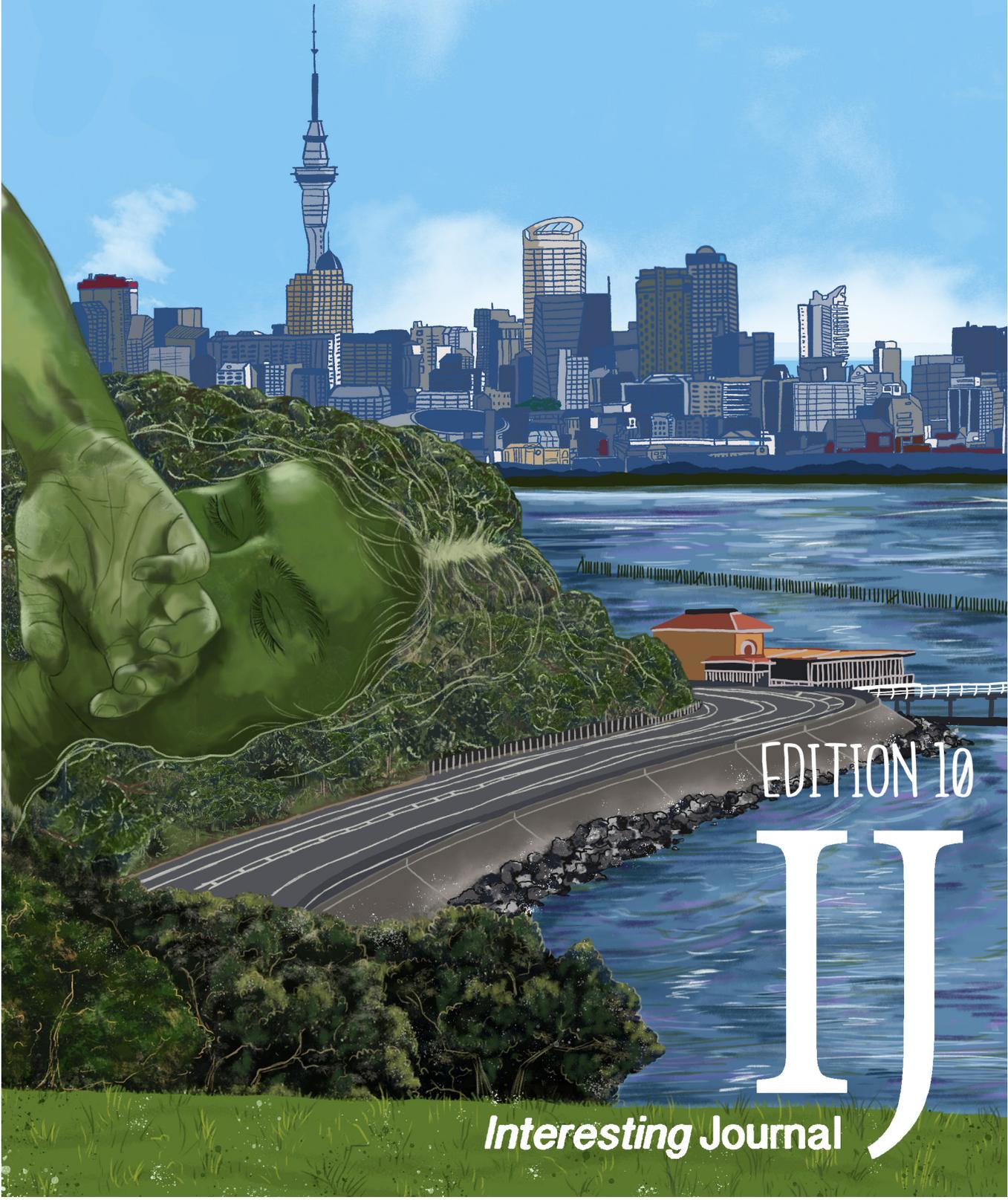




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NEW ZEALAND

| **ARTS**



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Editors' Note

Edition 10 of Interesting Journal is made up of 12 pieces of work from the University of Auckland Faculty of Arts. This collection consists of independent academic works that have been written by undergraduate students during Semester Two 2019, Summer School 2020, or Semester One 2020. All works have been peer-reviewed by our editorial team, and reviewed by a University of Auckland staff member who taught or marked the course that produced each work, and are experts in each respective field.

It feels like it was just not too long ago when we both became a part of the Interesting Journal team, working on Editions 5 and 6 together in our tiny, cold office in Belgrave. We have continued to work alongside each other to compile these sets of amazing student works, rescuing them from fates of neglect, buried in the depths of hard drives. Since 2017, we have trudged through hundreds of submissions; welcomed new editors and farewelled veteran ones; published our first Honours edition; and been upgraded to a considerably larger (and warmer!) office in Arts 1. And now, we are incredibly proud to have finally hit double digits with the release of Editions 10 and 11.

Every single year, one of the things that we most look forward to is 'The Meeting', in which the entire editorial team squeezes itself into our office and spends an evening selecting the pieces for publication. Our editors come prepared with both praise and criticism, armed with essays for which they are willing to fight to be included. Filled with serious discussion, laughter, snacks, and ever-present learning, the meetings often bleed well into the night without anyone even noticing. This year was no different—though we did appreciate it just that much more, having just come out of the nationwide two-month lockdown. To give you some insight into our selection method: We do not choose specific themes to focus on for each edition. Instead, we choose the essays which we want to see published—our main criteria being whether they are *interesting* (our namesake)—and then build the themes around the essays themselves. In acknowledgement of hitting a new milestone this year, we wanted to bring the journal back home for Edition 10, with Aotearoa as its focal point.

With Covid still present, in our minds and lives, something we have been reminded of this year, is that the fight is never over. Aotearoa has a lot to be proud of, regarding how we handled the pandemic—but that fight is not over. Likewise, as a country we have many things to be proud of, and many freedoms we should never take for granted—but those fights are not over either.

People who have the vision to find ways we can improve our society must learn to run marathons, not sprints. There has been a lot of talk this year of Covid teaching us how to 'slow down', and I hope these are lessons we take with us. It is impossible to be running at capacity all the time, and it is not what our biggest fights need of us. The fights to decolonise New Zealand, to protect immigrants and refugees, to lead the world climate action, to install wealth equality: These are all long-term fights. Covid's fourteen-day 'lag time' reminds us of the difference between action and impact; and as the pandemic finds a place in our memories over the next few years, we can't forget this.

When it comes to dealing with Covid, we have been vigilant, and dedicated. While loud minorities served to distract us, the majority of people put their heads down and got on with life, however strange it may have looked. Students got on with their studies in strange new circumstances—including many of the authors from Editions 10 and 11, whose insightful pieces we are proud to share with you. We are reminded of how much power the collective has, and if we can fight Covid the way we have, we can fight the other issues Aotearoa faces with the same success.

*Alika Wells and Paula Lee
Editors-in-Chief*

The Interesting Journal team would like to thank everyone at the Faculty of Arts Student Development and Engagement Team for their support, with special thanks given to Vandana Minhas-Taneja, Ashley Flavell, and Charlene Nunes. We would also thank the Dean of Arts, Professor Robert Greenberg, for his continued support of the journal, and all the members of staff who agreed to review and provide feedback on all the publications in Edition 10, as part of our peer review process.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

Aotearoa New Zealand is a settler-colonial society, this university is a colonial institution, and this journal is a form of knowledge production imposed on this country through colonisation. Colonisation does not simply marginalise Indigenous peoples through alienating them from their land and denying them self-determination; it also seeks to suppress and delegitimise Indigenous ways of knowing and being. So, in this colonial artefact, we seek to highlight and celebrate Indigenous epistemologies and Indigenous peoples' rights to knowledge production on their own terms.

First, we begin with Rollinson's rumination on what it would mean for the Earth to be a speaking, political subject. She describes how Western discourses grounded in capitalism and neoliberalism construct the Earth as a resource for unfettered economic growth, which is incongruent with addressing the ongoing climate crisis. Rather, she argues that Māori and Hawai'ian epistemologies demonstrate how the Earth could be a political subject, capable of speech. Rollinson provides a timely reminder of the insidious link between colonisation and capitalism, and that we cannot resist one without resisting the other.

Next, Davy explores how Māori data sovereignty is critical to legitimising mātauranga Māori. She describes how lack of data sovereignty for Indigenous peoples is the result of colonial violence and how it continues to hinder self-determination for Māori in New Zealand. Her essay highlights the currency of information in decolonisation and preventing the marginalisation of Māori.

Finally, we end with Francis's examination of how recent attempts to incorporate mātauranga Māori in the academy are still colonial attempts to suppress Indigenous epistemologies. She points out that Western epistemologies cannot let Indigenous knowledges stand on their own terms and instead constructs them as supplementary, a practice underpinned by colonial logics. Francis compels us to re-examine whether we value Indigenous epistemologies in their own right, or simply because they have been validated by Western science.

Through this selection of essays, we invite you to grapple with how Indigenous knowledges are suppressed through the Western hegemony. Rollinson, Davy, and Francis highlight how this colonial project manifests in different ways, but they all articulate the need for acknowledging Indigenous epistemologies as valid in their own rights. This is an issue we must contend with in New Zealand, particularly as tauwiwi who benefit from a settler-colonialism.

Jinal Mehta

Sociology 310

Researching Social Problems

Bella Rollinson

Earth as a Speaking Political Subject

If a subject excluded from politics was one that could not speak and could only make unintelligible sounds, what would it mean to consider the Earth a political subject (Rancière, 2010)? This essay argues that this is crucial in the face of an ecological crisis which existentially threatens the resilience of the Earth, access to basic human necessities, and global peace (Bosselman, 2010). I will first briefly outline the dialectical relationship between human society and nature. I will then explore how this relationship is recognised in bad faith by capitalist power. Next, I will consider this bad faith recognition through the concept of consensus. Finally, I will ask what it could mean to see the Earth as a political subject, capable of speech and thus demands. To achieve this, I will explore the epistemological perspective of Māori and Hawai'iian cultures, and the potential co-option of the theory of a speaking market. I will conclude that expanding our understanding of political subject(ivity) to include the Earth is a vital to guide the vision of the world we want to fight for.

Unfettered economic growth is inconsistent with Earth's limits, and we are intimately part of Earth systems. These are the contradictions with our current way of life that capitalist power refuses to sincerely acknowledge. Skyrocketing production and consumption are not only stripping the Earth bare, but increasingly reducing its capacity to reproduce itself. Similarly, the dominant conception of the Earth is one of a separate, inferior "other" made of raw material which is there for humans to instrumentalise and exploit (Bosselman, 2010). "Economic rationality" (Bosselman, 2010, p. 2430)—a bundling of concepts such as dualism, anthropocentrism, individualism, and economism—justifies both the domination and desecration of the Earth and of the vast majority of humanity (Barber, 2019). Prioritising one side of the contradiction, a world where humans are seen as distinct from and more important than Earth "hides capitalism's parasitic reliance on Papatūānuku for its own functioning" (Barber, 2019, p. 2). Our activity is threatening nine inseparable "planetary boundaries" (Kim, Bosselman, & Mauerhofer, 2013, p. 5): climate change, biodiversity loss, interference with the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, stratospheric ozone depletion, ocean acidification, global freshwater use, changes in land use, chemical pollution, and atmospheric aerosol loading. Irreversible changes in these environmental conditions will very likely be catastrophic for humanity (Kim, Bosselman, & Mauerhofer, 2013). Both relationships discussed above can be described as "frozen dialectics" (Sankar, 2019, p. 127), as the dynamic relation between the two conflicting worlds is suspended in stasis, with the domination of anthropocentric economic growth. This prevents a dynamic interplay between economy, humanity, and nature that resolves into new modes of organisation to live with each other and the Earth.

This domination is maintained by the 'bad faith' recognition of these contradictions. Bad faith recognition seeks to deny contradictions by recognising them only in the terms of the oppressor and within their systems of power (Sankar, 2019). In this case, capitalist power and its state representatives seek to deny the contradictions discussed above by constituting the inconsistent world within the terms of capitalist logic. Whereas each side of the contradiction is an ontological challenge to the other, the side which privileges economic humanity rejects "ontological resistance" (Sankar, 2019, p. 127). Ecological limits are understood (if not denied) through the logic of capital: we should have carbon markets, recycle more, and innovate for green technology, alongside many other suggested actions grounded in capitalist and neoliberal paradigms. More cynically, ecological crisis is interpreted as a business opportunity: the trading of waste, disaster insurance, booming profits in privatised water, etc. (Parr, 2018). Our relationship with nature is mediated through a green consumer identity, through the consumption of Earth resources. The status of the Earth, subjugated not only to the needs of humanity but the follies of the market, makes a reciprocal relationship impossible. Capitalist power refuses to recognise the true dialectical relationship between humans and nature, which must accommodate for a moment of rupture (Sankar, 2019). The environment is treated (or

recognised) as a factor to be considered (often in process rather than substance) against economic interests in a legal and political system designed to prioritise and protect economic interests (Bosselman, 2010). The possibility of rupture is foreclosed, and the contradiction is recognised in bad faith (Sankar, 2019).

Another way to understand the bad faith recognition of environmental crisis is through Rancière's (2010) concepts of politics and consensus. Rancière (2010) posits that politics truly occurs through dissensus by breaking down the boundaries of what is visible and "sayable" (p. 37). It lodges one world into another, creating a "paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds" (Rancière, 2010, p. 42); in other words, it dislodges a frozen dialectic. Therefore, consensus is the cancellation of dissensus, which ignores the possibility of a world contradictory to its own and the possibility of collision between the two (Rancière, 2010). It denies ontological resistance. Thus, when James Shaw, Climate Change Minister, announced that the Zero Carbon Bill (now Act) represents "the best possible political consensus across New Zealand", he was, in a sense, correct ("Climate Change Bill is a Step in the Right Direction", 2019). Compromise, which saw agricultural emissions excluded from the zero-carbon commitment, only makes sense in a world which denies the world of environmental bottom lines. Such a compromise is "ecological nonsense" (Bosselman, 2010, p. 2433). An ecological ontology is never truly considered; rather "environmental interest groups" were allowed to submit on the minutiae of a market-based emissions trading scheme which was predetermined (Ministry for the Environment, 2018). In the capitalist world, all collective deliberations are drowned out by economic imperatives (Jones, 2018). These imperatives purport to speak on behalf of everyone, but in doing so they (mis)translate into the language of the market (Jones, 2013). The market language is upheld as superior, and all other languages are deemed "degenerate and inferior if not outright incomprehensible" (Jones, 2013, p. 60). Thus Shaw's and the Green Party's environmental dilemma: whether to "speak in the wilderness" (Harvey, 1993, p. 9) without using the language of market and money, or to try and articulate the value and interests of the environment through a distorting and corruptible market language.

