indeed, the founding contradictions of settler colonialism. In this, my key influence remains Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd (2011, p. 40), who envisioned the worlds of “settlers, ‘arrivants’ [her word for diasporic peoples] and natives” as not separate, but “bleed[ing]” into one another. “The task,” she writes, “is to discern how the noise of competing claims, recognitions and remediations function to naturalize possession at the site of postracial inclusion, transformative multiculturalism and cruel optimism.”<sup>7</sup> Byrd (2011, p. 53) proposes “cacophony” both as a concept and as an intervention to work through this state of simultaneity. As a concept, cacophony is “a critical term diagnosing the persistence of racialization, subjugation, and hierarchized subject positionalities within and among those targeted and oppressed by the processes of imperialism and colonialism, war and genocide.” As an intervention, cacophony allows us to “forge alliances across historical and cultural experiences in opposition to the competition upon which colonialism relies.” Indeed, it is the cacophony of the competing projects of diasporic immigrants and Indigenous peoples that allow the settler state to continue its business as usual. It is from within this conceptual frame that I aimed to foster a critical understanding of the contemporary state focus on education for reconciliation, while the state maintained its stronghold on Indigenous land and material resources, and continued its importation of immigrant labour. I wanted students to appreciate how these could happen at the same time, what they produce, and why a merely educational framework does not challenge their separation in our teaching, analysis, and practice.

Accordingly, I organized the course content in ways that encouraged studying immigrant and Indigenous justice claims in complex conjunction. I suggested to my students that unless we do so, reconciliation will remain susceptible to a colonial state reconfiguring its governing strategies, i.e., an apolitical recognition of Indigenous peoples and paternalistic education of uninformed immigrants—instead of becoming a pathway toward decolonization of human relations, as envisioned. Through assigned readings, guest lectures, audio-visual materials, reflexive assignments, and a field trip (which I discuss below) to learn about quintessentially multicultural and multiethnic Toronto’s Indigenous history, students were

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<sup>7</sup> *Cruel optimism* is a term used by Lauren Berlant (see Byrd, 2011) in her eponymous book to refer to the desire of people for the proverbial good life even in the face of growing inequities of the liberal capitalist order. The post-colonial diaspora represent this optimism in their pursuit of multicultural inclusionary dream, which comes at the expense of Indigenous decolonization. The competing projects of diasporic and Indigenous politics—as manifest in postcolonial theorizing—is the subject of Byrd’s 2011 book, *Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critique of Postcolonialism*.

encouraged to develop a historically informed sense of the interconnections and complexities of immigrant–Indigenous relationships in settler colonial settings.<sup>8</sup>

### **Classroom as Contact Zone: How I Delivered the Course**

I was fortunate to have a small class (of only 17 students), which allowed me to build close intellectual and affective relationships important for courses such as this, in which students' social and political locations (e.g., “immigrant,” “settler,” etc.) were openly discussed and problematized, and in which they had to engage with their own and each other's histories in sometimes quite discomfoting ways. Demographically, the cohort was very diverse. Among 17, three were Caucasian and the rest of various other ethnicities, including South Asian, East Asian, African, and Caribbean. None self-identified as Indigenous. All racialized students and one of the Caucasian students shared their own or their family experience of migration to Canada.<sup>9</sup>

In many ways, the classroom and the cohort resembled Pratt's (1990/1991, p. 34) idea of contact zones, which emerge as the aftermaths of such violent encounters as slavery and colonialism, and which demand that educators employ “pedagogies of contact.” Such a pedagogy was aligned with how I envisioned the course, i.e., as one in which the constitutive nexus between migration, Indigeneity and settler colonialism will be actively discussed by future social- and human-service practitioners. The principal challenge I faced was in locating scholarship that inculcates such a complex and comprehensive understanding.<sup>10</sup> In my attempts to locate guest speakers and practitioners, I again found the two structurally innately connected political issues of immigration and Indigenous self-determination being treated as separate domains. Considering how foundational Indigenous dispossession and immigrant settlement have been to the reproduction of settler imaginary in Canada I consider this to be a concern. Select chapters from two recent social-work- and human-service-oriented books—one speaking to immigrant integration (Yan & Anucha, 2017) and another to decolonial justice for Indigenous communities

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<sup>8</sup> Admittedly, however, I was limited in terms of the materials I could introduce, since the course was listed as one on immigration and refugee protection and also was a longstanding one in the department. Due to several structural constraints the course did not really represent the more integrated curricula informed by history and political economy that I am proposing in this essay. Thus, this pedagogical experiment represents a journey, not a destination.

