

Decolonising Occupation: Causing Social Change to Help Our Ancestors Rest and Our Descendants Thrive

Isla Emery-Whittington with Ben Te Maro

*Whakataka te hau ki te uru, whakataka te hau ki te tonga,
Kia mākinakina ki uta, kia mātaratara ki tai,
Kia hī ake ana te atakura,
He tio, he huka, he hauhu
Tihei mauri ora.*

Abstract

This keynote address invited indigenous occupational therapists and our allies in decolonisation work to consider decolonising occupation in theory and in everyday occupations. A reflection on the professions bicultural and bi-political journey of occupational therapy in Aotearoa New Zealand is offered and local luminaries are honoured. The authors share aspects of their personal journeys acknowledging that social change is at once personal, social, timeless and timely. Importantly, we extend an open hand to our colleagues to partner and engage with the agency and urgency of decolonisation work as healing for our Planet, our ancestors and descendants.

Keywords

Indigenous, colonisation, theory, Kaupapa Māori

Reference

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Ki ngā maunga teitei, ngā awa waīora, ngā tai pari, ngā tai tīmu o te wāhi ataahua rawa nei, tēna koutou. Ki ngā uri o ngā waka o Tainui o Kurahaupō i tau nei, hei mana whenua o Te Taihū o te Waka, tēna koutou.

Ka huri au, ki a koutou. Ngā mana, ngā reo, rau rangatira ma, koutou no nga tini pito o te ao, tēna koutou.

E kore e mutu nga mihi ki a Matua Rackie, Whaea Iris, Peter ma, koutou e arahi mai i a mātou katoa. Tēna koutou.

Anō ra ngā mihi atu ki nga manuhiri no tūārangi. E Ana, te pouako, nau mai, tēna koe. I haria mai koe i ou moemoea, ou matauranga, kia kotahi ai ngā whakaaro. Tēna rawa atu koe.

Nā mātou te honore, ki te tū ki waenganui a tātou ki te tuku whakaaro, moemoea, me ngā kōrero no ia pae maramatanga. Nō reira, mihi mai ki teneki nō Tainui, Takitimu, Kurahaupo,

Te Arawa. Mihi mai ki ngā tini maunga, ngā tini awa, ngā tini marae, e kōrero nei.

Ka hoki āku mahara ki tērā o ngā tino pou o to tātou umanga; he wahine ngākau aroha, he tangata pūmahara. Kāore e kore, kahore tetahi i tua atu o teneki Pākehā toa. Tōna kaha anō ki te aro ngā wawata o te Tiriti o Waitangi mo tōna iwi anō. Nānā i whakaako ai i te ngako me ngā tūmanako o te Tiriti. Kāore au e wareware i ēnei kupu tohutohu ki a mātou ngā kaiwhakaaro ngangahau Māori; "Waiho ngā tangata kaikiri, kūware, ki a au, ā, māku e whakatika, e ārahi hoki. Kīkī tonu ngā kete o te iwi taketake nei!"

Nō reira, kia tātou ma, māna, mā Linda teneki paku kōrero. He tohu aroha mōna, mō tātou hoki.

It is Te wiki o te reo Māori, Māori Language Week. As a decolonising indigenous woman who is given the honour of this platform, one of the first things to do is share it with indigenous colleagues. Therefore I think of, and thank, the Māori occupational therapists who have helped wrestle and shape these whakaaro (thoughts) offered today. It is an honour shared with all Māori occupational therapists, our whānau, and I thank my father Brian Emery for being here and for his support of our profession over the years.

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Special thanks to Georgina Davis and Ben Te Maro who took up the challenge of sharing this opportunity. It is my honour to welcome and introduce Ben Te Maro, a dynamic colleague whose kōrero about his journey of decolonisation, he has kindly offered to share. In both Georgina and Ben, I have gleaned a deep appreciation for the urgency and agency of decolonisation work. Together we are certain that talking about decolonisation causes social change that brings peace to our ancestors and opportunities for real self-determination for our descendants.