A true political subject appears out of transforming this 'wilderness' into a domain of political struggle. Politics is making what was only audible as noise possible to be heard as speech by demanding its equal participation and "right to be heard as a speaking subject" (Jones, 2013, p. 59). To make the Earth a speaking subject is to reject the notion that there is nothing to be heard in its patterns and rhythms, the roar of the wind and the crash of the waves, and the buzzing and calling and chirping of insects and animals and birds, except "grunting and groaning" (Jones, 2013, p. 60). It is not irrational or impossible for the Earth to speak. Rather, the disciplines we are used to in the Western academic world circumscribe an "idea of the thinkable" (Rancière, 2006, p. 6) that regulates this dissenting thought. The interdisciplinary procedure must "create the textual and signifying space in which this relation of myth to myth is visible and thinkable" (Rancière, 2006, p. 9), instead of rejecting epistemologies outside of its own stories and myths. We need to radically reconsider communication and speech to include what does not currently belong.

To answer the question of what it might look like to live in a world with a speaking Earth, we can simply turn to those who indeed already inhabit that world. In Māori epistemology, humanity is not distinguishable from the Earth (Barber, 2019). Prior to the imposition of capitalism on Aotearoa, there was a unity and "general sociality" (Barber, 2019, p. 31) of all people and things in the world through whakapapa connections. The separation of the unity of humanity and Earth is a specific historical process that departs from the "normal condition of humanity" (Barber, 2019, p. 9). People belong to the Earth *as* the Earth, because humans are descended from the Earth mother, Papatūānuku, and the sky father, Ranginui (Barber, 2019). In Te Ao Māori, "Papatūānuku is far from inorganic, being a living biological system with her

own agency and personality” (Barber, 2019, p. 10). Therefore, to communicate with the Earth is merely to communicate with ourselves, in the sense of an extended, collective subjectivity that embodies relationships between tūpuna, atua, the natural world, and communities – all of which are overlapping categories (Barber, 2019). Humans are the speaking part of the conscious awareness of Papatūānuku (Barber, 2019). But it is only by embodying this collective subjectivity that the Earth could “com[e] to self-consciousness” (Barber, 2019, pp. 26-27) and speak through humanity.

In Hawai’ian epistemology, wai (the water of life) is inseparable and one with humans, and part of a continuum joined with all other living things, including plants, animals, winds, and mountains (Kunisue, 2014). Communication with nature is possible as a process of listening beyond verbal cues, in a wider form of perception and sensations (Kunisue, 2014). To others, listening for the voice(s) of the Earth might seem like madness, but it is perfectly reasonable and natural to Hawai’ians (Kunisue, 2014). Here we see the operation of discipline: Western science constitutes a “relation between a situation and the forms of visibility and capacities of thought which are attached to it” (Rancière, 2006, p. 8), and therefore establishes particular possibilities of reality and thought. Western disciplines could only conceive of Hawai’ians hearing the Earth speak as madness, restricting stories and myths about what a voice is and what listening is. For example, a process used by the Blackfoot tribe follows a dialectical communication process, which is an entirely rational and valid communication process that allows for nature (the Earth) to speak:

“Nature speaks, we listen, we somehow learn, we struggle to put what we have learned into words, but we are forever frustrated by the process, thus we return to nature and forever enjoy the spiral ...” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 68).

Crucially, this form of communication or state of being is not exclusive to Indigenous cultures by virtue of some stereotypical closeness to nature. As put by Kunisue (2014):

“ecological consciousness is a set of skills that anyone, even modern industrialized citizens like us, could acquire with a sincere effort ... when the forgotten ‘ecological self’ experiences permeability and fluidity of boundaries between self and beyond self.” (p. 230).

Feminist scholars have called for a shift in understanding subjectivity—the “intrusion of Gaia” (Tola, 2016, p. 10)—towards a collective entity or assemblage of humans, animals, and the Earth as a whole. This could begin with the refusal of the normalisation of climate crisis events. When the sky closes over with a red haze and the air is choked with smoke, perhaps it is not *just* bushfire season but “Papatūānuku call[ing] out to us now, her karanga tinged with urgent lament” (Barber, 2019, p. 27). The first step is a removal of the denial technique of cognitive dissonance, where the ecological self senses something is wrong, but is drowned out because we are unable to reconcile the consequences of such a realisation with the world we know and understand.

Lastly, the conception of an Earth able to speak could arise from an abstraction, which mutually (re)constitutes the ontological transformation to a relational human/Earth reality. Inquiring as to whether the market can speak, Jones (2013) argues that abstract forces can arise from material reality and can in turn become a real active force. In combination with material reality, these abstractions change the nature of ‘what is’ and our understanding of the world. For Jones (2013), the task is to deconstruct the abstraction of a speaking market to uncover the hidden ontological assumptions and material reality beneath. For this task, however, we might think of doing the opposite, noting that “prosopopoeia [attribution of speech] and personification are ... not universally or simply negative” (Jones, 2013, p. 29). Given the material reality of interrelated and interdependent life on Earth, and the relational ontology that arises from such a reality, how

might we create an abstracted, speaking Earth subject that acquires a cultural and ideational force? This is not as artificial or false of a project as it may appear. The idea of the ‘person’ is an invented idea (Jones, 2013). If all persons are similarly constructed, it is possible to struggle to concoct a new or different idea (Jones, 2013). As the market ‘speaks’ as an articulation of the reality and logic of capital, the Earth may also ‘speak’ back in a dialogue, articulating a rebuttal informed by a different reality and logic.

Admittedly, it may appear that a speaking Earth is not so unthinkable or unsayable given the rich understandings of Indigenous peoples of our relationality to/with Earth. The granting of legal personhood to the Whanganui River, for example, is the commendable result of a long struggle (Barber, 2019). But it is unavoidable to note that legal personhood is a bourgeois form “entirely consistent with the continued domination of the [E]arth by capital” (Barber, 2019, p. 26). The relational agency of the awa (river) does not puncture the world of capitalist logic but is rather absorbed and transmuted by it. Contrast this with the site of resistance against the capitalist development of Ihumātao: while complex, the resistance fundamentally pierced its way into the capitalist world and refused to be defeated or absorbed by capitalist rhetoric of “legal rights” and “settlement claims”. Insofar as the logic of capital continues to order our institutions and material reality, it is not enough for these alternative worlds to exist, tucked away and outside the blinders worn by capitalism. Otherwise, “[t]he capitalist mode of life forecloses, however inconclusively, that of Māori” (Barber, 2019, p. 27), or any other world, because it asserts itself as the only true and real world. For politics to occur, each world must recognise the other such that we inhabit a shared “paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds” (Rancière, 2010, p. 39). This occurs when one world is lodged—a forceful act, which breaks apart one world so the other can enter—into another (Rancière, 2010). Badiou (2008) claims another world becomes possible when we firstly create the space for it to exist and refuse to let this space be closed: “endurance within the impossible” (para. 30).

A speaking Earth is a touchstone for the ontological transformation and resistance that we now so desperately need. As we fight the inseparable struggle for the liberation of the Earth and humanity from capital, the Earth must be not just the battlefield but our ally and comrade. Whether we extend our own subjectivity to recognise our relationality with Earth, engage in active listening, or strive to build a mobilising political figure to transmit visions of an alternative way of life, we must always insist on the possibility and reality of a speaking Earth. Only then can we begin to force this capitalist world to grapple with the spectre of another.

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Māori 320

Mātauranga: Māori Knowledge

Ariarne Davy

Ko te Kai a te Rangatira he Kōrero – Discussion is the Food of Chiefs: Māori Data Sovereignty in the Post-Colonial 21st Century

Introduction

Māori, being expert storytellers, know that information is at the heart of any great story. With a rich oral tradition, storytelling is still the primary means of knowledge storage and sharing in Te Ao Māori. Technological innovation in the 21st century has allowed an explosion of information to be created and shared. Greater accessibility to information has created a problem for controlling what data is collected, who manages data and what stories are told; the problem is magnified for those groups with limited resources or who are marginalised relative to others. Indigenous groups have histories of being subjugated by colonial powers which included a loss of sovereignty over their data and knowledge. This loss has contemporary consequences for the ability of Māori to determine who is regarded as Māori, how desired social outcomes for Māori are measured, and to make meaningful arguments to drive social change that benefits Māori wellbeing. Advocates of Māori data sovereignty endeavour to return responsibility and control of Māori data and data-driven stories to Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand, cast in a backdrop of global movements for Indigenous Data Sovereignty.

What is Indigenous Data Sovereignty?

Fundamentally, the Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement is pushing for the return of control over digitised information about Indigenous people and traditional knowledge systems to Indigenous people (Snipp, 2016). Control of information on social structures is crucial to Indigenous peoples' right to cultural self-determination. The movement recognises that Indigenous people are highly numerate and literate, and Indigenous research epistemologies are valid (Walter and Suina, 2019). Qualitative research methods are predominant in Indigenous research. This focus largely excludes Indigenous people from quantitative methods of social and natural sciences. Reconnecting Indigenous people with their traditional knowledge of social and natural systems is tantamount to their identity. The Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement aims to deconstruct Western foundations of quantitative research methods and reestablish these methods with a basis in Indigenous worldview.

Walter and Suina (2019, p. 234) state that “our existence [as human beings] is always contextual.” The meaning imparted in this statement is that numbers have only the meanings that we human beings assign to them and choose to understand them by. Currently, Western demographic indicators predominate over Māori determined indicators of economic and social wellbeing (Morphy, 2016). These indicators are built based on assumptions that work in Western society but do not necessarily hold in Te Ao Māori or other Indigenous lifeways. Therefore, they cannot possibly be recording universal ‘objective’ realities, but stories that are only explained by a Western worldview. The methodological basis for most statistical frameworks excludes Indigenous worldviews, yet is still lauded by Western research institutions as ‘objective’. The Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement works to return the ability to contextualise information to Indigenous peoples so they can tell stories that make sense from an Indigenous worldview (Walter and Suina, 2019).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Mana Raraunga advance Māori collective and individual wellbeing by advocating for Māori Data Sovereignty as a human right recognised in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP; Te Mana Raraunga, 2018). The Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement is particularly significant in the emerging emphasis on Big Data, Open Data, and Open Science in the current research climate. However, the Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement is at odds with the concurrent Open Data movement,

which advocates for all data to be made available for anyone's use or scrutiny. Indigenous people can both benefit from data becoming more accessible but at the same time are losing control over how their data is shared and used; as Smith (2016, p. 132) states, "open data in the context of indigenous people is a double-edged sword." Te Mana Raraunga acts to protect Māori rights and interests concerning data and safeguard Māori data by governing data repositories guided by the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance¹.

Why is Data Sovereignty Important to Māori?

Advocates for Māori Data Sovereignty want Māori to be able to use data to tell our own stories from a mātauranga Māori perspective. These stories should be respected and held with the same mana and authority as data-driven research with a Western foundation. As the title of this article suggests, information and discussion are integral to leadership and persuasion in society. The whakataukī is reminiscent of an English proverb, "knowledge is power." Western society and Te Ao Māori both recognise the currency of information. Having data sovereignty means we, as Māori, have control over the stories that our data tells and what purpose our data serves. A critical Indigenous rights problem due to lack of data sovereignty is the loss of Indigenous peoples' ability to determine who is Indigenous (Snipp, 2016). Data sovereignty also gives us the power to determine the measures of 'good' social outcomes as opposed to being measured against non-Māori in social outcomes that the state decides are good (Morphy, 2016).

Whakapapa stores Māori knowledge about family and social histories, economic transactions, and natural phenomenon. Pool (2016) considers Whakapapa a database of information that Māori had complete sovereignty over before European contact. The settler-colonists dismissed this dataset in favour of their data collection and analysis methods. The new demographically hegemonic group deemed their epistemologies superior to that of Māori (Pool, 2016). Settler-colonists devalued traditional methods of knowledge storage and sharing to the point of reducing Indigenous knowledge to myth. The aim was to justify the subjugation of colonised Indigenous peoples, and the game was to paint the picture of Indigenous people the world over as 'noble savages' and uncivilised barbarians (Pool, 2016). Mātauranga Māori's history of devaluation and invalidation continues to contribute to there being bias favouring Western epistemologies. The goal of Te Mana Raraunga is to return mana to Whakapapa and mātauranga Māori as epistemologies, supported in the international human rights context by UNDRIP.

Quantitative data are the primary drivers of directing targeted government and non-government organisations social intervention through policy (Walter and Suina, 2019). Therefore, engaging with quantitative measures of material and social wellbeing is a necessity for iwi and hāpu who want to have autonomy over socioeconomic interventions devised for their benefit (by them or on their behalf; Morphy, 2016). For example, iwi and hāpu lobbying for the rights of waterways and other natural features must rely on Western science to quantify the health of ecosystems if they want to be listened to by state policy-makers (Stevens et al. 2020). The prohibitive costs of conducting these surveys put iwi and hāpu on the backfoot if a better-resourced developer obtains a resource consent to develop contested land (Stevens et al. 2020). Conversely, Stevens et al. (2020) also argue that Western science could be well-informed on concepts such as intergenerational scale by mātauranga Māori. Increasing research and analytical skills of people to enable work from a mātauranga Māori standpoint is a future-focused goal of Te Mana Raraunga.

¹ CARE Principles are: collective benefit, authority to control, responsibility, and ethics to be held by Indigenous people.

What are the Challenges of Achieving Data Sovereignty?

Nation-states across the world have different laws that protect data and intellectual property. Te Mana Raraunga (2018) advocate for Māori data to be stored in Aotearoa New Zealand whenever possible, based on the principle of jurisdiction. Having jurisdiction means Māori can influence the laws of Aotearoa New Zealand to protect Māori data, but this would be much more difficult for data held off-shore or by well-resourced multinational corporations. Pool (2016) argues that the commodification of data has the potential for corporations to appropriate data where control is further out of reach for Indigenous minority groups. Such appropriation would allow corporations to profit from Indigenous data with no obligation to create mutual benefit for Indigenous peoples without adequate protections.