<sup>9</sup> However, as the course unfolded and we got deeper into discussing settler nation formation, there seemed to be an invisible Indigenous presence. This was most manifest when many students, at one point or another, self-located as “settlers” or “racialized settlers” in Canada, symbolically acknowledging the Indigenous land they were on. As the instructor, I noticed at least two different dynamics—one between Caucasian and racialized students, most palpably felt while discussing early Canadian settlement, and another that all of them grappled with in relation to Indigenous peoples. This has made me think about how the course, as I develop it further, will engage Indigenous students, the kind of ethical, political, and pedagogical considerations need to be made, etc.

<sup>10</sup> Part of the reason for this challenge was that I looked for undergraduate-friendly content, and content specific to Canada, thereby limiting my chances. Since then I have been working on developing this course at a graduate level and have also expanded the sites to include the United States, Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia, and parts of the Global South. The literature across these sites is impressive, both in bulk and in their staunch critique of settler colonial capitalism.

(Baskin, 2016)—were finally used in my attempt to maintain simultaneous focus on both communities and their respective social and political struggles, and on how these maintain settler colonial dispossession.

I started the course with a state-of-the-knowledge review of the history and current practices on immigration, refugee protection, and Indigenous self-determination in Canada. As mentioned above (see Conceptual Framework), I seized on the political moments of reconciliation, and also the 150th year of the Canadian Confederation to bring these issues together. My entry point was that scholarships on these subjects have developed in mutual isolation, as have our teachings about them. I was very open with my students that this was the key conceptual and pedagogical disconnect I was trying to bridge, and they would do well to bridge in their life as practitioners. Each weekly theme pertaining to immigration and refugee protection was supplemented by the issue (or similar issues) as manifest in and experienced by Indigenous communities, and was followed by class discussions on what these mean for settler governance and political economy. In doing so, both specificity and commonness of immigrant and Indigenous experience of state-sanctioned oppression were highlighted. For example, while discussing Chinese labour recruitment for the Canadian Pacific Railways in late 19th century and the subsequent organizing in the Chinese communities, I asked students to consider the state logic of importing labour from overseas instead of engaging local Indigenous labour. I encouraged them to think about how Indigenous resistance to capitalist modes of production by refusing to participate in industrial waged labour allowed the Canadian state to construct Indigenous people as dysfunctional and unable or unwilling to work, and thereby legitimize its project of settlement. Discussing early Canadian settlement, I also referred to the enclosure movement in Europe and its organic linkage with the Industrial Revolution; both macro processes of dispossession of Europe's masses, which made it easier for Canadian statesmen to market "the New World" as part of nation-building strategies (Kelly & Trebilcock, 2010; Knowles, 2000). While discussing issues closer to home for social work graduates, for example, violence against women, I highlighted the hyper-visible culturalization of patriarchal violence and its impact on racialized immigrant communities, and yet, the conspicuous denial of state violence in the case of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (see Simpson, 2014). Similarly, we discussed homelessness and/or precarious housing situations for racialized immigrants, and traced back Indigenous homelessness to their dispossession from lands (King, 2015); and the criminalization of racialized immigrants as homegrown terrorists was discussed in relation to early Canadian state's criminalization of Indigenous cultural practices (McCalla & Satzewich, 2002). I took care not to introduce Indigeneity as an add-on, and instead tried to foster a critical understanding of how immigrant and Indigenous bodies are managed differently by the settler state, and to what tangible effect. I noticed such macropolitical discussions helped students move on from what I would like to call out as mere bad feelings or feelings of guilt, and develop a more complex understanding of settler colonialism as an economic, political, and cultural complex.

