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Eyes wide open: exploring the limitations, obligations, and opportunities of privilege; critical reflections on Decol2020 as an anti-racism activist event in Aotearoa New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) signed in 1840 by the British Crown and a number of indigenous hapū (subtribes) collectively named Māori has been widely positioned as the foundation document for the colonial state of Aotearoa New Zealand. Devastating consequences of breaches of Te Tiriti form an injustice perpetuated through overt and covert institutional racism. Such racism undermines Māori sovereign status, harms the wellbeing of contemporary Māori, contradicts a justice aspired to among democratic nations, and diminishes the justification of ourselves as a just people. As authors the demand to eradicate such racism is influenced by many Māori leaders whose efforts to honour Te Tiriti have never waned. We describe Decol2020 as a creative collaboration among community and scholarly activists intent on transforming racism. We offer this paper as a contribution to how such collaborations may be invigorated wherever any institutionalized injustice requires redress.

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Introduction: a meeting and a greeting

Warm Pacific greetings from a little subgroup of a larger group of activists, scholars, and activist scholars who have accepted the wero (a challenge)¹ to engage with academic peers who work in the realms of anti-racism and decolonization of Aotearoa New Zealand. To meet this wero, this essay is generated from the assumption that peer reviewed publications are merely one, but one important aspect of the many layers of engagement necessary for the realization of justice and peace in this world and perhaps the cosmos.

This paper is intended as a contribution to the responsibility demanded of the privileged in the face of racism and inequality, to “bend the moral arc of the universe towards justice” (Chomsky, 2017, p. 3). We call on the traditions of critical organisational scholars who with Māori and Tauwi (settler)² companions reflect on our being and becoming in the world. Many Māori have been making this road for one hundred and eighty years. As envisioned in Te Tiriti, Tauwi have a responsibility for the White privilege, racism, and colonial thinking that continues to impact Māori in harmful ways. We take a mandate from Chomsky that intellectuals “are typically privileged ... [and such privilege] yields opportunity, and opportunity confers responsibilities”

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(217:123). This responsibility according to Chomsky, requires an active contribution from scholars. Such responsibility is specifically demanded of all academics employed in New Zealand public universities, mandated by the Education Amendment Act (1990) to contribute as a critic and conscience of society. Through this paper we seek to serve this mandate.

We begin our paper by introducing ourselves. We do so to “show our face” to readers and to signal how our thoughts are guided by global and local scholars and activists we have chosen for our response to the racism associated with historic colonization perpetuated in contemporary neo-colonizing forms. We contribute to this global engagement by describing and reflecting on a local event: Decol2020, a ten-day series of activities comprised of diverse Covid-19 adjusted presentations, fireside chats, networking opportunities, and commitments to actions. We offer this essay as a contribution to the invigoration anti-racism and decolonizing praxis in the context of Aotearoa³ and beyond.

We pay our respects to te rōpū Rangitira (leadership) Māori professors such as Ranginui Walker, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Te Kawehau Hoskins, Leonie Pihama, and many more. Their ideas permeate our scholarship even as we have much more to learn from our opportunities to reach into such mahi (work). We also weave into our essay some specific ideas of western scholars such as those of Emmanuel Levinas, largely through the interpretation by of his work by Wray-Bliss (2009) and of the work of Paulo Freire, as guided by Ana Maria Araujo Freire (1994).

We call specifically on the work Smith (1999) and her generation of courageous authors. They detail aspects of western knowledge and ways of being that are deeply complicit in the colonization of Aotearoa. But aspects of western knowledge are also to be valued. Writes Smith: “Māori knowledge represents the body of knowledge which, in today’s society can be extended, alongside that of existing western knowledge (1999, p. 175). In our call on both western and Māori scholars, we draw also on the now widely used framing for ethical engagement in work with Māori through the work of Hudson et al (2010) in *Te Ara Tika* (the right way – or the way for making right).

Our paper takes form in Three Parts. Part One provides an introduction to ourselves (as authors) and the ideas we have selected to work with. In Part Two we describe Decol2020 as a project still in progress. Some of the insights we derive from our selected scholars in Part One are extended in Part Three to affirm our commitment to engage with our peers in our ongoing academic writing, and in our applied practices as researchers, teachers, and community activists inspired by the critical hope we find in our guiding authors.

Part one: Making visible ourselves, our Tiriti understandings, and our selection of guiding lights

In the scholarly work we are drawn to, the visible identity of authors is deemed a necessary aspect of respectful engagement. Therefore we show ourselves, our interpretation of Te Tiriti and its obligations, and the concepts we draw on for the subsequent discussion of Decol2020 in Part Two and Three.

We the authors: a virtual meeting of a face to face

It has become more common practice in Aotearoa to begin an engagement among peoples with a mihi/whakawhanaungatanga (a greeting, a making of connections, of family). Such a greeting also serves [theoretically speaking] as a disclosure of positionality related to our sense of responsibility, responsiveness, and respons-**ability** with regard to giving **affect** to Te Tiriti. We are:

Alex: I am a Pākehā educational researcher and activist who was raised bilingually (Māori and English) on the ancestral lands of K. My work explores the intersection of indigenous – settler colonial power relations and social justice theory and practice.

Heather: He Tangata Tiriti ahau. I am a person of Te Tiriti. I am a seventh-generation Pākehā (White settler) activist scholar who engages in scholarly work, training, and activism in pursuit of a racial justice and Te Tiriti honouring future.

Kahu: He Tangata Whenua (Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāi Te Rangi) ahau. I am a Māori, feminist, mother of three rangatahi (young people). Alex is my whānau (relation), I am inspired by Heather. Maria is the wind beneath my wings. I am so grateful for the difficult, yet transformative work they do.

Maria: I became drawn into anti-racism work in the 1980s inspired by the then vanguard of Pākehā leaders in Tiriti related anti-racism and social justice work. Subsequently I became a participant in Pākehā Tiriti community education initiatives, in all aspects of a thirty-year academic career in organisational studies, and more lately, with those who invite me into their projects. On my shoulders always, is the sharp eye and gentle voice of John Kirton (1997) and his generation of Pākehā educators who sought to bring the endemic racism of our times into the light and to transform our awakening into action.