Limited financial resources and lack of skilled individuals are prohibitive to iwi and hāpu conducting censuses and surveys independent of the state. These limitations force iwi and hāpu to collaborate with the state (who have different priorities) on large scale data collection and research projects (Snipp, 2016). Consequently, individual capability is genuinely critical to this issue because individuals can take positions within Western institutions with the financial resources to undertake research with a basis in mātauranga Māori (Stevens et al. 2020). Unfortunately, Stevens et al. (2020) recognise that there is a negative feedback loop in their field of physical oceanography, with very few Māori senior researchers and lecturers to inspire Māori students. As a result, the people resources that we do have researching with a mātauranga Māori foundation are thinly spread.

Conclusion

Data sovereignty is an issue in which it is clear that a “one size fits all” approach does not equitably serve all communities. The current hegemonic epistemologies—used in natural science, and especially in philosophy and social science—are founded in a Western worldview. These research methods work to further marginalise Indigenous people by comparing them to the non-Indigenous ideal of social and economic outcomes. Decolonising Indigenous data is hampered by the limited financial and human capital held by Indigenous groups and inconsistent international intellectual property laws. Fortunately, Māori—and other Indigenous groups around the world—are fighting to have mana returned to our Whakapapa and mātauranga. Te Mana Raraunga has a network of experts available to advise iwi and hāpu on their data needs and is encouraging more young Māori to study and develop skills in research and statistics. These efforts will protect Māori rights over our data and data stories in the emerging open data research climate, for the enduring wellbeing of Māori.

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Sociology 310

Researching Social Problems

Isabella Francis

Indigenous knowledge and Western science: validating Indigenous science as a colonising project

Historically, Indigenous peoples' societies were viewed as primitive and undeveloped, in contrast with rational and developed Western societies (Smith, 2012). Colonising powers used this logic of superiority and progress to justify their invasion and destruction of Indigenous lands and ways of life. The knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples were also seen as primitive and underdeveloped, and their practices as accidental discoveries. This logic allowed for the dismissal and erasure of Indigenous knowledge, such as rongoā Māori (healing practices) and maramataka (the Māori lunar calendar), by colonial scientists. In this essay, I will explore the colonial role of Western epistemology in repressing Indigenous knowledges through a project of validation rather than erasure.

In recent times, Indigenous knowledges have begun to be acknowledged as valuable by sciences within the Western academy, particularly in fields such as ecology, environmental management, and medicinal chemistry. I use the plural form of "knowledges" to acknowledge the plurality of knowledge systems developed by Indigenous societies around the world and to avoid homogenisation of Indigenous peoples (Smith et al., 2016). Two examples (of many) of scientific research using Indigenous knowledges in Aotearoa New Zealand include the study of bioactives in native plants for the treatment of Kauri Dieback disease based on local Mātauranga Māori and a long-term project for joint ecological management of the endangered tītī (Lawrence et al., 2019; Stephenson & Moller, 2009). These disciplines and authors incorporate Indigenous knowledges into Western scientific paradigms in order to legitimise Indigenous practices without acknowledging them as full knowledge systems independent of Western thought.

"Western academics typically treat Indigenous knowledge systems as supplementary to real knowledge 'relevant only to the extent that they have something to offer existing theories and discourses'." (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 72, cited in Broughton & McBreen, 2015, p. 84).

While the incorporation of Indigenous knowledges into the Western academic framework may seem like a positive step for Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems as it *appears* to deconstruct the colonial logic of "stupid" and "primitive" Indigenous peoples or societies (Smith, 2012, p. 67), I argue that it is a colonising project which seeks to re-establish the supremacy and universality of Western science. Western science has historically established itself as universal and rational (just as Western societies were seen as more rational than primitive Indigenous societies): "The ongoing privileging of one knowledge system and suppression of the other has left Western epistemology so dominant that it can now seem like the only possible framework..." (Broughton & McBreen, 2015, p. 84).

While Western sciences may see Indigenous knowledges as having scientific value, they simultaneously see Indigenous knowledges as 'contaminated' with spirituality, or as scientifically valuable ideas/practices that are covered up with superstitions and stories. Of course, some areas of science or particular scientists within the Western academy continue to persist in dismissing Indigenous knowledges as entirely non-scientific and invalid (see Don, 2010, for an excellent example).

The idea that Indigenous knowledges only have value when confirmed by Western science, or because they can offer a solution to problems faced by Western science, is colonial. It does not acknowledge the complex grounded methodologies of Indigenous knowledge systems and cosmologies, which cannot be accounted for within Western scientific understandings.

Indigenous knowledge is not accidental; it is developed, understood, adapted, and passed on through what Simpson (2017), borrowing from Glenn Coulthard, describes as "grounded normativity" (p. 63). 'Grounded normativity' refers to the knowledge and ethical frameworks generated by living with and on a particular area. To divorce Indigenous knowledge from its whakapapa by extracting the parts that science deems valuable—the parts that can be validated by science—is an act of colonial violence.

Coulthard (2014), Simpson (2017), and Ani Mikaere (2011) all write about how colonial powers (the Canadian state and the Crown in New Zealand) have moved from dominating Indigenous peoples with violence and force (e.g., genocide or residential schools) to awarding reparations which do not return sovereignty to Indigenous communities but give the appearance of repairing colonial harm. As Simpson (2017) puts it: "We'd like to see a prime minister smudging or acknowledging he is on Indigenous territory and have that signal a significant dismantling of settler colonialism" (p. 45). However, this does not signal decolonial politics; it signals a politics of recognition without action.

Although state-sanctioned violent colonisation continues in current times (e.g., the removal of children), it is no longer palatable to most citizens. Instead, colonialism manifests itself through "the ability to entice Indigenous peoples to identify, either implicitly or explicitly, with the profoundly asymmetrical and nonreciprocal forms of recognition either imposed on or granted to them by the settler state and society" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 25). Coulthard's work on the politics of recognition is useful for understanding how the 'recognition' of Indigenous knowledge by Western scientific methods in a Western scientific ontology is not decolonial but profoundly colonial. It highlights how people (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) believe that Indigenous knowledges, practices, and peoples must be seen and recognised by the colonisers and their worldview to be valid. This politics of recognition manifests itself in Western science as the obsession with validating Indigenous knowledges using Western scientific frameworks.

The movement from the *erasure* of Indigenous knowledges as unscientific towards the *validation* of Indigenous knowledges by Western science forms part of the broader movement by colonial states from violent, dominating colonisation towards coercive colonialism. To maintain absolute, universal supremacy (which shores up the logic that justifies continued colonisation), Western science must validate Indigenous knowledges by fitting them into its own paradigms. Western science has no place for knowledges that do not fit within the bounds of scientific rationality. It is a "totalizing discourse" (Smith, 2012, p. 73) that believes everything can be understood in its own ontological framework.

In conclusion, while different ontologies *can* coexist without a relationship of domination, Western epistemology (which presumes universality) is currently not able to make a good faith effort to understand and engage with Indigenous knowledge/mātauranga Māori as a knowledge system of equal value. The double-edged sword of acknowledging mātauranga Māori as 'useful' while still relegating it to the position of a lesser knowledge system is a colonising project that serves to reiterate Western science's perceived supremacy. This demonstrates how Western epistemology is unable to incorporate other knowledge systems without diminishing them to reaffirm its supremacy. Hikuroa (2017) said it best in the conclusion to an article about the similarities and differences between mātauranga Māori and science:

"Mātauranga Māori is, first and foremost, mātauranga Māori, valid in its own right. Both mātauranga Māori and science are bodies of knowledge methodically created,

contextualised within a world view... While there are many similarities between mātauranga Māori and science, it is important that the tools of one are not used to analyse and understand the foundations of another." (p. 9).

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RESISTANCE

In the context of 2020, resistance to injustice might seem, to some, to be on the rise. What we are seeing in many cases, however, is the culmination of, in some cases, centuries of oppression and discrimination. To those fighting in movements such as Black Lives Matter, this resistance has existed from the moment the injustice took place—it has simply become harder for those not impacted directly by such injustice to ignore it. The Faculty of Arts has always been a place for students to explore and grapple with both historical, current, or (more frequently) both historical and current occurrences of injustice and its subsequent resistance. The following essays, which come predominantly from Sociology but also the Arts Scholar programme, address resistance in a way that honours the past, is aware of the present, and looks forward to the future.

Batuwangala's essay examines the implicit 'right' to maim that Israel holds over Palestine and the impact this has on the ability for Palestinians to resist and recover. The essay centres around a close-reading of Jasbir K. Puar's *The 'Right' to Maim: Disablement and Inhumanist Biopolitics in Palestine* but adeptly utilises other texts to provide a well-rounded and easily understandable examination of the realities of such an environment. Batuwangala's examination considers the benefits of such a power dynamic for Israel, the struggles Palestinians face because of it, and also why narratives of 'collateral damage' appeal to an 'enlightened' liberal audience. Batuwangala links their argument to the advent of colonial capitalism and frames Israel's violence as a strategy of settler control.

McIntosh's essay takes us back to the Chinese Great Famine, in which the moral positioning of food and food-related activities tied directly into the resistance (or non-resistance) of peasants against a governmental system that was starving them. The framework that this essay works within, examining the moral perceptions of food and food practices, makes for an interesting examination of the rationale behind resisting or non-resisting behaviour. Even hunger itself (or the declaration that one was hungry) is examined in the context of morality and resistance. McIntosh provides us with an examination that ties food, morality, and resistance closely to one another.

Sesio's essay is a thorough examination of the framework within which anti-Blackness is allowed to thrive. The argument begins by questioning the way in which race is conceptualised under the dominance of Western epistemology, under which crime is seen as inherent to certain racial groups and instances of racism are only seen as consisting of "individual, overt, and locatable acts of violence". These locatable acts are positioned as the result of individual bias rather than a systematic, historical, and entrenched oppression of Black people. In the second half of the essay, Sesio examines the problems that arise when framing guilt and innocence within a 'White hyper-reality' and how leftist 'anti-racism' is not sufficient to dismantle these entrenched systems of anti-Blackness. To remedy this, Sesio calls for a complete dismantling, a Fanonian 'end of the world'.

Clemm's essay builds on the framework established by Sesio's essay by focussing on a close-reading of John Gillespie's *On the Prospect of Weaponised Death*. Clemm's argument also calls on the concept of a 'White hyper-reality', one in which there is no hope for the Black Being but to lose hope. Clemm argues that it is this loss of hope that allows for Black death to be weaponised as an instrument in the dismantling of oppressive systems. Clemm examines the ontological reality for the Black Being and the White Being and how for the White Being to be ontologically alive, the Black Being must be ontologically dead. Clemm argues that there is no 'happy ending' for Black people within this White-centred, White-framed world. This is only possible, as also argued by Sesio, when the world (as we know it) ends.

Edition 10 invites the reader to actively think about acts of resistance and rebellion and how the systems they exist within impact their efficacy. This selection of four essays encourages the questioning of that which is taken for granted and the seeking of better methods and systems for challenging injustices. Threads that run between the essays include the weaponisation of bodies (both for and against resistance) and how systems of power privilege those who established said systems (and continue to do so even after so-called 'equality' has been achieved).

Lily Holloway

Sociology 326

Sociology of Violence and Death

Ravi Batuwangala

The Right to Maim in Palestine: Israel's Humanitarian Camouflage

In this essay, I will be engaging in a close reading of *The 'Right' to Maim: Disablement and Inhumanist Biopolitics in Palestine* by Jasbir K. Puar. I will also draw on the principles of Frantz Fanon, Lauren Barlant, Mikko Joronen, Charles Wells, and Judith Butler to complement Puar's analysis. Puar presents an argument concerning debilitation and the right to maim, about the colonial capitalism of Palestine, and how Israel has an implicit right to maim and debilitate Palestinian bodies and environments as a form of biopolitical control. Israel's violent tactics have three main benefits: they dismantle resistance, appeal to the humanitarian discourse of the enlightened liberal movement, and are productive and profitable both economically and ideologically. Israel maims Palestinians through the deliberate targeting of Palestinians using non-lethal weaponry that disables them. Correspondingly, Israel debilitates the population by annexing infrastructure that is vital for survival and healing; it is the debilitation of both the body and infrastructure. Consequently, Palestinians exist in absolute suffering as Israel neither allows Palestinians to 'let live' nor 'let die' but rather 'will not let die'. The Palestinians inhabit the being of the *homo dolorosus*, a person made to suffer. This state of survival eliminates the Palestinian's ability to harbour resistance due to the drought of vital resources. Israel justifies this approach through the logic that maiming Palestinians is better than killing the Palestinians; however, this approach is a legal loophole rather than a genuine act of humanity. Collateral damage functions similarly to maiming and debilitating in that it allows states to disconnect the consequences of violence from their violent acts. 'Collateral damage' grants Israel the ability to cause injury and death without accountability. Ultimately, Israel and other capitalist states profit ideologically and economically through a cyclical relationship that occurs between the right to maim and the right to repair.

Puar states that, through the right to maim and debilitate, Israel maintains biopolitical control over Palestine. Kinkaid (2018) explains that debilitation, the slow wearing down of a population, is distinct but supplementary to disablement or the event of disabling. Maiming and debilitation function as apparatuses that neither 'let live' nor 'let die' but rather 'will not let die' and 'will not make die'—a perpetual existence of suffering that is neither life nor death (Puar, 2015). Puar explains that the maiming and debilitating of a population is a new form of covert violence, masquerading as a humanitarian justification for settler colonialism that appeases the enlightened liberals of the modern era. This challenges the idea that settler colonialism is only ever a project of elimination through genocide or assimilation and the idea that disability is only an unfortunate side effect of colonial capitalism (Ben-Moshe, 2018; Puar, 2015). Charles Wells' (2019) concept of the *homo dolorosus*, a person made to suffer, is a supportive addition to Puar's analysis. The *homo dolorosus* is the result of contemporary nation-states' need to appear liberal while simultaneously practising colonialism and imperialism (Wells, 2019). Thus, the *homo dolorosus* must remain alive to showcase the legitimacy of the state. This does not mean, however, that the *homo dolorosus* escapes death—death and exploitation are their daily bread (Wells, 2019). As a result, the *homo dolorosus* exists in a state of continuous near-rightlessness and near-death (Wells, 2019). Israel has produced the *homo dolorosus* in the Palestinian population, in which Palestinians live a precarious life that Israel simultaneously preserves and eradicates (Butler, 2009; Wells, 2019). Maiming and debilitation are mechanisms of power that maintain low fatality rates while executing the erosion of the population (Puar, 2015). Through maiming and debilitating the Palestinian people, Israel can maintain biopolitical control without global scrutiny, while achieving the same ends as the colonial projects of extermination and slavery (Wells, 2019). Therefore, maiming and debilitation allow Israel to maintain biopolitical control of Palestine.