Certainly, almost any other topic of conversation would have been safer and infinitely more comfortable to choose. Colonisation has been so very hard to talk about because it has been socially engineered to be forgotten (Jesson, 1987). It doesn't follow however, that we shouldn't attempt to push beyond what we know today. Whether we are born here, migrated here by choice or necessity, or are visiting for a time, colonisation is part of the social fabric of this place (Smith, 2012).

But first let's reflect on our bicultural journey thus far. On Tuesday we celebrated several milestones; first, our conference was opened, blessed and shared with mana whenua (local indigenous people) at Whakatū Marae. They shared with us the story of this puke (hill), where the cathedral now stands and has an older history as a pā site. Such knowledge was given only because we allowed mana whenua the opportunity to exercise their kaitiakitanga - their guardianship - and welcome us here. As visitors to Whakatū marae, our profession acknowledged the indigenous stories of this land, and in so doing affirmed mana whenua identity. Their pleasure was genuine and palpable.

Another milestone of the day, was that we were brought on to Whakatū marae with one of our own; a Māori occupational therapist and native speaker. Such deeds signal a social change in our profession and are important contributions in the shaping of our bicultural nation. Our very own waiata 'Whakaora Ngāngahau Aotearoa' - written and taught by our tikanga advisors Matua Rackie and Whaea Iris - was sung heartily by all.

Importantly, these milestones have not come about by societal drift or vague inclination. They occur because of the hard work of many people, over many years. The support and guidance of Whaea Iris and Matua Rackie Pahau urged our association over that bi-political governance line. Courageous leaders such as Karen Molyneux, Rita Robinson, Tracey Partridge, Shaz Harth-Bryant, Georgina Davis, Siobhan Molloy, Jane Hopkirk, Ruth Spain and more recently Harsh Vardhan, Jane Wilson, and Peter Anderson have listened and responded to this nation's need. Nōkū te hōnore ki te tū ki waenga koutou, ki te tuku teneki paku mihi. Tēnā koutou.

The changes that our association council underwent internally as practitioners, and as a team, are metamorphic. Leadership was from the heart. This gives me heart because a rare and alternative future for this profession has emerged and taken flight. In addition, our registration authority have also led and been led by incredible people over many years, who did not shy from imagining and contesting space for the social change that must come about, if we are to practice competently with everyone in this country.

Local Luminaries

Speaking of people who worked with the Board to create social change, this keynote is dedicated to the irreplaceable ally Linda Wilson. I suspect that for the rest of my days, I might not meet again a person of such fierce intellect, enormous heart and an unwavering dedication to real social change in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Indeed, Linda was one of the few people in whose company I felt at home in Aotearoa New Zealand. To explain, as an indigenous wahine Māori, I am from Aotearoa. New Zealand is not Aotearoa to me. New Zealand sits on top: imposed, patched-up and incomprehensible. I often feel like I am from New Zealand OR Aotearoa, never both simultaneously. When Linda spoke and practiced her acknowledgment and affirmation of Māori sovereignty, I experienced Aotearoa New Zealand. Our shared discourse enabled me to move past merely critiquing and protesting the presence of colonialism within our profession.

With Linda I could share my struggle: the discontent for the status quo and the calling out of institutional and everyday racism. Within our profession indigenous occupational therapists manage the misconception that colonisation is a Māori issue. We bear witness to resounding silence when we question assumptions and put up with regular assessment of our 'Māori-ness' on an imaginary scale of authenticity (Wall, 1997). This was never the case when Linda and I co-occupied conversation. Instead, our shared theorising illuminated and conscientised (brought critical consciousness to), the nature of the relationship between colonisation and occupation.

In Linda was a mind and a heart that was continually aware of colonialism. Linda never tried to change my perspective, mine or extract it, re-name or own it. She was content that it was. As a decolonising indigenous woman, occupations are places where I am simultaneously freed from and re-caged by colonialism. But with Linda, I experienced conversations as emancipatory occupations; moments where the hope and will for social change were matched with the expression of it. With Linda, I observed that talk of equity and justice are at once redundant, when equity and justice are present.