Our Reading of Te Tiriti and related anti-racist activism and scholarship

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) is a treaty negotiated between the British Crown and a number of hapū. Māori sovereign status was recognised through He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene (1835) – the Declaration of Independence (Healy et al., 2012). He Whakaputanga affirms Māori as a legitimate treaty partner in the emergence of global law making. This treaty has five elements with versions in both the English and the Māori language. In the Māori text, referred to as Te Tiriti, the preamble established the relation intent of the treaty. Under Article One, Māori granted kāwanatanga to the British Crown, over their (non-Maori) people. Article Two of Te Tiriti affirms te tino rangatiratanga, the unfettered authority or sovereignty of Māori. Article Three grants Māori the same rights and privileges as British subjects. Through a codicil, Māori cultural and spiritual freedom are also specifically affirmed. In the lexicon chosen for the English version of The Treaty of Waitangi, Māori appear to have ceded sovereignty. We maintain the Māori version (Te Tiriti) is the authoritative text because

in accordance with international practice, the Treaty must be interpreted *contra proferentem*, against the drafter, the Crown, where there is ambiguity. Central is the debate over the use in the Maori version, that the large majority signed, of the terms “kāwanatanga” and “tino rangatiratanga”, compared with the “sovereignty” appearing in the English translation. (Gilling, 2000, p. 66)

In Aotearoa, state-initiated violence against Māori resistance to their intended decline into non-existence may be evidenced in the duplicity of the state in the framing of Ngā Pākanga Whenua o Mua (the New Zealand Land Wars) of the 1860s,⁴ Te Rā o te Pāhua (the razing of Parihaka) in 1879,⁵ and the eviction of occupiers of Takaparawhau (Bastion Point) in 1978.⁶ These markers of a disgraceful history are among the now more frequently recognised state violations of Te Tiriti attracting state apologies and compensations. These explicit examples of regret and redress must not deflect attention however from perhaps more subtle incursions on te tino rangatiratanga assured in Te Tiriti, through processes of neo-colonizing assimilations with life destroying impacts that still go largely unnoticed by the wider population.

While many Māori have insisted on the honouring of Te Tiriti from its inception, increasing numbers of non-Māori scholars, educators, and activists have joined that demand in part to redress the dangerous inequalities that are exacerbating in this land, and for some, a deep commitment to be(com)ing a just people. A pivotal marker in the exposure of the historic and contemporary racism associated with the colonisation of Aotearoa can be found in the work of Smith (1999) and her peers. Examples of Māori and Taiwi authors who have published in this domain from the 1980s and into the 21st century include Awatere (1984), Bargh (2007), Durie (1998), Healy et al. (2012), Hutchings and Lee (2016), Humphries (1992), Jackson (1995, 2016), Kelsey (1990), Kirton (1997), Nairn (2002), Sneddon (2005), Huygens (2007), Walker (1990), and Williams (2001). Despite the flurry of activist attention up to and into the turn of the century

and bearing in mind scholarly and governmental literatures in this field more recently articulated as a call for greater co-governance,⁷ the sovereignty of Maori assured in Te Tiriti is still persistently undermined. Such breaches of Te Tiriti are named as, located in, and perpetuated in large part through what we refer to as institutional or systemic racism.

Influenced by the work of the above and many similarly orientated scholars and activists, we have our minds on a future to be generated through non-violent means. For this non-violent approach to generating a future that is just for all, we look to the hopes for humanity found in the work of Habermas, Arendt, Levinas, and Freire on education in general and to *Te Ara Tika* (Hudson et al., 2010) as guide for our mahi as activist scholars in the praxis of decolonisation and anti-racism.

As contemporary activist scholars and authors in diverse professional fields our mahi includes a critical focus on the creation and implementation of guidelines, rules, protocols, and laws devised to guide the relationships through which we may govern ourselves and guide into being a future that is just for all. The establishment of “good policy and practice” however, also presents risks of new universalisations and related but perhaps unnoticed continued colonizing practices despite the intention of Te Tiriti inspired people to be guided by Māori-led ways, a caution considered in the more general concern of the work where the disruption of whiteness gets controlled by whiteness itself.

How then, can we create ways of being in the world with each other and with Papatūānuku (Mother Earth) when what is to be considered “good” generates at times resistance and even violent contestation, sometimes (but not only) perpetrated by the state and the institutions mandated to ensure justice for all as Te Tiriti proclaims? We do not offer definitive answers to the necessary continuation and diversification of inquiries such as these. Rather we see our question as a marker in a particular time and place, by specific communities of engagement, for the ongoing wero (challenge) of be(com)ing a justice loving people.

Decol2020 is offered in this essay as an example of attempts to be both teachers and learners by experienced activists and scholars, by new and curious explorers, each with insightful contributions, challenges in praxis, and creative ideas for the continuation of the work. In preparation for our reflection on Decol2020, we next review the influences of authors who caution their readers to be alert to the potential influence of world views, hegemonies, and herd instincts we cannot ever be fully aware of, nor extract ourselves from entirely. Actively seeking ways of remaining alert to such potential we posit, is a duty in the service of justice.

Our theoretical orientations

Douglas Smith, in his foreword to his translation of *On the Genealogy of Morals* describes Friedrich Nietzsche’s work as a struggle for justice that works outwards from a perceived disastrous state of humanity “towards an understanding of the many interacting factors which have produced this state” (p. xiv). Our calling to mind those who have influenced us as authors invite a similar “practice of genealogy [as] not only diagnostic and interventionist but [which is by the very choice of our guiding authors] indicates our intent to reflexivity. The result is a kind of intellectual family tree including more or less sympathetic relatives... a search for the roots of cultural phenomena ...” (Smith, D. 1996, pp. xiv–xx).

The necessary struggle for justice of which Nietzsche writes is articulated also by Freire as the struggle for the realization of a dream; “for which we struggle” (Freire, 1994, p. 101). Such realization of “a future of which we dream is not inexorable. We have to make it, produce it; else it will not come in the form that we would more or less wish it ... (ibid).

Our reflections on the influential work of Nietzsche and Freire have been enriched by our reading Foucault (1972). These authors provide a focus on social relations as generating power that may be repressive or generative. Just what is to be considered repressive or generative

however, must remain open to inquiry. But often in the face of the unknown or even unknowable in our everyday, personal, and professional lives we must choose our [in]action. That [in]action has the potential to contribute to the subjugation or emancipation of self, others, and perhaps whole communities.

The potential of [unwitting] participation in the oppression of others and the indictment of a “just self” in this context must always serve as an “alert”: Hannah Arendt’s observations of common complicity in the banality of evil we now know as “The [Nazi] Holocaust” is an insightful study. In Arendt’s example the general and manipulable desire for an orderly society organised according to a set of explicit or implicit values was fuelled by a Nazi intent to exterminate Jews, Romani, homosexual, and other targeted peoples.⁸ This Holocaust is but one of many holocausts known to humanity where diverse populations explicitly contribute to, tolerate, or are oblivious to the extermination of “the Other[ed]” in pursuit of and perhaps camouflaged by some popular[ised] call for order, salvation, civilization, modernization or [necessary] globalization.⁹

Reflection on a history that draws back from the attempted erasure of Māori draws our eye to the work of Hannah Arendt, who along with scholars such as Levinas and Habermas concerned themselves “with a hope that humanity would never succumb to the depravity of [such a] Holocaust” (Martin, 2019, p. 14). Hannah Arendt is the luminary we draw on to explore in contemporary times, what she identifies as the participation of very ordinary people in the materialization of “the banality of evil”; the generation and tolerance of unconscionable violence against categories of dehumanized lives.