Puar explains that the right to maim and the debilitation of bodies and infrastructure are not simply a war on life but a war on resistance. Israel is attempting to destroy a third intifada pre-

emptively. Non-lethal weaponry, such as rubber bullets and flechette shells, allow for crowd control; however, Israeli forces have deliberately aimed at “protesters knees, femurs or vital organs” in an attempt to disable Palestinians (Puar, 2015, pp. 3). Israel denies medical attention and other infrastructural support systems (such as water, communication, and electricity) to those disabled so that the body remains debilitated; minimal support is provided to ensure survival without growth (Puar, 2015). Consequently, Palestinian bodies are removed from mainstream rights discourses and are placed outside the frame of ‘grieveability’ as they lack the capability for rehabilitation (Butler, 2009; Puar, 2015). Israel is attempting to disable the Palestinian capacity for resistance by disrupting everyday Palestinian life through an ‘asphyxiatory’ application of power (Puar, 2015; Wells, 2019). Resistance cannot ferment in a state where the population is unfit for the task and where paranoia (over attaining the bare minimum for survival) thrives. Hence, maiming and debilitating has become a method of population management (Ben-Moshe, 2018). Puar uses Lauren Barlant’s concept of ‘slow death’ to describe the gradual decay of the Palestinian population (Puar, 2015). However, slow death can entail a slow life. By foreclosing and suspending rapid movement, communication, and forms of contact (through the use of checkpoints and the confiscation of telecommunication infrastructure), the circulation of goods, ideas, and bodies are slowed down, disrupting the ability to form a resistance (Medien, 2018; Puar, 2015). Additionally, the practice of maiming is the destruction of the future of Palestinian children as many suffer from malnutrition or stunting and birth defects (resulting from exposure to white phosphorus) (Puar, 2015). However, Puar asserts that it is a biopolitical fantasy to think that resistance is preventable indefinitely, as demonstrated by Saber al Ashqar, a double amputee who launched a rock from a slingshot in his wheelchair at Israeli forces (Eastwood, 2018; Wells, 2019). Therefore, Israel uses maiming and debilitation of bodies and infrastructure to abolish any attempts at harbouring resistance in the present and the future.

Collateral damage is used as a euphemism to disengage from the consequences of violent and calculated warfare. Collateral damage is the unintentional killing and injuring of civilians and children (Puar, 2015). Puar disregards the concept of collateral damage as it “disarticulates the effects of warfare from the perpetration of violence” (p. 2). Israel can articulate collateral damage as unintentional, which may be factual, but the damage is also predictable (Puar, 2015). Collateral damage invokes the shifting of blame to the victim; for example, Benjamin Netanyahu blamed Hamas, the political party which represents Palestine, for the countless civilian deaths from Israeli operations (Puar, 2015). In doing so, the coloniser separates the act of violence from the effects of violence and escapes culpability (Puar, 2015). As per Frantz Fanon, if the settler can deem what is ‘violent’, they can define which actions are in the realm of violence—Israel has done this by limiting their brutal acts to ‘collateral damage’ (Fanon, 1963). Maiming and collateral damage have similar functions, as the relatively low number of deaths (compared to the number of injured) conveys a message that the injured are going to recover (Puar, 2015). Additionally, similar to maiming, collateral damage frames death and injury as an accident or an unavoidable necessity so that Israel does not lose its legitimacy (Wells, 2019). Israel’s escape from liability was evident during Operation Protective Edge and the use of drone warfare (Rogers, 2014). Israel explains that they went to “extraordinary lengths to limit collateral damage and civilian casualties using the precision of drones” (Rogers, 2014, pp. 95). However, as much as 70% of casualties were civilians and the extensive use of drones significantly contributed to the high levels of civilian death and injury (Rogers, 2014). This showcases how states use laws and customs of war to exploit ‘the collateral damage exception’ by using legal tactics that result in a staggering number of civilian loss (Cronin, 2013). Under these conditions, it is apparent that collateral damage is not an accidental circumstance but rather a calculated result of strategy (Cronin, 2013). The concept of collateral damage is used

to escape the predictable outcomes of violent acts. As a result, through legal loopholes, the coloniser escapes global scrutiny by framing predictable and calculated outcomes as collateral damage.

How is Israel able to escape global scrutiny for their actions? Israel has practised settler colonialism through “expert language, algorithmic calculations and rational science” which has resulted in the hiding of their violent acts behind a veil of humanitarianism (Puar, 2015, pp. 8). This mathematical approach to warfare has resulted in Palestinians being rendered “as bodies without souls, as sheer biology” (Puar, 2015, pp. 15). Israel justifies its right to maim through the conception that it is less violent than killing; a humanitarian approach to warfare that validates occupation and settler colonialism (Ben-Moshe, 2018). An example of this approach is a ‘roof knock’ whereby a preliminary assault, sometimes less than 60 seconds before, is given to warn residents of an impending strike (Puar, 2015). This supposed humanitarian gesture is called into question when 60 seconds are given to Palestinians subjected to mobility restrictions, as those in Mubaret Philistine Care Home for Orphans and Handicapped in Gaza were (Puar, 2015). Israel formulates a perception of themselves as a liberal state through their involvement in International Human Rights Laws such as the Fourth Geneva Convention and the United Nations Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (Puar, 2015). However, their blatant disregard for medical neutrality as showcased by their attacks on Palestinian healthcare providers, the disruption of doctors and civil servants who wished to reach populations in need of care, and their purposive disablement of the Palestinian population indicate otherwise (Puar, 2015). Palestinians have declared debilitation worse than death. This reveals the mockery of Israel’s supposed liberal and democratic approach to warfare as the preference of death contradicts the human rights model of disability which Israel claims to embody (Puar, 2015). Israel is not alone—capitalist countries (such as the Arab Gulf States and the United States of America) also hide behind a veil of humanitarianism by providing aid to Palestinians. Aid, akin to maiming and debilitating, facilitates neither ‘let live’ nor ‘let die’ but rather ‘will not let die’ (Kelly, 2010). Providing aid serves a propaganda function as donor countries appear sympathetic to the situation without providing the effective intervention necessary to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Kelly, 2010). Solving this problem will be economically and ideologically detrimental to capitalist states. Aid is analogous to colonial policy in which it casts itself as a benevolent solution while having drastically different consequences (Kelly, 2010). Mikko Joronen’s concept of the ‘space of waiting’ is an accommodating addition to Puar’s analysis of Israel’s counterfeit humanitarianism. Joronen uses this to describe the strategy Israel uses to validate Palestinian legal rights while simultaneously failing to realise those rights (Wells, 2019). Through the combination of slow and offsetting regulatory, legal, and administrative practices, the Palestinian population is held in limbo, waiting for the actualisation of their rights (Wells, 2019). Therefore, Israel conforms to internal and external expectations of human rights by showcasing Palestine’s ability to make claims against sovereign power without actualising those claims through never-ending delay (Wells, 2019). This reinforces the previous argument regarding resistance, as waiting prevents Palestinians from establishing forms of infrastructure, ownership, and social organisation that could facilitate resistance (Wells, 2019). Therefore, Israel conforms to a model of humanitarianism that disguises their violence and exploitation.

The policy of maiming and debilitation is productive and profitable both ideologically and economically to colonial capitalism through the ‘speculative rehabilitative economy’. Maiming and debilitation oppress entire populations that live in the shadow of the wealth and excessive consumption of the occupier (Mitchell & Snyder, 2019). Palestinian subjugation to violence and death is profitable in many ways for Israel and the capitalist world. Maiming and

debilitation are valuable not only economically but ideologically (Puar, 2015). As opposed to the Marxist theory of primitive accumulation, Palestinian labour is not needed for profit; instead, it is their debility and inability to produce labour that is exploited (Puar 2015; Wells, 2019). Israel profits substantially as foreign aid provides a source of revenue for rebuilding infrastructure that they destroy; this is a capitalist accumulation that ultimately feeds back into Israel's regime (Puar, 2015; Wells, 2019). Similarly, The United States profits economically and ideologically through providing funds for UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) for schools and hospitals while simultaneously providing ammunition that destroys UNRWA infrastructure (Puar, 2015). Through Israel's right to repair and the funds provided by donor countries, Israel can paint itself as the saviour of Palestine. Through this cyclical relationship, Israel can continue its maiming and debilitation while profiting economically and ideologically (Puar, 2015). Furthermore, the maiming and debilitation of Palestinian bodies is productive for rehabilitation industries (Ben-Moshe, 2018). Israel also profits from ideological legitimacy as Israel exploits the precariousness and debility of Palestinians to sustain its image as an enlightened liberal state (Wells, 2019). Additionally, technologies of debilitation become a source of revenue—the company whose drones were tested during Israel's assaults recorded a 6% increase in profit during the first month of Operation Protective Edge (Wells, 2019). Thus, the policy of maiming and debilitation allows colonial capitalists to profit through a recurring relationship between the right to maim and the right to repair.

In conclusion, Puar argues that Israel has manifested a right to maim and debilitate Palestinian bodies and environments as a form of biopolitical control. The doctrines of Frantz Fanon, Lauren Barlant, Mikko Joronen, Charles Wells, and Judith Butler are excellent supplements to Puar's analysis. Israel's tactic of avoiding killing Palestinians has aided Israel in three main ways: it dismantles resistance, appeals to the humanitarian discourse of the enlightened liberal movement, and is profitable both economically and ideologically. Israel maims Palestinians and debilitates them by apprehending medical care and other vital resources that would facilitate rehabilitation—both the body and infrastructure are debilitated. Consequently, Palestinians are in a state of indefinite suffering, comparable to the *homo dolorsus*. The enduring Palestinians do not have the means to harbour resistance and the effect of war on children aligns with Israel's ambition of suppressing opposition indefinitely. Collateral damage is analogous to maiming and debilitating in that Israel can escape accountability for its actions through a legal loophole in the customs of warfare. Israel justifies its approach as a humanitarian one but, in reality, the Palestinian does not live but survives in indeterminate waiting for the actualisation of their rights. In the end, Israel and other capitalist states profit economically and ideologically through the recurring relationship between the right to maim and the right to repair at the cost of the Palestinian population. However, it is doubtful that Israel will be able to oppress the Palestinians permanently as only a spark of resistance is needed for a fiery revolution.

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ARTSCHOL 100

Arts Scholars

Blair McIntosh

Hunger, Dissension, and the Great Chinese Famine: Examining the Durability of 'Food Morality' During Periods of Extreme Food Scarcity

'Good' or 'bad' delineations of food practices are seen across multiple cultural contexts, ranging from religious taboos and ethical food movements to the lucrative food blogging industry (Thompson, 2019 ; Sharpe, 2019; Warner, 2018). However, all these moral categorisations of food exist within the context of abundance experienced in society today. But what about times of acute food scarcity? If food is no longer plentiful, are cultural constructions of morality ascribed to food upheld, dismantled, or strengthened?

Acute periods of food scarcity in the post-war era are rare. One, however, is noticeable for its scale and length of food deprivation. Described by Dikotter (2010) as "the worse famine in recorded history", the Great Chinese Famine witnessed the death of approximately 32–45 million individuals between 1958 to 1962. Furthermore, because of advances in immunology, the Great Famine is historically unique for the fact that starvation (rather than disease) was the primary cause of death during a sustained period of absolute food scarcity (Dikotter, 2010). Whilst the scale of economic deprivation experienced is hard to ascertain due to limited comprehensive records, national living standards dropped to the lowest in Southeast Asia, whilst rural areas near the famine epicentre saw a near-total withdrawal of adequate resources, financial inputs, and material rewards necessary for survival (Chai, 2011). Therefore, the dire nature of the Great Famine offers an opportunity to investigate the durability of food morality in the most extreme of circumstances. By analysing the categorisation of food practices throughout the Great Famine, it is the contention of this essay that, even during acute food scarcity, consumption was framed in the terms of 'good' or 'bad' by the peasantry and Chinese government. Moreover, discussion of contrasting understandings surrounding 'hunger', practices of concealing food, communal kitchens, and *chiqing* (eating unripe crops before harvest) demonstrates that these moral perceptions of food were strengthened as scarcity rose.

Firstly, it would be incorrect to assume only food was labelled moralistically as 'good' or 'bad'. Rather, even the act of saying one was hungry became subject to moral scrutiny. This derives from the privileged position 'hunger' occupied in the shared consciousness of both the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the primary antagonist of the Great Famine, and the peasantry who comprised the majority of famine victims (Grada, 2015). As Grada asserts, the traditional food insecurity of China's peasantry was not dissimilar to "standing permanently up to [one's] neck in water, so that even a ripple is enough to drown [you]" (2015, p.172). Famine had been a constant historical reality and the notion of hunger a source of anxiety (Brook, 1998; Grada, 2015). This anxiety was utilised by the CCP to garner popular support, Mao Zedong proclaiming, "not even one person shall die of hunger", promising to provide all citizens an 'iron rice bowl' of lifelong job and food security (Brownwell, 2005; Manning & Wemheuer, 2011). Transforming the ideals of the CCP into a rich repertoire of food imagery, the adulation of the largely illiterate but nutritionally-astute peasantry could be earned. This relationship was strengthened by traditional Confucian ideals; the promise to provide food during hardship paralleling fatherly obligations (Brook, 1998). In return, the State's 'paternal' authority would be dutifully followed (Brownwell, 2005). Overall, the promise of food was a vital nexus between the peasantry and the State in communist China.