To those who discerned and understood the life works of this unique woman, I suspect tangata whenua already know you as a good ally. To Christine Rigby, Cara Lockie, Heather Came and those who live as Pākehā, who follow the most treacherous of social change pathways, you are our tangata tiriti allies and we thank you and dedicate this keynote to you too. We notice and we're grateful.

Thank you for walking with us and role-modelling Treaty partnership. Thank you for using your privilege to create structural change and open safe spaces for interpersonal dialogue. Thank you for not expecting us to educate you or those of our colleagues who have yet to reach the outer galactic rim of their perspective. Thank you for voyaging past what you know today, and especially when you notice you've lapsed into silence. Thank you for knowing that ignorance and silence are also privileges.

Thank you for distinguishing between what is extraordinary commitment and what is expected of a person in your position, i.e. there are no prizes for employing a Māori staff member amongst many. Thank you for cautioning the colleague who is tempted to write about us, or talk about us, without us. Thank you for understanding that cultural safety is primarily about what indigenous peoples experience, and that it is not about what is guessed at or opined to be. Thank you for giving the Māori occupational therapists in your employ time to attend Māori occupational therapists hui. And thank you for giving us space to meet and support each other and for making time when we called on you.

We know that anti-racism as praxis means you have tough conversations (Came et al., 2017; Huygens, 2011) and such conversations can take a toll. But do not think that your work goes unseen. A good kind ally is as obvious as a light in a dark alley making each step surer. We understand that social change begins within and it is this inner illumination that lights our collective paths. We see you and are honoured that you journey with us. Tēnā koutou.

Decolonising Occupation: Researching Thought History

For my part in this bi-political partnership, I have committed to researching western and Māori thought histories of occupation. It is a natural next step to look to theory and in particular, a Kaupapa Māori theory of occupation. As a Kaupapa Māori researcher, theory and praxis are inseparable (Bishop, 2008; Smith, 1997; Smith, 2012). Indeed, 'decolonising occupation' as a Kaupapa Māori theory is itself born of, and revealed within, decolonised occupation.

In the work of decolonising occupation so far, it became clear that occupation and colonisation are first cousins. Colonisation starts with occupation of lands and territories and the management of resources for extractive industry. Colonisation continues with the occupation of the hands and time – for Māori, our school children were educated for 6 hours a day, 5 days a week and enculturated into economic servitude, by being only taught domestic and manual skills in the Native School system (Simon & Smith, 2001; Walker, 1996).

Colonisation is almost complete when the mind becomes occupied with the language, ideology and desires of the coloniser (Fanon, 1961; Thiongó, 1986). Frantz Fanon (1961) stated that colonisation is also "the systematised negation of the [O]ther, a frenzied determination to deny any attribute of humanity ... forces the colonized to constantly ... question 'Who am I in reality?'" (p. 182). Inevitably, racism becomes internalised when the colonised begin to agree with, and in, the 'rightness' of their oppression (Memmi, 1965).

The use of the term 'occupation' when referring to land marginalisation, cheap labour, and social thought engineering, highlights the many meanings of the term occupation. The aforementioned meanings are not linguistic co-incidences when seen within their imperial and colonial lineage. Looking closer at

the thought history of occupational therapy we notice that John Locke, a British philosopher, has been credited as being both the father of capitalism and the father of occupational science (Wilcock, 2006). Locke wielded great influence in England in the late 1600's and was known to other people of influence including Isaac Newton. He made much of indigenous peoples of the New World, describing the 'native state' or indigenous person as someone who could not possess intellectual capacity because 'he' did not show 'any desire to fully utilise his lands' (Henderson, 2000). Locke did not appear to fathom that there were other ways to view and relate with land, earth, whenua, and that perhaps he did not possess the capacity to comprehend. Instead, his pronouncements of the sub-human indigenous peoples were treated as a green light for the British imperial land grab (Henderson, 2000). Are we as occupational therapists in Aotearoa New Zealand content with this particular perspective of occupation?