Several questions came to mind as I engaged in this strategy. In proposing that immigration and Indigenous self-determination be taught dialogically and

relationally, am I minimizing the Indigenous struggle for decolonization? Is what I am doing a form of “colonial equivocation” (Tuck & Yange, 2012, p. 17), i.e., collapsing of Indigenous and immigrant experience? These pedagogical strategies indeed posed a risk of faltering into a slippery slope of liberal pluralist sameness. However, my stated goal was to confront immigration and Indigenous self-determination as matters specific to respective populations only. I wanted to disrupt a scholarly and pedagogical practice of compartmentalizing issues that, in reality, are “intimate” (Lowe, 2015), i.e., have the potential of revealing previously unrecognized connections. The assignments, which I discuss below, were planned to operationalize this curricular focus on the entanglements between immigration and Indigeneity.

### **Lessons in the Politics of Visibility and Obscurity: The First Story Bus Tour**

The course had two assignments, one among which was a reflexive paper planned to highlight what I, building on Johnson’s (2013) account of Toronto’s Indigenous history, call the politics of visibility (of immigrants) and obscurity (of Indigenous peoples and issues) orchestrated by the Canadian state. For this paper, students had three options. They could review a movie or a documentary, submit a critical reflection on the compulsory field trip on the Urban Indigenous History of Toronto (the First Story Bus Tour, hereafter the Tour), or visit and submit a critical reflection on the Destination Canada immigration exhibit at the Toronto Reference Library (Toronto Public Library & Passages Canada, 2017).<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, only one student did the exhibit tour, and others chose the film review for their reflexive paper (and that, too, without much critical engagement with the Indigenous component of the course, a problem which I come back to later in the paper). Thus, it was the Tour that facilitated the most significant learning on this crucial component of the course.

The Tour, curated and conducted by Dr. Jon Johnson, an Indigenous historian of Toronto, took the class on a three-hour bus journey across the Greater Toronto Area and offered rich historical and contemporary details of urban Indigenous life in Toronto, dating back to 13,000 years. Along with the assigned reading on the history of the Tour (Johnson, 2013), it allowed students to critically engage with the discursive construction of Toronto as a city of immigrants (teeming with settlement and allied organizations and institutions, which many of them were preparing to work in). However, since no student chose to make the Tour the subject of their reflexive paper, my discussion is drawn from an optional journal they submitted in the tradition of reflexive practice in critical social work.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The exhibit was one of the series of public institutional responses to the 150th year of the Canadian Confederation. Exhibit materials were drawn from Toronto Public Library’s Baldwin Collection of Canadiana and Chinese Canadian Archive. The exhibit also featured personal mementos from storytellers with Passages Canada.

<sup>12</sup> I kept the journal optional and with very minimum grade implications, as I encouraged students to approach the Tour as an act of solidarity for which there typically is no material reward. In this essay I draw from these reflections mostly as, unfortunately, students did not opt to make the Tour the subject of their reflexive paper. This has made me think about ways to incorporate the Tour and related Indigenous content as required subjects of reflection in future.

As prompts for the reflection I suggested students consider how the Tour related to the course objectives. Immigration is a highly visible public policy issue in Canada; and many of the students, according to a poll I did in the first class, brought this understanding of immigrant integration as a major public policy issue, and were looking to practise in the immigrant settlement sector. My goal was to trigger a discussion on the relevance of urban Indigenous history in a course on immigration. All 15 students who attended the Tour (two students could not make it due to personal circumstances) submitted the optional reflection. While none anticipated the course would integrate significant and recurring Indigenous content, including a major field trip, all appreciated it and thought it was much needed in an immigration course. This need was rationalized via their lack of prior exposure to Indigenous history. For many, the Tour was their first major exposure to Toronto's Indigenous origin. They noted that the narratives of Canadian history they had been exposed to, largely if not entirely, miss Indigenous content. They mentioned growing up with stories of "lazy Indians" and the cultivation of a *terra nullius* frame of mind. For some, the realization that Canada's history is not so "neat and tidy" as they were made to believe led to a feeling of being let down by the school curriculum.