To achieve the 'iron rice bowl', Mao initiated the Great Leap Forward in 1957 (Manning & Wemheuer, 2011). This precipitated existing modes of private agriculture being collectivised into 'people's communes' comprising of up to 50,000 peasants (Manning & Wemheuer, 2011). However, by 1958, adverse climatic conditions coupled with economic mismanagement caused the first cases of food shortage to be recorded (Manning & Wemheuer, 2011). When this occurred, large numbers of peasants rioted and proclaimed their hunger (Wemheuer, 2011). As

Wemheuer (2011) notes, the declaration of being 'hungry' functioned as a call for the State to fulfil its paternal duties, as stipulated in the informal contract it had agreed to with the citizenry in return for dutiful obedience. However, because the State did not have the necessary means to meet this obligation, the logical conclusion of this concerted articulation of hunger would be to challenge the legitimacy of the CCP's mandate to govern (Newman, 1990). Having only held power for eleven years, the dialogue of hunger initially exploited by the CCP was now radically subversive (Diktotter, 2010). For its own survival, the 'good' obligatory nature of hunger had to be recast by the government as criminally 'bad'. This was done through subsequent accounts of hunger being portrayed as fictionalised, the result of 'selfish' peasants exploiting the State's paternal obligations to request unnecessary food aid (Wemheuer, 2011). Henceforth, saying you were hungry was counter-revolutionary, indicative of following the capitalist road and seeking to undermine the revolution (Wemheuer, 2011). Most importantly, the notion of wanting food was now rendered taboo. In Henan Province alone, 70,000 peasants faced 'struggle sessions', wherein the accused was kicked, punched, spat on, starved, and imprisoned overnight for 'pretending to be hungry' (Jisheng, 2012). This violence occurred despite the fact the province was the epicentre of the Famine, many peasants so weak due to lack of food that they died during the interrogation process (Jisheng, 2012).

By violently rendering the notion of hunger under socialism impossible and thus any reference to it morally "wrong", the government legitimised the limited aid it could provide (Grada, 2015). Consequently, the famine continued to worsen and the peasantry's hunger became increasingly life-threatening. At the peak of the famine in late 1958, when average daily rations were less than 250g, peasants increasingly turned towards illicit food practices such as stealing and grain concealment, traditionally adopted during times of strife to survive (Jisheng, 2012; Thaxton Jr., 2011). Once again, the morality of food harvested through these 'illegal' means was framed diametrically by the peasantry and State. Evidence of concealing grain from state collectors (mostly in individuals' homes), which became common in 1959, drew on a historic food practice euphemistically referred to by peasantry as 'borrowing grain' (Wanling, 2011). Fearing the state might not provide adequate food, grain would be 'borrowed' during tough times for consumption and 'repaid' in times of plenty (Wanling, 2011). Moreover, as Wanling (2011) contends, concealed food was often viewed as morally 'good' if it ensured the household did not go hungry. Indeed, to not engage with this food practice and thus let family members starve signified the failure of an individual to fulfil their basic responsibilities under Chinese Confucian ideals (Brook, 1998).

Because of the centralised and collective nature of food distribution in communist China, the notion of concealing food to deny it from the state (and thus the wider populace) constituted the literal eating away of the fiscal foundations of state power (Jisheng, 2012). Tantamount to treason in the eyes of the CCP, one infamous slogan asserted, "concealing one kernel of grain is the same as concealing a bullet" (Jisheng, 2012, p.336). Consequently, the CCP deployed the Red Guard to conduct mass grain seizures in the countryside, carrying punishments ranging from imprisonment to execution. Jisheng (2012) also notes that the concealed grain was often destroyed upon discovery; sometimes even shoved up the anus of individuals who had allegedly concealed it as a form of torture. If this practice is considered in context of the acute food shortage unfolding, the ruination of the grain suggests that, by previously being part of a 'bad' food practice, the food itself had been tainted and its consumption rendered untenable.

This was not the only way the CCP sought to redefine the moral boundaries of famine food practices, however. Eating at communal kitchens became mandatory in 1958 to all people's communes, equating to over 90% of the rural population (Jisheng, 2012). By doing so, it was

concluded that peasants no longer needed to prepare food at home. Therefore, all personal pots, stoves, cooking implements, and livestock were commandeered by communal kitchens for the 'collective good'. As Jisheng notes, "communal kitchens forced villagers to hand over their food ladles to their leaders, thereby transferring their survival to the hands of their leaders." (2012, p.21) Food was now weaponised to ensure obedience, as 'cadres' (representatives of the CCP responsible for overseeing the people's communes) could control the level of food peasants received (Jisheng, 2012). More radically, it sought to also eliminate engagement in 'illicit' food practices by dismantling the notion of 'family' as the base societal unit (Diktotter, 2016). Communal kitchens rendered dinnertime no longer a family affair but a public experience. Brownell notes that family in Mandarin roughly translates to "a group of people who ate food cooked on one stove." (2005, p. 253). If this is considered, by dismantling the 'household stove' to create the cooking facilities of communal kitchens, the CCP sought to reconfigure Confucian ideas of concealing grain for the 'common good' of individual family void. Instead, only securing food for the communal kitchen could now be considered a morally 'good' act.

By December 1959, the worsening food crisis forced many communal kitchens to only serve one meal every five days (Jisheng, 2012). The famine was far from addressed. Without any means to personally cook and a high risk of punishment for concealing food, peasants turned to the practice of *chiqing*, eating unripe crops before harvest (Thanxton Jr., 2011). Although this food practice was categorised as 'theft' under law, this was not the perception of peasants. As one survivor explained to cultural anthropologist, Gao Wangling, "theft was rare. But grabbing something and taking it home, this was not called theft" (2011, p.272). This moral construal of stealing food as not transgressive in nature stems from the long-held tradition of landlords allowing peasants to "grab a handful" of grain once harvested as thanks for their labour (Wangling, 2011, p. 280). Rather than being 'bad', this food practice was a moral right, enshrined in aged-honoured, agrarian customs. Thaxton Jr. (2011) theorises at the height of the famine, *chiqing* accounted for 50–90% of a peasant's diet.

Furthermore, the notion of engaging in illegal food practices for the 'common good' of the family was reconstituted in the wake of communal kitchens. To reduce detection, peasants organised *chiqing* across multiple fields and villages, alongside pre-planned and sophisticated night raids (Thaxton Jr., 2011). In much the same way the *tīti* harvest reaffirmed Kāi Tahu identity in Aotearoa, involvement in *chiqing* became a source of community cohesion and acceptance (Stevens, 2006). Evidence of this can be seen in the popular rural nurse rhyme, "if you don't steal on food patrol, you won't receive grain at all!" (Wangling, 2011, p.289). It reminded villagers that if they did not participate in this food practice they were not entitled to a cut from any grain the community successfully pilfered. Often, this grain was crucial for survival (Thaxton Jr., 2011). Like the CCP labelling those who concealed grain as morally 'bad', engagement in the community-wide food practice of *chiqing* was used as a moral indicator of character.

In Graham's assessment of food insecurity in New Zealand, she notes, "The absence of enough to eat impacts upon the social and symbolic significance of meals, rupturing food traditions and unsettling sense of belonging" (2017, p.133). Although separated by 50 years, this conclusion can also be applied to the Great Famine. Whereas food once formed the origins of political adhesion between the peasantry and the State, as it became scarce, this common bond quickly disintegrated into a fundamental 'rupture' in what constituted 'good' or 'bad' food. Moreover, this newly-minted food morality was one without a middle ground. Survival

depended on admitting hunger and engaging in food practices such as grain concealment and *chiqing*, even though it carried severe state penalties. Alternatively, reliance on the State did not guarantee food security, making an individual vulnerable to community ostracisation and accusations of neglecting familial obligations. In the food scarcity which persisted, the question of what was eaten, how it was eaten, and with whom was primarily a politicised moral, rather than nutritional, issue. Moreover, it was one with real-world implications. The Great Famine stands testament to the power of food to both unite but also divide; especially in its absence.

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Sociology 310

Researching Social Problems

Amanda-Rose Sesio

Resisting Racism in a World of Anti-Blackness

“If the structure does not permit dialogue the structure must be changed”

Paulo Freire, 1970

Two things plague the world right now; coronavirus and anti-Blackness. The names of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and now Arbury Ahmed, and George Floyd linger in our collective consciousness as victims of criminalisation, vigilantism, and state-sanctioned violence. Theirs are also the stories that have mobilised masses to the streets in honour of their lives but also, importantly, to confront the world of anti-Blackness. Such protests offer counter-narratives to racism in the 21st century but operate in constant struggle with the status quo—an anti-Black status quo. This essay seeks to explore the dynamics of resisting racism in a world of anti-Blackness, that is, to question how protesting racism is constrained in a paradigm of anti-Blackness. This argument proceeds in two parts. Firstly, I argue for a radical re-conception of race and racism, away from hegemonic understandings subsumed in criminological discourse, and a shift to that of ‘anti-Blackness’. Secondly, I argue that from an understanding of anti-Blackness through an Afropessimist lens, we can come to understand the irreconcilable projects of leftist anti-racist politics and that of addressing complete anti-Blackness. I draw on the works of prominent Black radical theorists in advocacy of a Fanonian ‘end of the world’.

Part One: Reconstructing Race in the Context of Anti-Blackness

It is impossible to present new knowledge without also confronting the historical dominance of Western epistemology (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). This then makes the radical re-conceptualisation of taken-for-granted categories, such as race, an important project to undertake in order to dismantle Western thought and expand the ways our social world can be understood. When tasked with the objective of deconstructing race, Spivakovsky argued that Criminology had treated race “as if it was the offal of the discipline” (Spivakovsky, 2013, p.3). That is, rather than seeing race as omnipresent to all discussions of crime, race is often represented as a mere ‘special topic’ in broader criminological theory. Criminology has contributed largely to the epistemological violence that Black and Brown peoples have experienced throughout history. The discipline premises itself on grounding criminological issues within the socioeconomic and political context but, when race comes into play, the argument is left at a harmful dead-end in two distinct ways (Spivakovsky, 2016).

Firstly, when criminological research presents the numerical evidence showing Black peoples disproportionately represented in crime statistics without positioning race in a critical historical-political context, there is a reproduction of positivist understandings of crime, i.e., that criminality is inherent to particular racial groups (Phillips, Earle & Parmar, 2019). A second positioning occurs when scholars do come to reject this and turn to the conclusion of racial profiling, which claims that individuals (and individual police officers) have their own motivations and biases. Presenting the issue in this way promotes the fallacy that racism exists only in individual, overt, and locatable acts of violence. This fallacy, which permeates criminological (and broader) discourse, means that addressing racism then becomes simplified to that of diversifying the police force, implicit bias training, or the prosecution of individual ‘bad’ officers. However, such framings cannot address the issues of mass incarceration, mass criminalisation, the War on Crime, and the War on Terror, for example (Wang, 2016). This implies that the disproportionate stopping, searching, apprehension, and murder of racialised peoples can be explained by the negative thoughts and feelings of individual police officers that associate Black people with crime (Gately, 2013) and presents these instances of police

violence as ‘exceptional’ (Wang, 2016). This research on individual bias may certainly seem exhaustive, leading some scholars to argue that there is no need for further examination of the topic of race and crime (as cited in Gately, 2013). However, this only provides testimony to the frequent dismissal of the structural nature of race and racism, which risks naturalising and decontextualising these statistics of race and crime. This means our methods of knowledge production do not address the core of these issues but rather reproduce them in subtle yet epistemically violent ways. This is racism in the 21st century and it is through this understanding that criminology (and similar disciplines) have not only shaped their own political climates but also that of broader society.

In order to understand the current context of policing as both an institutional and intentional practice, we must diverge from discourses of individual-level racism that leave us asking ‘do police possess racial bias?’. For the remainder of this essay, I argue that this approach cannot capture the qualitatively unique relation that Black people have with not only the police but with the world—which is that of complete anti-Blackness. I utilise the term anti-Blackness, derived from Black radical thought and, more specifically, Afropessimism, to articulate the notion that “the construction of Blacks as *nonhuman* (fundamentally) structures the status of all other racial groups” (Ray et. al., p. 149). In other words, blackness and whiteness exist antithetically, whereby one cannot exist without the other (Fanon, 1967). For the White person to have ontology, to be ‘human’ and to be ‘socially alive’, the Black must be socially dead, erased of all subjectivity and reduced to a state of ‘nonbeing’ or non-human (Fanon, 1967, p.41). This racial schematic defines the social order of the world. Fanon speaks to the phenomenology of blackness as ‘the quintessence of evil’ (Fanon, 2001, p. 39); criminality, guilt, animalism, and complete un-reason. This is only so because whiteness holds a positionality that equates it with innocence, goodness, normality, and reason. It is this which Fanon articulates when he says the colonial world produces a ‘Manichean’ world, characterised by hierarchically organised binaries. Taken as a system, racism exists to reproduce this Manichean order of the world, one that fundamentally defines Black people as ‘socially dead’ and White people as ‘socially alive’. As Wilderson (2020) states, the relationship of Black people to White people is fundamentally constituted on violence, such that the Black person is parasitic to the White just as the capitalist is parasitic to the worker, but uniquely constructed by that of irreconcilable, gratuitous violence.

Police brutality is one node of anti-Black violence (which originated in the slave patrols and colonial policing) that is integral to reproducing the Black/non-Black Manichean order of the world. The condition of policing today is, at a foundational level, no different. This makes sense if we understand that slavery and colonialism are ‘relational dynamics’ rather than an historical event or ensemble of “empirical practices like whips and chains” that ended in 1863 (Wilderson, 2020, p.41). That is, the fundamental relationship between the Black and the White person continues to exist “even once the settler has left or the government has ceded power” (Wilderson, 2020). Saidiyah Hartman (1997) points out that slavery’s persistence in ‘post-emancipated’ times is not because its sediment remains in memory but because Black lives remain imbricated in the racial animus entrenched during the slave trade, one that positions Blacks as a phobic object in the collective consciousness of people. Thus, Hartman (1997) denotes that Black life in the 21st century is that of an ‘afterlife of slavery’. The afterlife of slavery exists not just because police and White vigilantes killed Blacks during slavery, and still do today, but because Black people remain in “complete captivity from birth to death”

(Wilderson, personal communication, October, 2014). In explanation, Hartman (1997) illuminates the ways in which Black life is always proximate to death, i.e., in the way that Black people have “skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment.” (p. 6). Blackness may roam the world but it is always captive to and targeted by gratuitous violence. Sextons (2011) articulates this in the following text;

“Socio-political actions are, of course, possible for Black people but can never be done ‘freely’ and devoid the specter of violence given the meaning and utility of Blackness itself. In other words, if you are Black and you march against police brutality, or enter a Starbucks, or sleep in a college student lounge, or have a cookout in a ‘public’ park be always, already prepared to be confronted or have the police called on you” ... In fact, be always, already prepared to die. This is anti-Blackness. (Sexton, 2011).