The genocide and destruction that followed for indigenous peoples is evident (Jackson, 2007; Royal, 2006; Smith, 2012). But do occupational therapists recognise that John Locke's theorising is still present here today? How many times have you heard the statement 'they aren't doing anything with the land' and perhaps begrudgingly accepted the hegemony of removal of land rights? Do you believe in the property ladder and private ownership? Have you changed and altered your life course around this persuasion? The discourse of land as real estate, warns of a capitalist mind-set (Bedggood, 1980) and the disastrous nature of that particular mind-set on Earth Mother. It is a short-term consumerist illusion that humans can claim land. Time and wisdom reveal that human purpose is recognised when the land claims you. *Ko au ko te awa, ko te awa ko ahau. I am the river, the river is me.*

As an indigenous woman, discourse of land as real estate screeches of a colossal disconnection with the natural world and exposes a grave miscalculation of the value of the human place in that. From a Māori cosmogenic perspective, Tāne Mahuta, one of the children of Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), created the natural world before creating human beings. Our kiwi, weta, manuka trees, are seen as tuakana: those that were created first. Human beings were created last and as such we are the teina, the youngest in the whānau. What is the purpose of the teina? To listen and care for those that came before. Yet as teina, as people who have come to call ourselves 'Kiwi', we have forgotten how to listen to, let alone understand, the language of the kiwi.

Even Darwin would attest to a similar timeline for the origin of the species as that which many Polynesian peoples attest to. What Darwin couldn't do, was separate the goals of imperialist Britain from his theories (Smith, 2012). Instead, indigenous peoples became sub-human research objects, whose remains were exhumed and sent to far off museums, and whose skulls were filled with millet seeds as a way to measure intelligence (Smith, 2012).

Smith (2012) refers to the purpose of this era as the project of modernity, where empires and landed aristocracies of Western Europe sought wealth beyond their own shores. A poster boy of this era, Columbus' arrival in the West Indies in 1492 heralded a tsunami of capitalists' intent on commodifying lifeways, enslaving families and zoning Earth Mother herself (Jackson, 2007). Western science, religion and philosophy of the time added to the imperial swell of power and land theft, thus drowning indigenous peoples in colonial oppression, seemingly for perpetuity. For the colonised, colonisation is the most debilitating, pervasive and denied chronic health condition.

It is well established that racism, a foundation stone of colonialism, is a potent and measurable social determinant of health (Balsam et al., 2011; Bécares, Cormack & Harris, 2013; Fiske, 2010; Harris et al., 2006; Page-Gould, 2010; Paradies & Cunningham, 2012; Priest et al., 2012; Robson, 2007; Walters et al., 2011; Williams & Mohammed, 2013). This means that decolonisation is a long game "involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power" (Smith, 1999, p. 98). Decolonisation must grapple meaningfully with racism at institutional, interpersonal and internal levels (Williams & Mohammed, 2013) and is therefore a simultaneously personal and collective process. At this time then, I am honoured and excited to welcome Ben Te Maro who has kindly agreed to share aspects of his unique decolonisation journey with us.

Discovering Decolonisation: Ben Te Maro

Ko Hikurangi te maunga.

Ko Waiapu te awa.

Ko Ngati Porou te iwi.

Ko Ben Te Maro toku ingoa

Firstly, I want to recognise Isla Emery-Whittington and Georgina Davis for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this important conversation. When I was asked to do this presentation I was scared because I realised that the topic of colonisation brings up strong thoughts and emotions for people. On the other hand I was equally inspired, as I see this as an opportunity to impart a dialogue to my peers about my lived experience of how colonisation impacts me as a Māori occupational therapist. My hope is that by sharing my experience, I can help others understand the complex nature of colonisation and how it can effect Māori.