The attempted extermination of Jews, Romani, homosexual peoples as the Other[ed] related WW2 atrocities depended to some extent on sufficient people agreeing those Other[ed] meant: “not us”. Nixon (2020) suggests that for Arendt such meanings [presented as facts, truths, or reality] that allowed for such distancing from an ethical crisis are “... constituted within [social dynamics] as an ongoing process of agreement-making that is forever being re-worked and re-fashioned (Nixon, 2020, p. 46). Such agreement-making entails the types and processes of power Foucault brings to our attention: repressive or generative forms of power and their uses by the oppressor/oppressed, the privileged/marginalised, worthy/unworthy themselves not as fixed or internally consistent as these binary categories might suggest but as always open to renegotiation, however unequal the concerned parties are in that reshaping.

Them not Us; They not Me

Levinas invites us to consider the ethical consequences of categorizing the perhaps unknowable “Other[ed]”. What is it then to make a treaty between two parties – two categories of diverse and perhaps unknowable others? The definition of the Other[ed] and the exploitative treatment of such, intimately engages the wider population in the very possibility of such treatment through complicity, deflections, or ignorance Arendt’s work alerts us to. As a response to such evils, Arendt concerns herself with the ways people can educate themselves into engaging in a world of human difference and unpredictability – a link we make to Freire’s ideas of the work to be done by the “privileged” and to Levinas’s concern about those innumerable others for whom I have a responsibility.

Education, activism, and activist education and research are examples of commitment redress examples of assimilation as a form of violence or violation of an expressed commitment to justice. Freire suggests “a learning process... whereby the powerful would learn that their privileges, such as that of exploiting the weak, prohibiting the weak from being, denying them hope, are immoral and as such need to be eradicated ... for the crushed, forbidden-to-be, the rejected, that would teach them that, through serious, just, determined, untiring struggle, it is possible to remake the world (p. 198). Despite this formal recognition of Māori as sovereign peoples, and despite Article Three assuring Māori equality with all people in this land, various waves of

genocidal activities (attempted actual erasure) and diverse assimilationist policies subsequently enacted by the Crown are now the source of painful and expensive redress.

Disrupting normalised oppressions

A first step towards a commitment to work courageously against the conditions that allow for the oppression, exploitation, and at times the extermination of fellow human beings in the pursuit of order, is to disrupt the discourses that create and perpetuate the order that enables or tolerates such harms. Following Butler (1990), to disrupt such harms may involve the unsettling of the very grounds from which meanings, truths, and relationships are generated – a focus on the disruption of a taken-for-granted she has in common with Nietzsche, Foucault, and Freire. On its own, disruption of an established system however, no matter the good intentions of the disruptors, is not sufficient if a more just world is the desired outcome. Such disruptions may even be dangerous in their unintended consequences. Such disruptions of institutions and systems deemed inadequate or untrustworthy by a critique from opposing ideas, may create a vacuum for an unsavoury hero to fill. Roughly categorised as two oppositional forces, each with their codified values intended for general (universal) application, each with their associated means of systemically marginalising those who do not fit their schema and cannot or will not be assimilated.

Wray-Bliss (2009, p. 270) articulates concerns about attempts “to impose false universality and entrench sectional interests, as [these may indicate] a politically problematic will to totality, a will to know the other who we can then knit into the notion of “will to power” explained by Danaher et al. (2000, p. xv) as an idea Foucault takes from Nietzsche to express “the notion that meanings, ideas, rules, discourses, knowledge and ‘truths’ do not emerge naturally, but are produced in order to support, advantage or valorise a particular social group”.

While common within and across population, diverse forms of racism have geographic specificity (Dunn & Geeraert, 2003). There are complex global parallels in how this system of power perpetuates injustice. The perpetuation of such injustice stands in contradiction to the expressed values of individuals and nations who prefer to think of themselves as just people. To disrupt such racism in all its forms demands the concerted efforts and mobilisation of many (Ford et al., 2019). Globally it requires monitored declarations and conventions. Nationally it involves legislative and policy initiatives. Regionally and locally, it requires the awareness, knowledge, skills, and motivation of citizens to change and to share power at individual and collective levels. Anti-racism activities require coalitions, watchdogs, scholars, educators, activists, and witnesses. Anti-racism activities are often under resourced (STIR & NZ Public Health Association, 2021) but are a necessary investment for a society aspiring to be a just society.

Nietzsche’s contribution to our consideration of the will to decolonisation as a path to justice is his ruthless inquiry into the deeply embedded values of Judeo-Christian ethics – “justice, equality, compassion – as they have been inherited and secularized by the Enlightenment tradition”. According to Smith (1996), both orientations to justice are posited by Nietzsche as “nothing more than local expressions of an omnipresent and immanent will to power, the ruthless vital force which animates all life and drives all human activity. In this sense, conventional morality and its scientific critique are skin deep, superficial disguises masking the operations of the will to power” (p. vii). The will to power is “at one time a product of aristocratic self-discipline and at another of the conditioning of the weak... (p. xx). These seemingly distinct energies may instead be considered as “the same active force which both builds states and instils bad conscience” (p. xx). “Unfortunately,” writes Smith (1996) “the distinction he (Nietzsche) proposes between a will exercised on others and a will exercised on the self becomes increasingly difficult to maintain” (p. xx).

The Other[ed] as Enigma- turning the focus to self

Perhaps paradoxical in the intent of our opening mihi to “show our face” as authors, as individuals, and as persons affiliated with various communities, we seek to explore some of the contradictions and opportunities that arise in such definitions of self and Other[ed] with whom we are in a necessary relationship. We do so to observe in Part Two of this essay, how Decol2020 provided an opportunity to share ways to come to know and trust ourselves and others, and how or why we might [re]shape ourselves in the context of a Te Tiriti based future for Aotearoa, – in a context we cannot ever know with certainty “the Other[ed]”, and bearing in mind, the reality that I and “the other” are never a static entity to be captured in a preferred sense of order or justice, the imposition of the will of one over that of the Other[ed] is deemed a form of violence.

While Freire’s notion of critical consciousness is intended to break the “culture of silence” he posits as infused into the demeanour of oppressed people, our focus in this essay is on the consciousness of the privileged, an adaptation of his work seeded in *Pedagogy of Hope*. The strategy Freire offers is the “unveiling” of that which is already known/real to the inquirer but that which may not be easily seen in its detail, let alone be spoken about. In that context, an “educational practice of a progressive option will never be anything but an adventure in unveiling” (1994, p. 7).