Part Two: On Protesting Anti-Blackness

A comprehensive understanding of anti-Blackness through an Afropessimist lens allows us to illuminate the limits of anti-racist advocacy based on liberal notions of justice, innocence, empathy, and recognition. It therefore demonstrates the need to look beyond the linear performances of power and instead at the dynamic relations of power (Wilderson, 2020). To be more specific, we must not only consider altering the frame of recognition, but destroy the frame as a whole. This conceptual analysis materialises at a time where police brutality (and racism as a whole) is at an important point of visibility.

“Black life is lived in a white hyper-reality” (Gillespie, 2017, p.2). Gillespie uses the concept ‘White hyper-reality’ to describe how whiteness, White being, and White symbolism, overdetermine the world in every sense. Gillespie argues that, because we exist in a White hyper-reality, we cannot think outside of the semiotics of whiteness. White-realism constructs the conscious mind such that it is unable to distinguish between the fictions created by the White being and reality itself. This is important for the Black person, considering that any attempt to communicate the shackling of this White hyper-reality can only do so using the language and semiotics dictated by whiteness itself. It is in this way that Black articulations of suffering are confronted with the impossibility of accessing a “grammar of suffering to communicate a harm that has never ended” (Gillespie, 2017, p.6). Thus, all Black speech and assertions against anti-Blackness are made in the paradigm of anti-Blackness that permeates the libidinal economy of society. As such, we exist in a framework that demands Black suffering to be translated so that it is recognisable for the White liberal imaginary and can be deemed worthy of empathy.

One way Black suffering is translated is through an appeal to innocence. When a Black person dies at the hands of police or vigilantes (those who take the task of state violence into their own hands), there is often a pattern of political campaigns emphasising the ‘innocence’ of that victim. The spokespeople of many movements prior (but not exclusively) to that of ‘Black Lives Matter’ centred on the murder of unarmed Black men to which a framework of innocence has become a ‘necessary precondition’ for the launching of anti-racist campaigns. However, as Wang (2016) argues, there is a problem when we use innocence as the foundation to galvanise anti-racist action, because any claim to innocence always operates amongst an a-priori conflation of Blackness and guilt. As Fanon articulates and Wilderson rearticulates, the Manichean world is one where “the cause is the consequence”; “I shot you because you are

Black, you are Black because I shot you” (as cited in Wang, 2016, p.7). Therefore, a claim to innocence for Black people exists only because the collective conscious of society has mapped innocence onto whiteness, and guilt onto Blackness. Rather than interrogating the schematic itself, this strain of anti-racist politics takes it to be organic. It determines the moral and political discourses such that racist violence is only recognisable as racist violence when the Black person can be recognised on the terms of the White liberal imaginary. That is, providing the Black person meets the conditions to be perceived as non-threatening, morally pure and as having ‘authentic victimhood’.

This materialises in the emergent categories of being a ‘good Black’, i.e., the Obamas and Oprahs of the world, or the counter, ‘bad Black’. Yet, for the Black person to be perceived as ‘good’ to White civil society there must be a dissociation from the class of ‘bad’ Blacks, i.e., the homeless, convicted, or lower-class Black people (Wang, 2017). This asserts that the default of Blackness is inherently ‘bad’ and to be otherwise is a deviation from the norm (Wang, 2017). Fanon (1967) speaks to this in *Black skin White masks*, stating that, for the Black person to be recognised as anything other than substandard, they must “throw off the burden of that corporeal malediction” (p. 84). In other words, dissociation from being by default ‘bad’ demands a dissociation from Blackness.

In the context of anti-racist campaigns, we see this appeal to innocence clear in the dividing attitudes towards the ‘rioters’ and ‘looters’ of the Black Lives Matter movement. The White liberal imaginary cannot recognise this behaviour as morally palatable or as a legitimate expression of grievance which leaves these people denounced as un-authentic victims of racist violence and illegitimate political actors. These are the limits of empathy based on liberal politics of recognition, as there are demands on Black suffering to be made comprehensible (and thus, mutilated in translation) to the White liberal imaginary. Instead, we should see such victims as those who articulate the wrenching totality of anti-Blackness and experience anti-Black violence viscerally. This means we must understand violence on the terms of the most oppressed.

When a police officer murders a Black person, the first thing we demand is the prosecution of responsible individuals. However, on the macro level, Sexton (2003) entices us to think, “what are we doing when we demonstrate against police brutality, and find ourselves tactically calling upon the government to help us do so?” (Sexton, 2003, p.171). When we focus on individual police prosecution, the focal point of justice centres on reformist logics, i.e., bodycams, diversifying the police force, bias training, or firing the odd racist officer. This logic, however, can only go so far in addressing and prosecuting acts of racist violence at the individual level for, even when that individual is prosecuted to the highest degree, the totality of anti-Blackness and the structural racism endemic to policing is obscured from our conversation. Here it makes sense to draw on Gillespie’s (2017) White hyper-reality because the Black claim to justice is always constrained by this reality, which imparts the belief that we are restricted, even at the highest level of abstraction when calling upon the government for protection from its own agents. As with the discourse of innocence, there is an assumption rendered invisible that there is a fairness to the state, that the system presumes equal innocence and thus protection of all. In other words, our perpetrator has become our protector.

Sexton (2003) illuminates the limits of our imagination and, by extension, our liberation when he says, “it is not the fact of impunity [from murderous violence], but the realisation that they are simply people working in a job” (p.54), and that the origin of violence is not at the abstraction of shooting or force but in the fact that police roam looking for such events in the

first place—that Black people needn't do anything to be targeted for their bodies are policed all the time. However, I want to note this is not to render police brutality or the apprehension of implicated officers negligible, because people—*families*—need relief and often this constitutes part of the closure necessary in the immediacy of racist violence. By extension, to write against such politics is not to critique the works of reformist groups or the needs of people to be recognised and incorporated in this world, but rather it is to understand the ways in which “black speech is always coerced speech” and to critique the way in which Black suffering must always be articulated through a palatable discourse for the White liberal imaginary ” (Wilderson, personal communication, October, 2014).

In conclusion, basing our politics on innocence, individual bias, and leftist frames of recognition cannot address the totality of racist violence that is anti-Blackness because, as Butler stated, “recognisability proceeds recognition” (Butler, 2009). While Butler did not explicitly write this in relation to the conditions of racism, it is clearly still applicable. For the Black person to be recognised, and thus worthy of empathy, their suffering must be translated in such a way that they enter a frame which allows for recognition. That frame, however, is that of the White hyper-reality (Gillespie, 2017) which, at a conceptual level, reproduces the ontologies brought into existence from the time of slavery (‘pre-emancipated’ times). The Black person is therefore reproduced as less-than-human (socially dead) and consequently has no “ontological resistance in the eyes of the settler” (Fanon, p.110). Therefore, when Wilderson says, “we are the antithesis of recognition” and that “recognition and incorporation are generally anti-Black” (personal communication, October, 2014), he, like Fanon and those who follow Black radical thought, identifies that recognition in good faith cannot occur without rupture of the frame of recognition itself (Sankar, 2019), without destroying recognition itself, and without the end of *this* world.

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Sociology 326

Sociology of Violence and Death

Savannah Clemm

On the Prospect of Weaponised Death – A Close Reading

The purpose of this essay is to closely examine John Gillespie's 2017 text, *On the Prospect of Weaponized Death*. This is a text that builds on the Fanonian critique of colonialism and violence, as well as incorporating contemporary Black critical thought. This is an example of how Fanon's theory can be used today to critique colonial violence and the ongoing anti-Blackness in the context of the state. This essay will discuss the key themes within Gillespie's writing with further explanation and exploration. Firstly, it will examine the theme of hope versus hopelessness. Secondly, it will examine the idea of the white hyper-reality in relation to the Black Being. Thirdly, it will examine Gillespie's statement "the black body lives to die". Fourthly, it will examine the dialectic of self and others within Gillespie's writing. Finally, it will examine the need for counterterrorism by the Black terrorist.

Gillespie begins his essay by recounting the event which prompted him to write it in the first place, the death of Baltimore rapper, Lor Scoota. As the mourners listened to the late rapper's music on repeat, they burst into joy and danced around the neighbourhood. This joy, however, was short-lived. Police officers turned up to the scene armed with guns in an attempt to maintain white superiority and Black inferiority. In this moment, Gillespie had the realisation that the Black body could not win, thus beginning his development of the theory of weaponised death (Gillespie, 2017). As part of this theory, Gillespie touches on the importance of hope and hopelessness for the Black Being. Once there is a realisation that the only hope is to lose hope, Black death can be weaponised. It will always be a hopeless situation for the Black individual (Gillespie, 2017). Once the Black individual has acknowledged this and recognise that they cannot win, only then can they hope for the beginning of the end of the world. The Black individual can no longer hold onto the hope of a revolution when this has never worked historically. This hopelessness gives them power to think beyond living in white, colonial, and capitalist world.

*“learning to die
in the anthropocene
must be done
for those who
were never invited
to the
anthropos too”*

The above poem written by Gillespie (2017) is used to represent his realisation that, for the Black Being, there is no living in the white hyper-reality. This means that the current world we live in is not the Real world and is instead a fiction created by the White Being, a simulation used to keep white people and their structures in power. This simulation also reveals the underlying concepts of race, racism, and the objectification of the Black Being. When the White Being sees the Black Being, they are only seeing a construct of the white hyper-reality

and the person themselves. This association then leads to the 'justification' of violence against Black people within the white world, which then further suggests that the Black Being is not human because they endure so much violence (Gillespie, 2017). This constant, never-ending violence is not only ignored but is also made ordinary and mundane (Gillespie, 2019). The objectification of the Black Being helps to explain Gillespie's conclusion that weaponised death is needed. This process of dehumanisation is used to inflict and justify violence and the Black individual is not seen as human. Instead, Black people are used as constructs and objects in this white hyper-reality. Constant Black death is needed to maintain and uphold the structures which are already in place (Gillespie, 2017). Blackness is trapped within this white hyper-reality, within the white language and culture, and there is no way that the Black Being can fully be understood in this context. The White Being continues to focus on a good life for themselves and the promise of death for the Black Being. This cycle is intrinsic to the white hyper-reality. Through the use of English language, the Black Being is only informing this fictitious version of reality but trying to live within this reality is not an option as there is no hope for a 'happy ending' (Gillespie, 2017). This reality superimposes itself upon the world and is a hyper-reality because nothing is able or allowed to exist outside of it.

Gillespie views the Black body as a still-birth (in relation to the white hyper-reality) which guarantees natal alienation, social and ontological death, stating, "the black body lives to die". Ontology is the philosophical study of being and becoming, it helps us to theorise what it means to be in and part of the world. For the Black Being to be ontologically dead, it means that, within this white hyper-reality, the Black Being is non-existent, deemed incapable of being alive (Gillespie, 2017). This creates the need to weaponise Black death. In Gillespie's (2019) text he states "Stay black and die. Stay nothing and die. Same difference." This is articulating his belief that being Black and non-existent is the same thing. The world has deemed the Black Being to be a non-being and this idea is repeated throughout all aspects of society. Black people are deemed to be the problem and the source of many other issues. This is the state of Blackness. The world is ruled by the white hyper-reality, the white ontology reigns supreme, and, comparatively, the Black Being is 'incapable'. Gillespie (2019) mentions that "perhaps, it is better to know how one would prefer to die rather than live." He uses Kendrick Lamar's lyrics in his *Buried Alive Interlude* (where Lamar says that he feels like a suicidal terrorist) to help explain this. For Gillespie, this happens at a paradigmatic level regarding the ongoing violence that the Black Being is constantly subjected to. For the Black body to exist in the world, they have to be under some sort of denial, functioning in an anti-Black world without actually being. To be a suicidal terrorist means that there is no more fear associated with death, they are able to take this nothingness and become fearless of the never-ending death that occurs.

Throughout Gillespie's (2017) text there is a strong understanding of the dialectical relationship of self and others. This is the idea that everything exists in relation to another. The 'self' is how we would regard ourselves as humans and 'other' is how we would regard all the other humans which live in the world that we interact with. 'Objects' are the different non-living objects which we surround ourselves with, which we interact with. The sense of 'self' within the world can only be informed by the 'objects' that surround us and our existence is dependent on this differentiation. However, Gillespie believes that the Black Being is actually

in a layer below the 'other', as non-human and non-existent in the world (Gillespie, 2017). This understanding is very important when reading his text to help understand how Gillespie is talking about death. Society does not need to recognise Black existence because it is so low under the 'other' and the Black Being's existence does not inform the white body's power. Constant Black death indicates that it is just a continuous cycle, never changing. For society, the Black Being is non-existent, only the image of the Black Being exists. Gillespie explores the symbolism within white and Black life, the symbolic value in white life, and an absence of value in Black life within the world (Gillespie, 2017). There is a hyper-intensification within a white hyper-reality which means the Black life is overrepresented in the poorer parts of society; for example, in death, incarceration, and violence. Through the initial destructive and violent colonisation of colonials, violence will endure afterwards.

Huey Newton (1973) states, "the first lesson a revolutionary must learn is that he is a doomed man". Gillespie includes this in writing to help relay the concept that there is no 'happy ending' for the Black Being, there is no easy revolution. The only way to end this hyper-reality is by fighting (Gillespie, 2017). The only way out of this world is through the "end of the world". The Black life is predicated on the violence of the white hyper-reality, existing in constant threat of white supremacists, colonial and racist terror. The White Being has decentralised their violence and, therefore, the only logical thing for the Black Being to do is to reciprocate this violence. Gillespie (2017) calls for the need of Black terrorism to create radical change, best understood as counterterrorism. He believes that through the personification of Black death and the non-uniqueness of Black death there may be an opening to help with the "end of humanity" and that there is power to end the World through death (Gillespie, 2017). This counterterrorism looks like violence but, in reality, it is self-defence. It is believed that this counterterrorism is the only way to steal Black death back from the White Being. The White Being itself is a violent construct within society, stemming from its colonial violence and ongoing anti-Blackness. To the Black terrorist, their violence looks like self-defence after the violence they have already endured. To the white hyper-reality, however, this will only look like violence. For Gillespie, the existence of whiteness is, in itself, similar to terrorism because it mediates all racialised relationships. He mentions that the United States of America is currently in the time of Trump as president and that the goal of the White Being during this time is to reconcile the "Nation-State" (Gillespie, 2017). Trump is attempting to recreate the years of enslavement and necro-politics and Gillespie believes that the White Being can only be "destroyed symbolically" (Gillespie, 2017). This means that the Black terrorism that occurs will need to be immoral, a response to globalisation which is itself an immoral event.