Before I begin, I have a "sorry/not sorry" warning. As a presenter, I speak from the heart. It's a purposeful move because I believe that showing emotion generates empathy. Empathy creates connection and connection leads to understanding. Colonisation is a difficult discussion to talk about because it elicits strong emotions such as shame and anger, which can influence communication, causing us to shut down or attack. My hope is that an empathetic dialogue can help create an understanding where we all feel affirmed, no matter how colonisation has impacted us, so we can move forward together to discuss meaningful change.

Firstly, I want to start by asking you some questions which I'd like you to reflect upon. When you answer these questions, I want you to think about them within the context of your ethnicity/culture:

1. When it comes to your ethnicity; how "ethnic" are you? For example, if you identify as being New Zealand European, on a scale of 0-100, how New Zealand European are you?
2. What occupations have you participated in today that affirms your cultural identity?
3. How does Aotearoa/New Zealand affirm your cultural identity?
4. How does your work place support your cultural identity and are they aware of the challenges for you and your people?
5. Do people, whether they are from your ethnic group or not, look to you as an individual to create social change for your ethnic group? Or do you feel a personal responsibility to create social change for your ethnic group?
6. Do you fit in with your ethnic group?

These are questions that I get asked or I ask myself every day. Whilst I know that I'm not the only person in this room who ponders these questions, I recognise that there may be many others in this room who may have never had to think about these questions. This is a common phenomenon of colonisation, whereby minority groups become hyperaware of their differences when those differences are not present or supported within the social framework of the more prevalent group.

To tell you a bit more of my decolonisation journey, I need to take you back to the start of my life. I grew up in Gisborne, a small town on the East Coast of New Zealand. Gisborne is a unique township in that over half the population of the region are Māori, and this means that Māoritanga is woven into the everyday fabric of life. Everything for small social interchanges, to the education system, to more formal events are lathered in Māori language and/or tikanga.

My family come from Ngāti Porou and I grew up around whānau and our marae. Māoritanga was a part of my life. It felt natural, and never token. From a young age I showed promise academically and was taken under the wings of many amazing teachers who ensured that I excelled.

When I turned 13 our family moved to Auckland. My dad received a job promotion and my parents recognised that our options as a family were limited if we continued to live in Gisborne. Many people in the region live in poverty, do not complete education, go on to be young parents and many of the job opportunities that are available are in seasonal work or forestry. My parents wanted more for me and my brother than what Gisborne could offer us. I remember my grandmother, a Māori woman, telling me at a young age that if I wanted to make it in life, I had to do it the Pākehā way.

We moved to the North Shore which is an extremely different environment than the one I grew up in. I was placed in a top streamed class for accelerant learners and was one of a handful of "brown students" in my class, let alone the school. I was one of two Māori students who completed high school in my year. Once again I was very lucky to have very supportive teachers who nurtured my academic gifts because they saw the potential I held as a Māori student. This continued into university where I was granted a Community Partnership Scholarship to attend Auckland University of Technology (AUT). I graduated from AUT and went on to get a job at Auckland District Health Board.

Looking back on my journey, I am aware that I have been unconsciously groomed by the effects of colonisation. I have had the support of many amazing people to excel academically, and I am truly grateful for that support. I'm also aware that the more I engage with the education system, the further from my culture I am. Because the foundations of the education system (and the health system for that matter) are underpinned by Western culture, the system is not naturally designed to uphold or support Māori culture and beliefs.

In my working life, I'm well aware of the effects of colonisation, after all, we hear the statistics all the time; many Māori do not complete secondary school with a small handful continuing on with tertiary education. Many more live in poverty with poor housing. Māori are over represented in the justice system as well as the Care and Protection system. We are over represented in some of the poorest health statistics for our country such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and suicide; just to name a few.