Freire posits that dialogue enhances positive connection between people and enlivens their capacity to transform themselves as well as their worlds through a “critical” hope (1994, p. 8). To engender such hope is “work”. Such work is a demanding, ethical struggle. The notions of struggle and work Freire expresses reverberate through the work of Butler and Athanasiou (2013) who articulate “... affective labor of critical agency ... [as] forging an alternative to the present” (p. 15) or what Freire articulates as a struggle to improve the world. It is the work of shaping such an alternative, with all the paradoxical risks of contributing to a counter imposed alternate universalisms (Wray-Bliss, 2009, p. 269) to the present.

It is the expressed intent of, the actions during, and the responses to Decol2020 that we turn to next as a critical reflection on an example of anti-racism work in Aotearoa. We describe the project and reflect on examples of feedback from participants in this event, particularly in its rapidly Covid19 induced on-line adaptation. Our chosen theme for reflection on Decol2020 in this essay then is *Eyes wide open: Exploring the limitations, obligations, and opportunities of privilege*.

Part two: Decol2020 – A project still in progress

a future of which we dream is not inexorable. We have to make it, produce it; else it will not come in the form that we would more or less wish it ... : (Freire, 1994, p. 101)

The conception of Decol2020 was seeded early in 2019 by Māori musician and storyteller, Moana Maniapoto. Moana hash-tagged #projectwaitangi, a national network of Tauwiwi committed to upholding Te Tiriti and transforming racism. Heather (an author of this paper) responded to the tweet saying she would accept the challenge as part of a group she belongs to. Heather spoke to a friend, then another, and soon a working party was mobilised. It was decided to craft an event drawing on the expertise of Māori and Tauwiwi activists and academics to strengthen anti-racism responsiveness, responsibility and respons-ability and to amplify the key messages of anti-racism in the context of a Te Tiriti honouring future. *Decol2020* was born.¹⁰

Anti-racism work in Aotearoa requires complex negotiation between Tauwiwi and Māori. This is nuanced work including the appropriate use of Māori concepts and lexicons. This makes the gifting to *Decol2020* of the whakataukī (proverb) “Hei kanohi mataara, hei ringa whiti – Eyes wide open, ready for action” as a guide to bind our thinking, planning, and being together particularly special.¹¹ The whakataukī was interpreted as a prompt to alert the senses through invigoration of te ngākau (heart/sensation), te hinengaro (intellect/mind), ngā ringaringa (practices).

The ethos of *Decol2020* was also influenced by the ethical guidelines drawn from *Te Ara Tika* (Hudson et al, 2010). These guidelines were developed to encourage Tauīwi to enhance and strengthen work with Māori, and to legitimate Māori efforts to ensure that any research undertaken in Aotearoa is based on tikanga and mātauranga Māori (Māori ethical principles and philosophies). Specific principles taken from *Te Ara Tika* (Hudson et al., 2010) were:

- Ensuring acceptability and accountability to Māori;
- Embracing a relational ethic to work with Māori;
- Committing to equitable benefits through a sustained focus on mana (mutual respect);
- Committing to equity and distributive justice.

While initiated by a small group of activists, with particular attention to its consistency with a Te Tiriti honouring process, the aspiration to enhance and expand collaborative relationships was evidenced in the rapid expansion of contributors and participants from the very conception to implementation of *Decol2020*. Partners provided invaluable support in the form of promotion, financial and in-kind contributions, technical support, speakers, facilitators, strategies, train-the-trainer sessions and watch parties, access to mailing lists, artwork (memes and posters), prizes, organisational endorsement, and the sharing of food. The encouragement embedded in the whakataukī, and the guiding principles of *Te Ara Tika* endorse the critical reflection on relational ethics infused in both provides ethical guidance for this essay.

The organisers for the event were predominately Tangata Tiriti (Tauīwi with an expressed commitment to be[com]ing Te Tiriti honouring), many with strong connections into te ao Māori (the Māori world) and anti-racism communities. As the initiators moved from concept to outreach, the project gathered over a dozen Māori partner organisations including mana whenua (local Māori with territorial authority). On the project website the organisers published the accountability arrangement made with Māori. From conception to development, implementation, and evaluation, all arrangements were made in dialogue with Māori.

Reported experiences of the Decol2020

With ethics approval in place, we gathered feedback on the *Decol2020* experience through an online survey, noting informal feedback sent to organisers, and by hosting pre- and post-event meetings with our partners regarding key messages, aims and learning. A link to an online survey using Survey Monkey was distributed via email to everyone who registered for *Decol2020* at the conclusion of the event, along with a participant information sheet describing the purpose of the evaluation. Ethical approval was secured through AUTEK. The survey link was promoted through project partners' communication channels, e-newsletters and social media. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. Participants had a month from the end of the final webinar in the series to complete the survey. Those who had not responded by the set closure date were deemed to have declined to participate. A total of 110 people completed the online survey, mainly from Aotearoa (98) but also from Australia, Canada and the United States.

We used the survey to ask three broad questions – how participants felt about the usefulness of the *Decol2020* webinar series; how participants intended to apply their new knowledge; and how such programmes could be strengthened. Summary quantitative information was extracted from Survey Monkey to show distribution of participants perceptions. Responses to qualitative questions were analysed using a thematic analysis approach as set out by Braun and Clarke (2006). Eighty percent reported an excellent overall experience and 64% reported the sessions were of very high quality. To assess educational impact, we asked participants to assess their levels of knowledge and expertise on three domains prior to and post the event; (i) decolonisation, (ii) Te Tiriti; and (iii) racism/anti-racism. Improved knowledge and expertise were reported across

all three domains with significant shifts in participants reporting strong knowledge post the webinar series. Overall, reported participant experiences were almost all positive. Central to our own assessment of the value of *Decol2020* however, would be some indication that the event would generate action beyond the event itself. The following were identified as important outcomes of the event:

- The event attracted 15,000+ registrations over the ten-day period.
- 28 recorded webinars were made available on the #decol2020 YouTube channel.
- 2 decolonisation action posters were produced and made available for distribution;
- He Hōmiromiro, a virtual decolonisation reading group, gained a 27% increase in subscriptions;
- More than 3000 new connections were made on the *Decol2020* Facebook page;
- Several requests for advice and support from other organisers around hosting virtual conferences were generated;
- A Facebook competition focused on participant actions following #decol2020;
- Media coverage included items on Te Korimako o Taranaki FM 94.8; NewsTalk ZB; Waatea News; Stuff.co.nz;
- e-newsletter distributions proliferated.

We now turn to the qualitative responses selected for their pertinence to the early scholarly focus we have chosen for this essay.