Secondly, I recommended that students check out the city's 501 Queen streetcar route in Toronto (Toronto Transit Commission, 2018), Heritage Toronto's Modern TO bus tour (Heritage Ontario, 2018), and City Sightseeing Toronto's Double Decker City Tour (City Sightseeing Toronto, 2018) for comparative perspectives on the Tour. The 501 Queen, for instance, is the longest streetcar route in North America, and also one of the longest in the world. It takes nearly two hours to complete and offers a brilliant glimpse of Toronto in its urban complexity. The trip is referred to as a "showcase" for Toronto's diversity (see Farquharson, 2012), since the car traverses through the city's major neighborhoods. The Heritage Toronto tour visits Toronto's heritage buildings, including its diverse neighborhoods. The City Sightseeing Toronto tour is typical of a touristy ride through a major metropolis, again making it a point to focus on Toronto's diversity. I asked students to consider what the Tour had allowed them to see that they would not have otherwise seen, and then to juxtapose that unseen and the unknown with the hyper-visibility of Toronto's ethno-racial diversity. Students wondered why it is so difficult to learn about Indigenous history when Toronto has had thousands of years of Indigenous presence. Drawing on the assigned reading (Johnson, 2013), they offered powerful analysis of this obscurity as beneficial to the settler state, which absolves itself of accountability for "disappearing" Indigenous peoples.

When I asked students to reflect on the practice implications of their learning, they drew attention to a responsibility to learn further. In the context of social work's fraught relationship with Indigenous peoples, the teaching offered in the Tour conducted by an Indigenous historian was particularly appreciated by students as an act of trust, and they felt responsible for learning more, to look beyond what they identified as dominant settler perspective, and to carry forward the learning into their practice as social workers. Some took the Tour as a way to further politicize understanding and practice of anti-colonialism and anti-racism by incorporating the missing dynamic of Indigenous history. Following my suggestion to foresee areas of

practice where this knowledge can assist anti-racist, anti-oppressive practice with immigrants and refugees, students thought that the imposed silence and invisibility of Indigenous issues is creating further divide among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and that pressures should be mounted on the school system to offer more relevant lessons as a way to foster empathy and facilitate decolonial justice. The construction of Indigenous people as people of the past, and/or “passive victims of colonizers” (Johnson, 2013, p. 280), students thought, could be countered by finding ways to daily engage with Indigenous history. A move to the need for critical solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples was not a far stretch from where they were.

In brief, students showed an impressive understanding of a key question I posed at the beginning of this essay, i.e., who or what benefits from the state of relative obscurity of Indigenous history and presence, a question that was amplified by my conscious juxtaposing (via the Tour especially) of this obscurity with the overt visibility of immigrant and diasporic peoples and cultural formations. However, they also invoked the theme of education for reconciliation, thereby overshadowing the question of whether education for reconciliation can, or is meant to, address such structured nature of dispossession, which was a major objective of the course.

### **Moving Beyond Education for Reconciliation: A Pedagogical Commitment with a Difference**

Considering the evolving nature of this course (currently being developed as a graduate course with focus on multiple settler colonial sites), this essay is best read as a commitment to a different form of pedagogy that can help us move beyond education for reconciliation. And I emphasize commitment, not claim. I am not keen on settling for or against any social, political, pedagogical, or institutional orientation when it comes to reconciliation. I taught the course, and now write this essay, with acknowledgement that immigrant–Indigenous relations, in their myriad complexities and contradictions, foreclose possibilities for any resolution except that which is contingent, contested, and at best, graduated. My central argument is that reconciliation between Indigenous and immigrant populations is not *only* a matter of education in the sense of more information, and/or an enhanced understanding of each other’s political struggles. And it is with some observations about how to move away from this rather simplistic pathway—increasingly embraced in post-secondary teaching/learning scenarios—toward a greater focus on the structures of separation and invisibility that I want to conclude this essay.