In conclusion, it can be seen that Gillespie uses many different themes and images to help inform readers about violence and death. The concept of hope versus hopelessness is used to help show the constant violence which the Black Being is subjected to. The only way to proceed is to recognise and understand hopelessness as a way to create power. The concept of the white hyper-reality helps to give an understanding of the fictitious world that is currently lived in. It helps to explain the violence which has happened to the Black body and how an entire world cannot see through the fantasy of the hyper-reality. The racist sees the non-existent Black Being rather than the person themselves. This also helps to explain Gillespie's (2017) statement that

“the black body lives to die”. There is no space for Black ontology, the white hyper-reality has become the dominant ontological source of the world, which does not allow any others to exist. There is also a focus that within the dialectic of self and others, the Black body is placed below the idea of ‘others’ and even objects. They are worth less than an object to the world and that is reflected in how they have been treated. According to the white hyper-reality, Black deaths are meaningless. Gillespie believes that, by not being afraid of this constant and meaningless death, death can be weaponised. His final point includes the need for counterterrorism as the only way the Black individual can become free is through counter-violence. The reclaiming of Black death takes it away from the white hyper-reality so that it can become weaponised. There is a need to accept this fate, in order to commit to revolutionary social transformation and the destruction of white hyper-reality.

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THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

The works within this section focus on the land of Aotearoa New Zealand. Rich with connections, stories and struggles, they explore our unique world and provide insight on how we can change it for the better.

Masquiso takes us on a humorous and lively journey into our nation's recent past. She investigates, through film analysis, the frustration and disdain of a 2000s Aotearoa New Zealand towards what was seen as the rise of the inconsiderate, consumerist and morally decadent 'JAFA'. With a critical eye, she follows the film and brings light to the country's changing social and economic balance which birthed this stereotype. Subverting the film's commentary however, she discusses how, in many ways, this stereotype misses the mark.

Devey then takes us to a more sombre subject. He presents a plethora of reasons why Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) is failing to provide adequate resources to treat depression. He examines the lack of attention given to primary prevention, and the lack of consideration for how diverse cultural and socio-economic factors are relevant to both the causes and treatment of depression. He argues that *useful* resources for treating depression would take account of the various social determinants of depression which are unequally distributed across society.

Waymouth continues this discussion and invites us to consider the link between mental health and our cultural beliefs around work. Drawing on the 'vulgar work' theory and his own experiences, Waymouth shows how the demonisation of unemployment and the inverse valorisation of work (as being the ultimate good and duty of citizens) has negative impacts on mental health. In particular, he discusses the vicious cycles that these cultural norms create.

Chen's piece invites us to reconsider how to effectively engage in political action. It reminds us of the oppressive colonial nature of our political past and present. It urges us to consider whether the act of voting condones this injustice, and whether voting is actually an effective tool for change. She asks us, instead, to build awareness and to move towards alternative methods of political engagement.

Finally, Holloway's collection of short prose envelopes us in life, land and memories all tinged with Aotearoa New Zealand's unique beauty. An homage, an observation, a time capsule of moments and feelings, each poem is an honest and gentle tale of life; replete with familiar sights, sounds, scents and symbols.

These works ask all of us to look clearly at our country; to critically and honestly examine its history, culture and institutions. More than that, they challenge us to take action and shape its future for the better; to correct injustices, and to help those in need. And, finally, to be present: To notice Aotearoa's beauty but also its tragedy, and the way in which it informs our lives.

Spencer Barley

History 705

Writing New Zealand

Ana Kathrin (Kyra) Maquiso

JAFAS: Just Another F*****g Annoying Stereotype?

JAFAS (2000) is not, unfortunately, a documentary on the much-loved orange candy. Indeed, the South Islanders of this documentary did not find anything sweet or delightful about their subject; nor did they sugar-coat any of their opinions about them. As an Aucklander watching this documentary twenty years on, I could not help but feel unreasonably targeted by the series of barbs and sneers that seemed to be passionately thrown at me. The documentary's intrepid host Joe Bennett indeed successfully hunts the coffee-sucking, fashion-obsessive JAFAs after all, but a JAFAs is certainly not the typical Aucklander—at least, not anymore.

In any event, *JAFAS* demonstrates three key features of Auckland's history during the early 21st century. One, Auckland's considerable growth during this time was undeniable and gained substantial attention from the rest of the country, albeit disparaging at times. Auckland was becoming a major influential player, even if the rest of the country tried to resist this reality. Two, there grew a widening regional rift between Auckland and the rest of the country (mostly the rural South Island), likely as a result of Auckland's exponential growth and urbanisation. Finally, while the JAFAs does exist, the label is only truly applicable amongst Aucklanders of rich, white and entrepreneurial backgrounds. The JAFAs originally signified the quintessential Aucklander before the SuperCity merge in 2010, when "Auckland City" primarily referred to central Auckland. This label was never intended to apply to the entire Auckland region; but, unfortunately, this urban myth haunts even the furthest suburbs, arguably to this day.

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*"Up to the sky in a Sky Tower.
From here, I look down on the city that looks down on the south."
(Bennett, Riddiford & Steven, 2000, 0:28:26)*

In 2000, Auckland's population reached 1.2 million, "a third of the country's human biomass" (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:07:30). Beginning in the 1950s, this industrial settlement transformed into a bustling metropolis (Hoffman, 2019), charged with the noises of cars in traffic, ringing Blackberrys, and JAFAs muttering to their cell phones while power-walking to their skyscraper offices. South Islanders, on the other hand, were free from this chaos. Ross McMillain, a proud South Islander, never needed a cell phone in his life and basked in the freedom of being able to shout across the hills to whoever he wanted to holler out to (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:26:29). The JAFAs, being restless city-folk, are always in a rush or jabbering on their phones—they do not even bother to have cheery chitchat with their local mailman or petrol stop attendant. I can understand South Islanders' gripe with city life, as I am sure many Aucklanders do love to complain about the traffic (Watson, 2019). But if the South Islanders' contempt for Aucklanders came from a mere disdain for city life, then why were cities like Wellington and Christchurch, which were also experiencing urban growth (albeit at a less dramatic pace) (Maclean, 2015; Wilson, 2015; Wellington City Council, n.d.), off the hook?

It might be because of the JAFAs' attitude problem. The documentary cleverly illustrated this using the Sky Tower: as the JAFAs ascended higher in their buildings and economic growth, they began looking down on the South. South Islanders felt neglected by the JAFAs, who showed no remorse as they "sucked the South dry" of their labour and resources (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:11:37). During a Sky Tower dinner interview featuring some high-class JAFAS, no insults were flung towards the South Island—yet I could not help but notice an indefinable air of arrogance and pretentiousness, and a slightly patronising tone in the delivery of certain comments. This came especially from one gentleman who felt "proud" of the rest of New

Zealand but was “starting to get annoyed at their insecurity” (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:29:46). Moments later, quick shots of the dinner guests laughing boisterously, while the same gentleman humble-bragged about playing golf later, displayed a level of pompousness that made the scene too embarrassing for me to watch.

But maybe this ‘neglect’ of the South, while coming off as arrogant and insensitive, was simply Aucklanders getting on with their lives. As Aucklander and art consultant Hamish Keith notes, they often had no choice and no room or energy for disliking the rest of New Zealand amidst the hustle and bustle of city life (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:33:01). Following the region’s population boom came considerable pressures for urban development: the city built more houses and accommodation, more utilities, more roads, and more businesses (Hoffman, 2019). By the turn of the new century, Auckland became New Zealand’s largest concrete jungle. It grew in economic influence, so much so that it became casually recognised as New Zealand’s commercial capital (Bennett et al., 2000; see also McClure, 2016). Maybe South Islanders harboured bitterness against the idle-rich JAFAs who, they believed, were cruelly sucking the rest of the country dry for their own sake. For some Aucklanders, such as our golf-loving gentleman from the Sky Tower, perhaps the South just suffered from tall poppy syndrome.

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*“Aucklanders? Well they’re not really part of New Zealand, are they?
They’ve got their little culture, their own little country up there.”*
(Bennett et al., 2000, 0:10:20)

The growing rift between South Islanders and the JAFAs was certainly becoming more and more difficult to ignore. Bill Ralston, an editor from Auckland, likened this rift to two nations growing apart (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:48:37). The South Islanders agreed with Ralston, but this seems to be the only thing they have in common with Aucklanders.

The Jafa culture is apparently obsessed with outward beauty, caring for nothing else but to flaunt their newest heels and jackets as they romp along Queen Street. The JAFAs Bennett interviewed were all fluent in fashion: Jodie, who worked in Auckland public relations, wore an expensive Italian coat; two Jafa men who were interviewed in a cafe seemed well-acquainted with the latest styles and sunglasses (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:08:00-09:07). Striving to “look like an Aucklander”, Bennett felt the need to buy a sleek new outfit from a luxurious shop, chosen for him by retailers fluent with whatever was ‘in’ (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:12:07-0:12:37). This was definitely not the South Island way, where attention was paid only to the sheep they were tending, not the wool coats that were trending.

The JAFAs were apparently so obsessed with image and vanity that there was a specific social category for attractive-looking Aucklanders—‘Beautiful Person/People’ (or ‘the BPs’). This label was repeated at least twice in the documentary, and sure enough, it did exist (Anne, 2013; Dickson, 2008). Perhaps the South Islanders were right about the Jafa’s preoccupation with appearance, but I was personally surprised. In comparison to other city centres around the globe that offered a lot more malls and model-esque passers-by (Hoppler Inc., n.d.), Aucklanders seemed far from the hyper-consumers that South Islanders perceived them as—at least in my eyes.

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But who really is the Jafa? Early in the documentary Bennett slips a passing comment: “A Jafa is an Aucklander; but not every Aucklander is a Jafa” (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:00:49). This seems to me a critical distinction, but unfortunately this detail is not explained any further. Instead, the documentary rolls on, notwithstanding that the very wording of this *endearment* (“just *another* f****g Aucklander”) implies a sweeping generalisation about all, if not most, Aucklanders. When South Islanders were interviewed about the Jafas, all — but one — acknowledged that they referred to the few “froth on the top” (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:07:31). Yet for most, a Jafa was, as implied by the phrase, just *another* Aucklander. Bennett’s expensive coat made him feel (and look) like an Aucklander; an Invercargillian imagined a typical Aucklander as someone with a “mobile phone stuck to their ear” and with “brand new cars” (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:37:04); and another talked about Auckland as the land of the BPs (Bennett et al., 2000, 0:36:42). The fallacy of equating any common Aucklander with the white, elite, trendsetting Jafa seemed relatively common (New Zealand Herald, 2007).

And do not get me wrong: the Jafas—wrapped up in their yachts, luxurious living, and the “coffee-addict crap of Auckland” (Bennett et al., 2000)—did, and do, exist. But Auckland was also home to less-privileged communities in its suburbs. I recalled my childhood as a primary schooler in Avondale in the early 2000s. Life was simple: we walked to the dairy for lollies or jogged around the park next door, not rushing to our next meeting. We had hot tea (or banana Primo on the weekends) on the porch—not in expensive cafes. My central-West Auckland neighbourhood in Canal Road was definitely not filled with white, obnoxious entrepreneurs. Yet the documentary fails to narrow down the definition of ‘Jafa’, perpetuating this false generalisation about all Aucklanders.

Why, then, were Aucklanders tagged as the white, elite class of the CBD? One answer lies in the geography of the Auckland region at the time of this documentary. *JAFAS* was filmed ten years before the Auckland SuperCity: the merging of 8 separate city councils creating one larger and unified Auckland (Hoffman, 2019). Before the merge, suburbs from the far outskirts of the city centre (such as Henderson, Otara, Albany and Papakura) belonged in their separate cities and districts. Thus, when participants of the documentary talked about the ‘Aucklander’, they referred to those who lived in what was then known as ‘Auckland City’—the central region of Auckland, which we now know as the CBD. Since 2010, after regions of different demographics and backgrounds came together, it has become difficult—perhaps even impossible—to imagine an archetypal ‘Aucklander’ (Davies, 2010). Yet, unfortunately, this stereotype survives.

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Does *JAFAS* offer convincing insight on Auckland’s social history and culture? There are definitely elements of truth, but we should be wary of the tendency to generalise all Aucklanders with the infamous label. The Jafa perception might just be another *fun and adorable* stereotype. Nevertheless, this documentary is telling of Auckland’s undeniable growth and influence, and the growing regional rift that accompanies and results from it.

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Sociology of Health, Illness and Medicine

Zak Devey

Manatū Hauora and Depression: A Critical Analysis

Aotearoa's Ministry of Health (Manatū Hauora) has the power to significantly shape how New Zealanders perceive depression. However, the Ministry's authority is squandered by a government that refuses to clarify how ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status (SES) mediate New Zealand's mental illness epidemic. Opposing these deficiencies stands to combat the dissemination of ineffective information within Manatū Hauora's depression resources, inviting integration of culturally and economically accessible interventions. Conversely, an uninspired response threatens to preserve a biomedical model of mental illness that disregards interactions between one's socioeconomic environment and wellbeing. International literature speaks to the economic incentives medical institutions possess to preserve a singular conception of depression when organising public information (Conrad & Schneider, 1986). This helps explain why alternative treatments threatening healthcare profits and the medical model are either simplified or avoided entirely within the Ministry's depression resources. Moreover, Brown, Zavestoki, McCormick, Mandelbaum and Laebke (2001) explain how dominant epidemiological paradigms (DEP's) can cooperate with media to minimise public expectations of a depression resource's usefulness. To date, the efficacy of dominant sources of medical information have remained largely uncritiqued. Additionally, no research has critically considered Manatū Hauora's mental health resources in particular, nor their capacity to engage with and benefit diverse readerships.

To shed light on how dominant depression resources can malfunction, I first explore what comprises an effective mental health resource. I then assess Manatū Hauora's consideration for gender, ethnicity, and SES specific determinants of stress against this standard, as well as against public depression resources provided internationally. To determine how inadequate depression resources shape inequitable wellbeing outcomes, I consider the consequences of contemporary depression interventions within minority and low-income communities, for whom decapitalised indigenous health frameworks could subvert economically inaccessible therapeutic treatments. I then consider how primary care institutions benefit from dissonance between Manatū Hauora's regulatory and informational responses to depression. Finally, I explore how cooperation between the Ministry and media preserve epidemiological paradigms that minimise opposition to individualised and malfunctioning depression resources. This essay will argue that Manatū Hauora not only offers an incomplete depression resource but has deliberately minimised opposition toward its narrow scope. Beyond illuminating the case of Manatū Hauora, this analysis stands to identify key problems found in the way various dominant medical resources depict depression.