As a healthcare system, we are aware of many of the challenges for Māori, but our system is framed in such a way that it can come across as if we're expecting Māori to jump on board with Western frameworks, rather than collaborating and creating a healthcare model that meets the needs of Māori. As a Māori health clinician, I'm often looked to by my peers to help create change for my people because I am Māori. The difficulty here is that in order to excel in life – travel, have financial stability, own a home - I've had to do it the Pākehā way which has taken me away from my culture. I feel uncomfortable being looked to as an expert on my culture when colonisation has created disconnection between me and my culture. In addition, it is hard to connect with and befriend Māori health practitioners because there are so few of them. For this reason, many of my friends are middle class Pākehā, and my life mirrors that of my Pākehā friends. I'm disconnected in a sense from whānau as I don't share some of their lived experiences and yet I feel incredibly connected to them due to our blood bond.

As you can see my life is difficult because I'm walking in two worlds, and feeling like I belong in neither. In my career, I feel responsible for my people and the expectation for me to do more than my job description because I am Māori. I don't see my Pākehā friends being asked to do more because of their ethnicity. I often think that I see the world differently and I work hard to translate and synthesise my world view with

the dominant western culture. In order to share opinions, I package or sensor some of my worldview, in order for people to understand my perspectives. Often I feel like I'm hustling for acceptance in my workplace because I know I don't always fit in with the system.

On the other hand, there are times where I feel appreciated and celebrated because I am Māori. Whilst it feels great to be seen as a Māori male in a predominantly Pākehā workplace, it can leave me feeling 'othered' because of my ethnicity. When I take part in conversations about improving health care for Māori with my non-Māori colleagues, I feel envious that they can go home and turn off work. Whereas, I am reminded of the lack of societal privileges every time I open my social media. I can't go home and turn off work when the reality of Māori health is in my face.

When it all becomes too much, I wish that I could turn up to work and be "Ben", but then guilt sets in and I feel like I'm betraying my people. I am fully aware that I'm in a position to create change but it is hard work to change it. In my personal life I feel a sense of failure for not having many Māori friends, not knowing te reo Māori, or being rusty with tikanga. I have trouble relating to my whānau because we do not have shared experiences. I feel a deep sadness and self shame that I am a beneficiary of colonisation whilst my whānau, the people I love, are the faces of the statistics that Māori are well known for. I feel I should be doing more for them, even though I feel disconnected from them.

It's a burden I carry. This is colonial shame. I have done a lot of research about shame, particularly through the work of Brene Brown, and here is what I know. Shame makes you want to hide away and the less you talk about shame, the more you have. Shame loves and grows in darkness. But it is conquered by light. Illuminating shame decreases it and so I talk about my reality; to shake the shame I carry. This is my life. I don't have another life, and pretending that my life is different, or feeling angry that colonisation has impacted my life is unhelpful. I'm learning to accept that I inherited this story because I was born to an ethnic group unfavoured by colonisation. It is unhelpful to blame, but it is helpful to be aware of and speak out about the impact unspoken impacts of colonisation.

Within all of this, I feel very lucky to be an occupational therapist. To be part of a profession that upholds bicultural practice within the frameworks of the competencies. We mandate that our profession must be competent with working with Māori. The inclusion of Competency Two to the e-Portfolio is a clear indication of our commitment as a profession to ensuring that we are doing our part in improving healthcare for Māori. How amazing is that?

At the Clinical Workshops in Wellington in 2016, we discussed changes to the e-Portfolio. During this discussion, there was a comment from a participant asking if Māori could provide more training to up skill non-Māori. Whilst there is a gap that exists, and non-Māori should have access to being up skilled in Māoritanga, I have an issue with the expectation that Māori

should be doing more to provide non-Māori with training. If you're a beneficiary of colonisation, do not expect Māori to educate you about the experiences and challenges of being Māori. We are already working hard to stay afloat in a system that was not designed to benefit us.

A good friend of mine once said that equality might succeed if beneficiaries of privilege create space for the non-privileged. To my non-Māori allies, please give us space to grow in the world that was created to benefit you. By creating an open space, we will talk to you about hopes, dreams, and wishes for our people. In turn, we will also allow space for you to join us on that journey and up skill you with the knowledge and tools you will need to help us on that pathway to achieving a socially just future. Our profession is leading the way in cultural competence. Not just in New Zealand, but in the world and I'm excited by the change that can happen when Māori and non-Māori healthcare professionals work collaboratively to decolonise healthcare in Aotearoa.