Alert the senses

In addition to canvassing how the specific aims of *Decol2020* were experienced by participants we wished to assess our impact through what Butler and Athanasiou (2013) refer as “... affective labor... of critical agency... [of] forging an alternative to the present”. Our selection of participant observations reflects our response to the gifted whakataukī with its call to confluence te hinengaro (the intellect), te ngākau (the heart/spirit), and ngā ringaringa (practices) into our reading of Freire’s call on critical hope, theory, and actions, and Levinas’s respect of “the senses”, to consider the extent to which we (authors and organisers) met our aspirations to contribute, profile, build knowledge, extend activities, and encourage activism directed towards the decolonisation of Aotearoa. We alert the senses through the integration and invigoration of our mahi as “affective labour” – labour that in part entails an undoing of the universalisation of the western individualised agent as the epitome of an emancipated person on which much public policy and education on justice is still premised.

Martin (2019) draws on Levinas for a review of the foundations of western individualism by considering a “relational person... a one-to-one, a face-to-face, a relationship of love, kindness and respect... with sensual and spiritual aspects... which becomes the genesis of the reference for the social order “and the source of our responsibility and the need direction of our responsibility (p. 16) – in part our capacity to act, to engage in a struggle, to remain motivated through a critical hope advocated for by Freire (1994). In this regard, antiracism work is articulated by one Decol2020 participant as

the practice of making a decision every day that you’re still gonna put one foot in front of the other, that you’re still going to get up in the morning. And you’re still going to struggle ... It’s work to be hopeful.

Accordingly, below we offer an initial framing of insight into our reflection on the qualitative information we were able to gather – bearing in mind that even as we have distinguished heart, mind, and action, their integration is assumed – one is enlarged by the other in a symbiotic way as are the values of indigenous world view described by Verbos and Humphries (2014b).

Te Ngākau (the heart/spirit): critical motivation/hope

The primary audience for this event were those who are aware of social, cultural, environmental, and economic inequities but struggle to remain motivated in their own sense of agency and commitment to respond to oppression and injustice in the context of Te Tiriti breaches.

Great job! So grateful! You are all awesome and I want to thank you for creating such a confronting, thought-provoking and inclusive event; You did fantastic.

Typical comments of appreciation used words such as gratitude, aroha (love) and respect for the organising crew, the kai korero, [speakers] the back-up support whānau ... Ngā mihi arohanui ki a koutou, so much love ...”.

Te Hinengaro (the intellect): critical thinking

The stimulation of the intellect on ourselves as authors is selectively explored in the space constrained Part One of this essay. There were also reports from participants that the opportunity to think together was valued:

Ka Rawe! [Excellent]You've created an amazing kete [basket] of knowledge that is of great value now and for the future

Nga Ringaringa (the practices): critical action (praxis)

An example of the outcome of Decol2020 as inspiring ongoing action came from a participant who wrote:

This conference was amazing. I shared all the links with my colleagues ... I will keep raving on about it ...

Many Decol2020 participants made bold commitments to take on the necessary work of the decolonisation of Aotearoa and to tackle racism that arises from breaches of Te Tiriti wherever they witness it. Participants told us about their commitment to future action such as developing teaching resources, watching missed webinars on YouTube and disseminating the links on to other individuals, groups, or organisations as an educational resource to be used. There was a significant increase in sign-ups for a newly established monthly decolonisation reading group, and the development of our own freely available memes from speakers created easily accessible and pithy quotes that were be used to provoke and support further anti-racism work. Leadership of, and participation in, training of more independent, community-based Te Tiriti educators was committed to by many. Almost everyone reported a deepened understanding about Te Tiriti, anti-racism and decolonisation, and articulated commitment to encouraging collaborative relationships with and between partner organisations. Overall, participants demonstrated their commitment to stimulate public discussion and action.

The complex notions of human emancipation from oppression of the Other[ed] by the powerful, the privileged, the complicit, the ignorant, and the fearful is an element of justice that many Te Tiriti focused people turn their attention. Many *Decol2020* participants reported they were exploring their own privilege and were planning to take steps to understand/learn and investigate their own identity history and place in the world. Others were keen to learn more about racism, colonial history, and te Ao Māori. Some were ready to practice te reo and deepen their understanding of tikanga Māori (the Māori language and protocols). Similarly, people valued direction to existing anti-racism resources such as the *Me and White Supremacy Workbook* (Saad, 2021) to confront their own privilege and to move closer to becoming an ally in decolonialising activities. Some people reported that they had joined associated Facebook pages, such as *Tauivi mō Matike Mai Aotearoa* (a group advocating a Te Tiriti-based constitutional change).

Commitments were made to develop courage and expertise to challenge colleagues to stop spreading misinformation and racism; to ally better with Pākehā colleagues in work to dismantle structural racism, to trust and listen more deeply, and to examine more carefully their own practice.

Ideas about actions included becoming more confident in expressing views; joining decolonisation reading groups and participating in Facebook groups related to disrupting racism and colonisation; developing resources to support decolonisation work by Tauīwi, and joining Tauīwi based action groups. Actions taken include one participant utilising the webinars to deliberately strengthen their allyship skills, and others planning on having more conversations about racism and privilege to recruit more allies in challenging White privilege. Many committed to amplify “bystander” interventions – as one respondent phrased it: “challenge shit”.

I have a much better grasp of the importance of biculturalism and hope I use this in my day-to-day work and encounters.

When asked what two things they might do differently as an outcome of participation in *Decol2020* ideas included explicit commitments to be more open-minded, courageous, active, and vocal about anti-racism and decolonisation; be willing to share experiences; develop resources to support decolonisation work by Tauīwi; use te reo more; bring wairua [spirit] more into their mahi; be sensitive and respectful; and commit more time to this kaupapa [agenda].

From Tauīwi participants, there were commitments to follow leadership from Māori and aspirations towards engagement with Māori struggles. There were commitments to explore allyship and collaborations with Māori and Tauīwi in the process of doing decolonization, to focus on greater range of Tauīwi perspectives as Tangata Tiriti and join new Facebook groups and other such communities. Some participants acknowledged the need to be wary of appropriating language without a grasp of the deeper meaning and connections. There were many undertakings to speak against institutional racism wherever it presents itself, to help people learn about inequality and racism within and across fields of application:

Ongoing reflections: accept the gift: feeling connected, informed and energised

Despite the need to radically reshape the format of *Decol2020* due to the impact of Covid19 restrictions, formal feedback provided a sound indication that the programme was deemed a welcome, informative, and energising event. Specifically appreciated was the variety of presentations in content and style, to be able to zoom in, listen, chat, ask questions, and to re-view presentations as webinars. Participants raised issues for improvement of the process. These were nearly all to do with the technological aspects of an on-line forum where preferably “face to face” would be the preferred ways of working. Covid-19 impacted uptake of virtual connectivity suggests many of these issues would now not be the challenge they were to us as novices.