Consider that the students were clearly interested in, fascinated, and made thoughtful by the course, and especially the Tour. In their evaluations, some wanted it to be a core course and also a year-long one. And yet, they struggled with operationalizing the analyses developed through curricular content and class discussions into their reflections and key assignments. This struggle was manifest in quite specific ways: First, they did not choose to make the Tour a topic of their reflexive paper. They also demonstrated sparse engagement with Indigenous content in their final assignment (a group presentation on immigrant servicing organizations in which they were supposed to envision themselves as practitioners). I consider

these to be signs of the deeply entrenched separation between immigration and Indigenous issues. A key question—raised both by colleagues with whom I discussed the course, and later, by the anonymous reviewers of this essay—is how I plan to translate its core principles into professional practice sites. The major hurdle to moving the analysis of entangled relations beyond classrooms, as I realized hearing my students present, is the policy and programmatic silo developed around these issues (something I also noticed while recruiting guest speakers for my class). This is why, in spite of my vision to achieve otherwise, the course approximated yet another attempt at education for reconciliation. What pedagogical strategies are required to dislodge immigration and Indigeneity from their secure, near mutually exclusive anchors? What are some of the productive sites of engagement in policy making and program development?

Next, while students developed impressive understanding of the politics of hyper-visibility (of immigrants) and structured invisibility (of Indigenous peoples and their histories), I nevertheless noticed them approaching the historic silence about Toronto's Indigenous presence and celebration of multicultural others as a disconnect that we can fix, as the Canadian state would like us to believe, by raising the visibility of Indigenous issues. How did such liberal interventionism infiltrate an otherwise quite critical cohort of students who talked about the politics of separation of issues throughout the semester? I wanted them to appreciate that the political disconnect between immigrant and Indigenous issues is neither intentional (i.e., in the sense of having a clearly identifiable agent who can be held responsible) nor accidental (i.e., with no accountability for any agent whatsoever), but part of the dynamics of settler colonial capitalism. While individual responsibility and commitment to learn is of unquestionable value, it is not necessarily the only response we should have to dispossession. Instead, how the settler colonial state manipulates different subject positions and their political goals (e.g., Indigenous land grab and migrant labour exploitation) to reproduce itself provides us with a better perspective on the complex array of social, political, and economic forces we are up against when we think about Indigenous decolonization. Students seemed aware of this, but only implicitly. For example, they insightfully noted that while the Canadian state welcomes Indigenous cultural ceremonies, there seem to be prolonged and complicated discussions and delays on the more material aspects of land and treaties (an issue brilliantly raised by Tuck and Yange in their 2012 article, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor"). I am thoughtful about how to probe and build on this critical awareness, currently implicit, in future iterations of the course. I specifically want to ask whether and how we are invested in this separation.

Similar challenges of translation and operationalization present themselves particularly strongly in social work pedagogy. With its focus on stable identity and population categories and on clearly defined and demarcated social issues, it is a discipline demonstrating minimal engagement with the ongoing and complex processes of accumulation of settler colonial property via land expropriation and labour exploitation. I suggest social work scholars take note of the political costs of separation between immigrant and Indigenous issues in their teaching and learning, especially in the context of reconciliation, and reorient their pedagogy and modes of

inquiry accordingly.<sup>13</sup> Toward that end, I suggest the profession also reconsider the nature of its engagement with immigration and immigrants. In a recent sweeping review of social work curriculum globally, Danso (2015 p. 1741) critiqued the profession for lack of attention to the transnational processes and mechanisms of displacement and population movement, and for instead focusing on post-migration issues. He called this a “gap in a global profession” and suggested a move to the trans-local processes that make people move across borders in the first place. I believe this reorientation from studying and supporting immigrant populations (current foci of social work) to engaging with their migration and mobility, if properly conceptualized and carried forward, will allow the profession to appreciate the analytical benefits of studying immigration and Indigenous self-determination relationally. The fact that we do not do that (at least not substantially), I suggest, is a pedagogical limit, and I invite my colleagues to commit to this epistemological and pedagogical shift. I hope they will be as excited as I am to walk this road.

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<sup>13</sup> I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that the separation between immigration and Indigeneity that I am critiquing here can be thought of as a “false binary.” I purposefully urge scholars, colleagues, and students to work toward mitigating this binary understanding in our research, teaching, and professional practice.

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