Decolonising Me: Towards Consciousness (Isla's journey)

Decolonisation is the "intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands..." (Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2005, p. 2). My decolonisation journey began unconsciously and uncritically many years ago. Questioning what was obviously untrue and noticing glaring incongruence between some media portrayals and my life experience was relatively straightforward work. However, sharpening the focus of how colonialism is perpetuated only started when I interacted with the writings and talks of indigenous critical theorists (such as Leonie Pihama, Belinda Borell, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Karina Walters), black academics (including James Baldwin, Ta-Nehisi Coates), black feminists (including bell hooks and Toni Morrison), comedians (such as Aamer Rahman and Samantha Bee) and many 'woke' allies. Scaffolding my emerging conscientisation were concepts such as privilege, universalism, colour blindness, communication derailment techniques, reverse racism and historical trauma.

An essential step on the decolonisation journey is purposeful re-orientation from negative and deficit stories of the colonised towards the political, social, cultural and economic systems of the 'white world' that designed, built and maintain the modern indigenous experience (Durie, 2003; Smith, 2012). Having re-oriented attention to the machinations of colonisation, the fuel of colonialism becomes perceptible; relentless disconnect within and amongst communities, nations and nature. Central to the design and execution is the concept of 'privilege' or conferred advantage due to gender and skin colour (McIntosh, 1990).

Peggy McIntosh (1990) conceptualised privilege as an 'invisible backpack' that is filled and re-filled with unearned advantages and leg-ups. In her study, McIntosh noticed that the research subjects - in this case white men - could readily acknowledge that women were generally disadvantaged compared to men. However, they were unable to acknowledge that as men they were materially, socially and politically advantaged. Furthermore, ignoring those with less power is an expression of privilege (Durie, 2003).

It follows that while some settler populations appreciate that indigenous peoples have been disadvantaged by colonisation, they do not also perceive their own advantage (Pease, 2010). Closer to home, Borell et al (2009) observed that the myth of 'special benefits' to Māori is prevalent but irrational given the overwhelming number of social and health indicators stating otherwise. Studies in institutional racism, conscious and unconscious bias have provided much clarity to the collective delusion of special benefits (Blaise, 2010; Houkamau, 2016). Furthermore, harm and trauma arising from health inequities are able to be measured, tracked and recorded at individual, community and societal levels (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

Indigenous researchers have explicated the personal and collective trauma as 'soul wounding' as described by Eduardo Duran (2006) and historical trauma as further explicated by Karina Walters and colleagues (2011). Duran (2006) suggested that indigenous therapists must ascertain the degree of 'soul wounding' and disconnection that occurred for the indigenous families we meet as collective and personal trauma are in play (Pihama et al., 2017; Walters et al., 2011). The use of cultural assessments give voice to the historical trauma of whānau, hapū and iwi. In addition, a whānau ora philosophy and framework supports whānau to reframe what success is and in so doing, navigate historical trauma.

Certainly, my experience is that when asked, Māori do not testify that addictions, suicide, homelessness, obesity, domestic violence or even poverty is our greatest impediment. We sense that the real injustice is predatory affluence (Wise, 2012) and lament institutional and everyday racism and the theft of whenua: our practices of our own indigenous lifeways of connecting internally to ourselves (Durie, 1997) and externally to our whānau and our Earth Mother. We know that loss of connection is our greatest concern because we carry shame when we don't know a waiata (song), our language, our whānau, our marae ways, or how our rivers flow at springtime. We regain these connections when we kōrero (share discourse), whai whakaaro (theorise), karakia (prayerful connection), moemoea (dream and dream travel) and hui (gather together). I recall when I first studied occupational therapy over twenty years ago, few connection enabling activities appeared as part of occupational therapy theory.