Keep pace with new technology and stable platforms

Most of the suggested improvements to the virtual format related to technical issues. Useful suggestions for the improvement of a future event included using break out rooms for discussion or participant activity; encouraging people to make connections and build relationships for working together or supporting each other; providing summaries of key points for reference without having to search through YouTube clips; and making recordings available closer to the end of each session. There were ideas for better communication by sending out calendar reminders when signing up to a webinar, and marketing more to reach a wider audience. Scheduling suggestions included not having so many events at one time, spreading the programme over two weeks, allowing for more time between events, providing more interactive options, having a tighter agenda, and scheduling more sessions between 6 and 8 pm.

Equity and access concerns were recognised with suggestions to provide equipment to some and facilitate hearing more from youth and elders. While these comments provide guidance for improvement, participants were also generous in their recognition that under the circumstances, the change in format due to the Covid19 lockdown, as well as the unexpectedly high number of registrations that needed management, *Decol2020* was “a VERY ambitious project to pull together with just volunteers”. All in all the feedback suggests a very successful event.

Congratulations on pulling such an ambitious event together! It has really given a boost to anti-racism and Tiriti-based organising! It brought together, even if virtually, most of the key individuals and groups involved in anti-racist and Tiriti-based organising, which is really important and was really overdue, and stimulated and enthused the audiences I was part of about a just future. It also provided a list of te Tiriti educators around the country and produced decol posters. Now we need to build on that momentum.

Overall, we observed the direct impact of the wider activities we were involved in through social media, through session design, process problem solving, and “thank you” messages. The response was intended as (and remains) an attempt by Pākeha with Māori guidance, to demonstrate a (critical) hope for the generation of a more just Aotearoa as a nation of just people (still) in the making. We as authors of this essay also experienced Decol2020 as exceeding our hopes and aspirations for this event. The experiences of Decol2020 and the ongoing mahi that continues to this day, shows passionate support in that the event hosted in 2022 (Te Tiriti based futures: Anti-racism 2022 (Decol, 2022)) attracted more than 45k registrations, and although due to our own resource restrictions and Covid-19 disruptions we did not gather publishable feedback, the calibre of presentations, and the continued invigoration of events leading up to and following Decol2022, suggest a strong community of activists and scholars are at work. What within this trajectory of work might we as scholars, drawn to the ideas selected for Part One of this paper, investigate further?

Part three: together in search of a better world for all

Much exploitation is enabled by the disassociation of the powerful and privileged from responsibility for the Other[ed] – particularly if their power or privilege may be shown to be generated from theories of justice where the marginalisation of those Other[ed] – human beings essentialised in some way, categorised and relegated to the margins – may be integrated/assimilated on preconceived ideas of justice. Justice-work (and Te Tiriti work as our example), requires an investigation of this universalisation, categorization, and marginalisation, and their supporting moral reasoning for redress of their complex implications.

Reading Levinas (as interpreted by Wray-Bliss, 2009) has drawn our attention to the work of scholars who “are careful to delineate a reading that steers towards a non-essentialising, non-moralistic ethics” (p. 272). Such authors are presented by Wray-Bliss as anti-foundationalist and radical in their rethinking of the relationship between self and other. It is an ethical response not from attempts “to know and categorise the other (to make them an object of my knowledge –[i.e.] to reduce them to a construction that is mine” (p. 272) and thus able to be integrate “them” into “our” schema of good and evil, deserving of my care or not, bound to me by some idea of duty or distanced from me by a justified non-responsibility). This “making known” or what Freire may call to “make [seemingly] concrete” in some way some way is common to all knowledge creators and related legislative bodies. There is room here for a closer look at the differences and similarities between Levinas’s notion of the “unknowable other” we cannot and must not universalise and Freire’s attention to “the system” as a concrete entity [thus knowable – including its constituent populations] and entity to be challenged and transformed [including the identities of the constituent populations).

With the guidance of selected theorists introduced in Part One of this essay, and with our reflections on the responses of Participants to Decol2020, we now turn our attention to

ourselves, as authors and as Te Tiriti activists. We have selected two matters for further consideration a choice influenced by our observations of the increasingly violent polarisations of populations within and across nations:

- i. Concern about the intensification of divisiveness – the universalising of oppositional assumptions generating the antithesis of the desired outcomes.
- ii. The risk of contributing to unintended and selective system preserving assimilation . . .

The current intensification of a state of humanity in dangerous conflict gives urgency to questions about how humans can live together when very different and at times, contradictory ideas of justice are asserted, at times violently. Such conflicts have been recently expressed on the parliamentary grounds of some established democracies with accompanying images of nooses prepared for the advocates of counter-positions, or by aiming warheads at opponents. Often the same indigenous, religious, and political emblems are being hoisted by contesting sides to bolster their preferred truth claims.

The primary categorizations of the treaty context are framed as Māori and Pākehā distinctions/partnerships. This may be a necessary codification for Te Tiriti settlements and reparation. Conflicting ideas about giving *affect* to Te Tiriti through Māori influenced models of governance illustrate an intensification of divisiveness evidenced a year out from the elections in Aotearoa. A Te Tiriti based future is perceived by some as an unacceptable Māorification of the nation.¹²

Vote for the Labour-Green-Te Pāti Māori (TPM) bloc [posits journalist Hooton, 2022] and you'll get evermore insufferable Grey-Lynn wokeism, world-first climate taxes on provincial New Zealand solely designed to bolster Jacinda Ardern's international brand, radical separatism and ultimately some kind of "Tiriti-ocracy". But vote for the National-Act axis, they say, and a hapless and policy-less Christopher Luxon will be pushed far right by a much better organise and ideologically committee David Seymour.

The resistance depicted above could be viewed as a reactionary response to the *affective* gains made by Māori and Pākehā Te Tiriti activists, leaders, and community innovations over the past three decades. The increasing distance between the depicted oppositions is a space that could be taken advantage of by a populist weighting towards one or other side. It might also be the space where creative work can be done. The success of Decol2020 and the even more numerous registrations for Decol2022 suggest anti-racism and Te Tiriti work continues, intensifies, and deepens, occupies this space and radiates its influence accordingly. However, we advocate for this proposed occupation with a caution.

The space created by the disruptors of oppositions expressed above may be a space for the peacemaker by a reconciling appeal to the voting public to come closer to a position that can be shared or at least respected – a tolerance of difference deemed a strength of democratic societies. Such tolerance requires a sense of *responsability*, attributes of which can be "explored through the motif of the face-to-face" encounter and considered for the public domain, including law" writes Martin (2019, p. 13).

Respecting difference

Among the deep roots of the Tiriti activist movement an examination of "the difference" between Māori and Pākehā and once "identified" how these might be codified and managed. Aspects of this "identifying", and "codifying" are integral to the necessary legal, policy, and governance directions which we not but have not the space to expand in this essay. We direct our attention now to the Tiriti work that is focused self-reflection and reflexivity – a reflexivity that would impact future codification and so on. For this focus on the "self" we again take note of the challenges brought Levinas in the consideration of the western idea of an emancipated individual as an agent of change – in whom is vested responsibility or the Other[ed]:

The more I divest myself of my freedom as a constituted willful, imperialist subject, the more I discover myself to be responsible; the more just I am (Cited by Martin, 2019, p. 17).

The challenge for the moral person is to find and hold both an individual position, to be an enabled (responsible^{able}) agent of change, to be in communion with others and to not succumb to the “herd instinct” Nietzsche “attributes at times to the organization of the masses...” (Smith, D. 1996, p. xiv–xx). While holding onto the integrity of the Tiriti analyses, how can this be amplified without amping up of the moral divisions so evident within and across nations, communities, and families at this time. Paradoxically perhaps, there is a need for greater confidence, assertiveness, and affectiveness in our Tiriti mahi, even as there is a need for [mis]trust of what we think we know.

i. *Of [im]proper [mis]trust – the risk of unwitting contribution to assimilation*

A further connection between the work of Levinas and the observations of Arendt are brought to our attention by Wray Bliss who writes that a critical orientation as a form of “mistrust” of those whose views differ from our own is crucial and may be “proper in modern times ... [but] this mistrust is also reproducing some unwelcome effects. Wray-Bliss continues that the field of ethics needs to recognize and reconsider such mistrust ethics “if it is to avoid a questionable complicity in the effacement or defacement of others” (2009, p. 268). Such complicity might come dressed in an attractive, seemingly emancipatory or revolutionary garb but still serve the assimilative strategies of the powerful and privileged. The exposed tensions may be recognised, reconfigured just enough for the dissent to be appeased, to dissipate, to ensure the privileged remain privileged.

How do activists, in our case those working to generate a Tiriti affirming futures, deal with contesting oppositions of power that is correctly the focus of analyses and action? In the call to caution against the objectification of binary categories of being with the call to tolerance of difference, is “not to be confused with connivance” ... [It] is intended as a criticism of sectarianism” (Freire, 1994, p. 8). Connivance with evil should not go uncorrected (p. 9). It is a strength of the anti-racism movement, illustrated in many of the presentations at Decol2020 that connivance with system-protecting assimilations (codifications) cannot be tolerated.

But new critical questions arise. Might we as a passionate community of staunch activists and activist scholars be so enchanted by our stories about ourselves and others that we risk a yet to be noticed uncritical positioning of ourselves as the righteous, universalising authority of justice? To not consider this risk is to risk an[unwitting] contribution to an ever more sophisticated hegemonic will to power the neo-colonial, neoliberal State is well skilled at ensuring. Might we (as a community of Tiriti educators and activists) be at risk of contributing to a herd-instinct of followers of a seemingly radical agenda, serving the status quo by trusting the work undertaken is emancipatory? Might the very success at exposures of tensions make those very tensions adaptable for ready assimilation of the definition of “the other” reduced to a construction that is mine”?

Decol2020, and anti-racism workers in Aotearoa are a community of passionate people committed to the realisation of a Tiriti honouring nation. We as authors of this essay, with the critical companionship of Māori and Pākeha – with our eyes firmly on the responsibility and responsibility of Pākeha, acknowledge the problematic reductionism of these complex categories made more concrete in the laws and policies we together make. But these may also be seen as a basis for a transcendence to a life together that honours more than law – in the love and respect for the sensuous lives of each: lives that can be thought of “the source of relational ethics arise from pour bonds with others, physical emotional, conscious and unconscious bonds which antecede the development of agency and the exercise of free will (Martin, 2019, p. 16). In so doing we may permeate not dissolve the categories of western mechanistic, instrumental thinking with

its post enlightenment separation of research, teaching, lore breaking, and law making. This we find such transdisciplinary approach in the Māori notion of ako¹³ (co-inquiry) as a relational life-way, a way of moving forward in our Tiriti related anti-racism mahi. An example of this form of integrated relationality can be found in Salmond (2022, p. 4) who, guided by Pā Henare Tate, invites “Te Tiriti...[to] be visualised as a meeting place where different groups of New Zealanders come together to resolve injustices and seek peace with one another” and what Hoskins et al. (2011) refer to as relational responsibilities – examples of which were clearly demonstrated in Decol2020. We, as authors, are reinvigorated and challenged to continue this work – along with a good dose of caution with regard to the how and the who we draw on for inspiration and support. Our desire to have tangible impacts for Māori drives our motivation to build activist capacity in Aotearoa, encouraging more Tauīwi to take up or extend this work. In this realm we have some pragmatic questions to continue to motivate future actions:

- Who else has tried something like this Decol2020 Project and to what effect?\
- Who are using a different approach and to what effect?
- How and why do other approaches differ from our example?
- Are there different signals or trends that we should be noticing?
- What can we weave into our own mahi from their learnings?

There are also theoretical questions to consider. Returning to Butler and Athanasiou (2013, p. 15), anti-racism workers may ask how to remain open to the changing “indeterminate performativity” of others, or how to be alert to ever more sophisticated hegemonic adaptations or alternative authorities which become the possibilities “of what matters as presence”? To act require decisions to be made. To assume to know, to be closed or inattentive to risks of embedding the irreducible alterity or radical otherness proposed by Levinas in codes of practice invites an alert.

While one of the core goals of decolonisation work is to tautoko (support) Indigenous aspirations, our focus in this essay has been to appreciate the extent to which *Decol2020* has encouraged critical reflection from Pākeha in terms of decolonisation activism. We saw participants commit to confronting their privilege and positioning as Pākeha in Aotearoa, and affirming their activist intent to educate, and act. This knowledge affirmed our Freirean intent to [re]invigorate critical consciousness among Pākeha and encourage and support this Pākeha self-confrontation. Persons who nurture a critical consciousness can take distance from that which unsettles them. They are able to turn an uncovered actuality into a problem-topic that, through the fierce struggle of dialogical actions (Freire, 1994, pp. 8–9), can be confronted and overcome and “the dream can become reality” (1994, p. 206). With the guidance of Maya Angelou:

Do the best you can until you know better.

Then, when you know better, do better.

Maya Angelou¹⁴

And so we continue!

Looking back while moving forward: Critical [Self] reflection: not entangled but indivisible intellect, emotion, and action

As we reflected on the feedback and drafted the questions for future consideration, there were many “aha” moments that brought deeply embedded assumptions to the surface and continue to inspire our critical motivation. Our action, in the face of no better ways forward we yet know of, we continue to “make the road by walking” (Horton & Freire, 1990). We continue to seek new possible guiding ideas (concepts) and reflect on whether they will expand our capabilities:

- How else might we approach future work?
- Is an event such as this a useful endeavour to invest limited time and resources in?
- Are we expressing appropriate goals and objectives? How do we consider t?
- How can anti-racism workers contribute to new views of and responses to inequity in Aotearoa?
- What imagining might we adopt for our preferred future and what are the most appropriate values and action we can nurture to achieve this?