1. Conscientisation is an English translation of Paulo Freire's conscientização and broadly (but somewhat imprecisely) means critical consciousness.

Travel weariness is part and parcel of my decolonisation journey and I have noticed that hurts and trauma are costly excess. Consequently, I create spaces of rest that include practices of forgiveness. It is impossible to journey far without these tikanga. Whether it be the cafe server who won't serve you, the security guard who surveils you, or the colleague who holds the pen for you, forgive fast and move on. Sometimes I call out the racism, sometimes I sit back and hope my allies will. I have noticed that without rest I find it hard to forgive history and trauma, and my mana feels voiceless.

Mana is an antidote to the colonial deficit-laden stories of indigenous identity, ability and dreams. Mana whenua stands one in the knowledge that for Māori we are who our mountains and rivers say we are. Mana whānau reminds that we are who our ancestors say we are (Royal, 2006). They do not see us as mere by-products of a land grab.

Indigenous Decolonised Occupation

Indeed, indigenous occupational therapists are in a unique position to appreciate, understand and reveal decolonised occupation for the following reasons. First, we are schooled early in the principles of kawa and tikanga. It is second nature to us to locate ourselves within the area we are, find out what are the ways the 'locals do it' and respect those ways and values – even when they are not our own. We are taught to listen to and respect local knowledge that has developed for reasons beyond what we might comprehend. Consequently, we experience many local ways to do, know and understand; the antithesis of universalisation of knowledge.

Second, we understand that chronic health conditions filter the daily expression of spirit through occupation. It is no great reach for indigenous occupational therapists to grasp that colonisation ought to be recognised for the chronic health condition that it is, as evidenced in its ability to arrest, impose, and force alternative everyday occupations and lifeways. As allied health professionals, we observe how the great disciplines of health are impotent in the face of political whim, drug company and insurance profits. Attention and resource for chronic health conditions are miniscule in comparison to that afforded to acute conditions and care (World Health Organization, 2002).

Thirdly, alongside the people we serve, we bear witness to the hundreds of moments a day where freedom, ability, hope and justice thrive within and become manifest in everyday occupations, in spite of chronic conditions. However, occupation as it is currently treated in occupational therapy requires some theoretical disinfection (Hammell, 2011; Hammell, 2013). Certainly occupation can either dismantle or perpetuate the social order (Angell, 2012). However, once decolonised, it is clear that occupation is whatever we ask it to be.

Fourth, it is expected of us. Our whānau, hapū, iwi and ancestors have very real expectations that we will integrate and whakamāoritā (make ordinary) our learnings. Having experienced how human doing is treated and understood in western thinking,

it is clear that ongoing colonisation has adhered to that particular view of occupation. Let us explicate and displace colonisation from the present-ness of everyday occupations, and instead reclaim what indigenous peoples absolutely know to be occupations.

Decolonised occupations including theorising, dreaming, communing, speaking indigenous talk are abundantly available to us, literally hundreds of moments a day. Decolonised occupation is where mauri (Life force) is intuited, mana is dwelled upon, and compounded generational love and consideration surges. Decolonised occupation allows our ancestors to rest as we make the most of opportunities they never had so that our shared descendants thrive. As indigenous occupational therapists, who witness disability, injury, heart hurts and soul wounds and whom have sat at the feet of ancestors and at the tables of humble, courageous and wise allies, we have a task to do.

Conclusion

Colonisation traumatises, harms, kills and dehumanises (Fanon, 1961; Memmi, 1965; Pihama et al., 2017; Smith, 2012). Worse still, extractive industry, economic servitude and death of hope have wreaked hell on the natural world which is being harmed every second of every day. The Great Disconnect between human doing and reverence for doing has left our tuakana, teina and Planet Earth herself in unprecedented peril. Decolonisation work is as great as it is urgent and as "Colonisation has shaped all of us; dismantling its ill-effects will therefore take the best efforts of all of us" (Mikaere, 2011, p. 91).

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa. Therefore, there you are, I see you.

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