Through our work as authors of this paper, and as part of a community of scholars and activists for justice, we aspire to contribute to the critique of the racism associated with colonisation globally with specific commitments to its disruption and transformation in Aotearoa. This work for justice entails close attention to responsibilities demanded of the privileged in the face of deeply embedded personal and systemic racism and the inequalities that are generated. We have contextualised this work by sharing aspects of our identity and our standpoint as authors of this paper, mandated by participants of an event we describe in this paper as Decol2020 to craft a scholarly discussion. As part of our [to be] “seen face”, we have outlined the scholarly influences that underpin our orientation to anti-racism work in the realms of decolonising education and activism, with Aotearoa as our focus. We offer this paper as a contribution also to the growing scholarly activism that challenges and transforms the historic predominance of assumed researcher objectivity and/or neutrality by taking our stand.

It started with a tweet: Decol2020: More than skin deep

For justice to be served, rightful sovereignty of Indigenous peoples must be upheld and selective forms of cultural assimilation or political appeasement by any self-serving elite must be eschewed for people who believe themselves to be a just and honourable people (Verbos & Humphries, 2014a). For such people, the dignity of others, the respect to be accorded all life, is fundamental to one’s own sense of self-respect. Disrupting injustice is necessary but not sufficient for a more honourable future. Disruption to such oppression becomes an ethical commitment. Finding paths to human emancipation from any oppression becomes a duty. When decolonization of minds and political systems are posited as a path to such emancipation, differences not only in the definition of such systems become pertinent.

Today Te Tiriti continues to serve as a mandate for the creation of Aotearoa as a modern nation state that could be distinguished by holding a Te Tiriti honouring identity (Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016). For this future to be achieved all vestiges of Te Tiriti related institutional racism must be eliminated. This racism not only harms the wellbeing of Māori, continues to undermine Māori sovereign status declared in He Whakaputanga (1835), and tarnishes the dignity of those who continue to tolerate this injustice. We have focused on the responsiveness, responsibility, and respons-ability we seek to enrich in and through our scholarship supported by the resources of publicly funded university careers. In this paper we articulate this as be[com]ing Te Tiriti honouring peoples who are committed to respect the rightful sovereignty of Māori and the duty of the Crown to honour Te Tiriti (Martin et al., 2019).

Despite generations of anti-racism work globally, aspirations to become a just society remains a challenge. *Decol2020* was a specific response to increased interest in challenging all forms of racism, and in Aotearoa in particular, through a Te Tiriti focused lens. *Decol2020* was the largest anti-racism education event ever attempted in Aotearoa. It started with a tweet: the tweet became a seed, the seed was nurtured in the fertile soil of a community of anti-racism and Te Tiriti workers, as scholars and activists, new and old, and the vibrant cosmology energising the spirits of diverse participants. The shoots of the seed are visible in the responses to *Decol2020* and in the many offshoots already visible in the critical motivation and reinvigoration energies – demonstrated in the attraction of 45,000 registrations in Decol2022.

Decol2020 has demonstrated a welcome response to a recognised gap in action against racism. As well as providing a wealth of insights into diverse activities, the ten-day event also met a major community need for anti-racist, Te Tiriti-based, and decolonising activities that can be made accessible around the country and internationally. Freire posits that dialogue enhances positive connection between people and enlivens their capacity to transform themselves as well as their world. It is the work of shaping futures to which *Decol2020* and our reflection on it, seeks to contribute. We believe that events like this will support Māori development nationally by lessening Pākeha resistance to the transformation of systemic racism and by increasing the numbers of allies for Māori and invigorating Pākeha support for their struggles against racism – but with a strong emphasis on the critical consideration of “the selves” we are becoming. We posit that *Decol2020* will continue to benefit Pākeha by strengthening an identity as Tangata Tiriti, providing Te Tiriti-based information and ideas for anti-racist activism and by promoting Te Tiriti-based futures and thus helping build a more just, peaceful, and sustainable future for Aotearoa.

This paper is one outcome of *Decol2020*. It is a submission to peer review through which we meet a specific form of responsibility as demanded of scholars, a responsibility rooted in privilege of vocation, woven into various levels of accountability demonstrated in this project. It is to be assessed according to the aspirations of our partners and participants. We believe generating activist scholar accounts of social movements such as *Decol2020* will contribute to how future anti-racism events can have direct and indirect impacts on a range of communities in Aotearoa and internationally. Looking to the future – contemporary challenges invite continued critical “eyes wide open” on the discourse of anti-racism work for new waves of hegemonic assimilation that have marked the intransigence of colonial powers to date and brought us to the brink of global catastrophe. We are ready to act, to reflect to learn, and to act[again and again]. Ake, ake, ake!

Notes

1. With advice from our Reviewers, we use this format of Māori words with an approximate English equivalent now in common use in Aotearoa. We acknowledge the risks with this emerging language use as an aspect of Māori aspirations for the wider uptake of te reo Māori (the Māori language) across all Aotearoa, in all professional, political, and community communication and personal life where so required or desired. We are conscious also of the needs of an international readership. We have been encouraged to see in the global literature the use of many more indigenous words as signposts towards very different worlds in the making.
2. *Tauīwi* is a word that refers to ‘new people’, later settlers.
3. It is more common now to see the geographic lands we hail from as Aotearoa. The increasing use of Aotearoa is part moving this jurisdiction to a nation honouring the sovereignty of Māori established in 1835 by way of He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nū Tīrene (the Declaration of Independence) and affirmed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840).
4. <http://newzealandwars.co.nz/land-wars/wars/>
5. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/occupation-pacifist-settlement-at-parihaka>
6. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-tai/ngati-whatua-orakei-toru>
7. <https://www.equaljusticeproject.co.nz/articles/co-governance-in-aotearoa-new-zealand-controversy-and-cooperation2022>
8. <https://encyclopedia.usmm.org/content/en/article/mosaic-of-victims-an-overview>
9. The emerging of more critics of the history of NZ to refer to the term ‘genocide’ as an intention of missionary zeal is explained in Consendine and Consendine (2001, pp. 57–58, 64, 67–69).
10. <https://our.actionstation.org.nz/partnerships/tiriti-based-futures-2020>
11. We would like to acknowledge Wawaro Te Whaiti (Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne ki Wairarapa, Kāi Tahu) and Anahera McGregor (Ngāti Ruanui) for the gifting of this proverb for our event. Tenā rā kōrua.
12. <https://www.spectator.com.au/2021/06/maorification-of-smiling-zombies/>
13. <https://tereomaori.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-guidelines/Teaching-and-learning-te-reo-Maori/Aspects-of-planning/The-concept-of-ako>
14. <https://www.glamour.com/story/maya-angelou-quote>

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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