Expectations of a Dominant Mental Health Resource

Tools for identifying relationships between depressive symptoms and one's socioeconomic context should be a staple of any government resource on depression. The World Health Organisation (WHO) broadly locates obstacles to depression treatment within socioeconomic hardship, setting a minimum standard for governments to follow when informing their own populations (World Health Organization, 2020). An effective government resource would understand the need to surpass this standard, specifying how external factors give rise to depression. To simply list depressive symptoms for readers to self-diagnose with is inadequate. Instead, symptoms should appear alongside links to resources which illuminate the diverse social determinants of stress. A reader can then seek advice relating to *which* social determinant of stress they believe has informed their symptoms most; be it job loss, domestic violence, workplace racism, or otherwise. By acknowledging how malfunctioning social systems sustain high cumulative stress, an effective resource reminds readers not to blame themselves if unable to resolve their depression independently (Allen, Balfour, Bell, & Marmot, 2014).

Next, an effective government resource on depression should make recommendations for managing depression that are accessible for diverse readerships. To ensure the resource does not alienate certain ethnic groups or socioeconomic classes, it should promote primary preventions that are diverse in cultural origin. Relating to interventions that combat illness before it occurs, primary prevention is generally cheaper for clients than dominant depression interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy (Ebert & Cuijpers, 2018). Moreover, culturally conscious depression treatment can encourage use within marginalised groups by locating interventions within accessible health models (Patel, 2001). To further a resource's accessibility, methods of reducing stress through behavioural change such as regular exercise and nutrient-rich diets could be shaped as streamlined educational tools. For example, a reader could enter their ethnicity so that a depression site can generate diets which are both culturally appropriate and high in emotion-regulating nutrients.

A resource that subverts medicalised assessments of mental illness will expand the accessibility of the information it provides (Feinberg et al., 2012). This is because economically disadvantaged readers could engage with interventions that do not require costly medications, while minority ethnic groups would encounter mental health strategies tailored towards cultural safety.

Analysing a Dominant Source: New Zealand's Ministry of Health

To critique Manatū Hauora's efficacy as a depression resource, one must appraise their consideration for the diverse and disparate allocation of stress between groups. Moreover, one must determine whether the group-specific interventions provided (if any) are effective. Prior to recommending interventions, a depression resource should define the illness, its triggers, and resulting symptoms. A competent mental health resource will personalise these suggestions, emphasising caveats to the efficacy of certain recommendations depending on one's social conditions.

Manatū Hauora ignores how gendered lived experiences can shape the causes of depression and what interventions are most appropriate. Gender specific depression statistics were visible in only two pages of the Ministry of Health website: "Mental Health (50+ years)" (2014), and "Mental health – Māori health statistics" (2018), both of which are only visible when directly searched for. While both resources highlight disparities in depression prevalence by gender, neither speak to the gender-specific determinants of depression which could both contextualise the data and threaten the validity of the advice they provide. For example, sexual abuse and domestic violence are both key predictors of depression that women report experiencing more frequently than men internationally (Parker & Brotchie, 2010). Subsequently, Ministry prompts for depression management such as talking to family or getting quality sleep could be unattainable for a female reader in a precarious home environment. Social phenomena do not distribute their emotional impacts evenly. Thus, dominant resources on depression should provide tools for assessing one's social environment *before* suggesting solutions. To achieve this, Manatū Hauora could ask readers to enter their gender and self-identified obstacles to wellbeing upon accessing the site. This would allow the resource to personalise recommendations, recognising the diverse needs of readers as well as their gendered psychosocial contexts (Weissman, 2014).

Manatū Hauora's resource on depression makes insubstantial attempts to acknowledge that Māori and Pakeha information should differ to account for their contrasting lived experiences and depression prevalences. While the site presents data highlighting disparities between Māori

and non-Māori prevalence, its culturally specific intervention recommendations are limited to visiting unspecified “iwi and other Māori health counselling services”. Such a recommendation appears lazy when one considers *every* suggestion the site makes could be imbued with some manner of culturally conscious guidance. For example, advice such as “learn relaxation techniques” could be made more accessible to Māori readers if links to indigenous breathing practises such as Hikitia te ha were attached (Sety, 2018). A metanalytic review by Griner & Smith (2006) found that culturally adapted mental health interventions were four times more effective than interventions provided to individuals from various backgrounds. This is *not* simply a matter of using culturally appropriate terminology. Rather, these treatment frameworks acknowledge the realities of racism within the recommendations they make, ensuring interventions can thrive in a culturally conscious environment (Harris et al, 2006; Czyzewski, 2011). If Manatū Hauora is to provide information that is as accessible for Māori as Pakeha, all intervention strategies must possess culturally conscious alternatives located in Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) practise.

Manatū Hauora fails to acknowledge its multicultural readership, shallowly recognising depression interventions specific to Māori, while ignoring all other groups that call New Zealand home. No statistics relevant to Pacific Island or Asian populations are included within the site’s depression resources, even though differences in depression prevalence between Māori and Pakeha are highlighted (Ministry of Health, 2020). This is particularly startling given Asian and Pacific peoples comprise almost 20% of Aotearoa’s population (Environmental Health Indicators New Zealand, 2014). Takeuchi, Sue, and Yeh (1995) defend the value of ethnic matching in mental health interventions pertaining to Pacific Island and Asian populations. This should indicate to Manatū Hauora that culturally appropriate mental health recommendations could benefit all ethnic groups, not just Māori. Durie (1982) argues that colonial injustice has led to tokenistic attempts by the government to consider Māori when conceptualising mental health resources. By providing recommendations specific to Māori but no other groups, Manatū Hauora affirms that its attempts to acknowledge how ethnicity and depression interact are indeed politicised and ingenuine.

Manatū Hauora’s advice on managing depression is not comprehensive enough to combat health misinformation targeting low-income groups. While Manatū Hauora (2020) provides “Eating healthy” as a tip for managing depression, a review conducted by Mhurchu & Gorton (2007) found consumer understandings of product nutrition were moderate at best. Given Māori living in poverty suffer disproportionately from nutrition-related illness, the Ministry should provide economically feasible resources that specify what foods improve mental wellbeing (Lawes et al., 2006). To achieve this, sites like WebMD and Dr.Mercola.com could act as valuable resources (2011; 2015). However, it is not enough to simply refer readers to these sites. Instead, the Ministry could use their recommendations to generate price conscious shopping lists synced to local prices, allowing readers to affordably consume the recommended nutrients for sustained mental wellbeing. Without nuanced systems, broad advice such as “eating healthy” remains vulnerable to reader misunderstanding (Ministry of Health, 2020). Moreover, health misconceptions stand to increase so long as food industries target low-income communities with marketing campaigns minimising nutrition’s importance (Freeman, 2007; Grier, Mensinger, Huang, Kumanyika, & Stettler, 2007).

Manatū Hauora minimises the role government plays in shaping socioeconomic contexts that exacerbate depression. The site’s key resource on depression presents readers with broad advice such as “reduce stress”, “learn relaxation techniques”, and “understand what triggers depression for you (e.g. lack of sleep)” (2020). Recommending readers learn stress-reducing

techniques does not present a long-term solution to the social determinants of one's depression. Instead these advisories individualise the illness, implying one should learn to cope within emotionally detrimental socioeconomic contexts without challenging the status quo. Moreover, the notion one can simply "reduce stress" ignores how socioeconomic circumstances deprive different groups of autonomy over their health. For example, poor sleep is more prevalent in low-SES occupation workers, due to shift-work demands (Van Cauter & Spiegel, 1999). If a dominant mental health resource is to help a reader realise the socioeconomic circumstances that facilitate healthy sleep, that resource cannot simply recommend they sleep more. Rather, it must encourage individuals to assess how workplace demands and home environments interfere with their rest. The Ministry could facilitate such guidance by providing work condition appeal forms monitored by the state, or links to government insulation subsidies for those who sleep little due to cold. It is not enough for Manatū Hauora to advise readers to avoid their encounters with different determinants of depression. They must provide tools which streamline one's ability to do so, prompting readers to consider *why* they find it difficult to reduce their stress. Applied to Manatū Hauora, these alterations would encourage readers to question depressive social systems rather than perpetually cope amidst them.

To Manatū Hauora's credit, its depression resources detail behavioural and therapeutic interventions significantly more often than medical treatments (2020). The site even acknowledges the dangers of medical dependency by providing a cautionary document for females taking medication while sexually active, pregnant, or consuming other medications (Ministry of Health, 2017). Depression resources distributed by Canadian and American governments provide no such cautions, suggesting Manatū Hauora has meaningfully subverted the medicalised ideologies shaping depression resources abroad (National Institute of Mental Health, 2018; Canadian Mental Health Association, 2015). However, one must consider the conflict between how Manatū Hauora frames its attitude towards medicalisation and its indifference toward regulating distribution of antidepressants. Conrad & Schneider (1986) explain how the American Medical Association politicised abortion, framing their opposition as a moral stance to obscure their monopolisation of medical practise. One could argue the Ministry of Health politicises illness the same way, creating cautionary antidepressant resources to obscure their regulatory complicity in the prescription of depression medication to over 13% of New Zealanders (Wilkinson & Mulder, 2018). This brings the substance of Manatū Hauora's depression resources into question given that its cautions against mood medication contradict its regulatory action. One must therefore question whether the primary goal of Manatū Hauora's therapy-centric depression resources is to genuinely advocate for therapeutic practise, or to minimise opposition against the medicalisation of depression within primary care.

Sociological Analysis

Aotearoa's medical healthcare providers benefit from Manatū Hauora's minimisation of primary prevention, which could limit profits from depression treatment if widely introduced. While the Ministry acknowledges interventions other than antidepressants, a medical model of framing depression still informs those alternatives. For example, Elkins (2009) explains that the medical model obscures the fact psychotherapies are an interpersonal process, not a medical procedure aimed at treating physiological causes of illness. Subsequently, profit-generating talk therapies are funded over any form of education initiatives that might teach communities to establish sustainable therapeutic networks on their own. This serves healthcare providers by ensuring that treatments to depression can be monetised (Conrad & Schneider, 1986). While the use of medication has been subverted within Manatū Hauora's framing of depression, it

nevertheless preserves the therapeutic authority of medical industries. This is a key mandate of the medical model, which must fortify reductionist beliefs about how illness is caused and treated in order to preserve its validity (Wade & Halligan, 2017).

Minority and low-income communities stand to suffer most from Manatū Hauora's minimisation of interventions that subvert the medical model. Preventative wellbeing frameworks are both cheaper and more accessible than government treatment, and are even capable of defying the capitalist structures undermining communal intervention. The "te whare tapa whā" model of wellbeing exemplifies such a framework, focusing upon a holistic and intersectional conception of wellness (Rochford, 2004). Established independently of the medical model and reflecting values fundamental to Māori wellbeing, te whare tapa whā separates itself from capitalising systems. It is able to do so by resisting patient-practitioner dynamics, persisting first as a valued communal process rather than a service with fixed economic value. Despite the framework's promise, Manatū Hauora's authority as a government entity prevents te whare tapa whā from taking root in marginalised communities without explicit support. Thus, decapitalised mental health frameworks will only become systemically accessible in Aotearoa when Manatū Hauora ceases in its exclusive subservience to a medicalised understanding of depression.

Accounting for Deficiencies in Medical Information:

To account for Manatū Hauora's information deficiency, I draw on the work of Brown, Zvestoski, McCormick, Mandelbaum, and Luebke (2001) and Smith (2016) to illuminate how and why the Ministry may minimise opposition to its inadequate depression resources. In their text, Brown et al. (2001) identified how "Dominant Epidemiological Paradigms" (DEPs) could be shaped through the withholding of information and selective funding of research. The article then argues government practise can contribute to the preservation of such incomprehensive DEP's by routinely obstructing alternative explanations for disease. Government can do so by using its medical authority, selecting which conceptions of illness the media presents as dominant. Brown et al. also noted that these framings then stand to be fortified within the public consciousness, with media outlets propagating selective portrayals of the disease. While Brown et al. focuses on breast cancer, the article invites inquiry as to whether DEP's could also be manipulated by government institutions to shape public expectations of depression resources. On the relationship between political economy and media in the Canadian distribution of anti-depressants, Smith (2016) suggests government advocacy for over-medicalised depression treatment results from fear that alternative solutions will invite public opposition. For example, individuals may challenge the state for its late admittance of the relative inefficacy of anti-depressants compared to talk therapies. Subsequently, demands for subsidised access to less-medicalised interventions and primary preventions could result. Applied to Manatū Hauora, conflict between the public and government on this issue could threaten the Ministry and its medicalised model. Such conflict between the government and public could also pose economic risks, given that deconstructing a medicalised DEP of depression stands to alienate potential state relationships with pharmaceutical industry, which are predicated upon mutual advocacy for medical intervention (Moynihan & Cassels, 2008).

Together, Smith (2016) and Brown et al. (2001) illuminate *how* government and media can manipulate public DEP's, and *why* they might be incentivised to do so. Subsequently, one can explore how and why reader expectations from resources such as Manatū Hauora might be curated. For example, Mike King's "Gumboot Friday" mental health campaign demonstrates how contemporary media can implicitly shape a DEP of depression, encouraging Facebook

users to generate money for counselling services by changing their profile pictures. The initiative was a success, generating \$20,000 in just 48 hours. (Wells, 2019). However, the initiative was also complicit in reinforcing notions that the public should combat depression by aiding the expansion of therapeutic practise, *not* by challenging the socioeconomic determinants of depression which predicate the demand for such interventions. Public perception was thus guided away from primary preventions at the socioeconomic level, and instead towards preserving the economic sustainability of medical institutions.

While media is a dominant tool through which DEPs are preserved, Brown et al. (2001) elaborate that media also bears the power to promote alternative explanations for disease and deconstruct DEPs. Aotearoa's media has taken small steps to challenge Manatū Hauora's narrow scope, criticising the Ministry for replacing primary prevention with a "bottom of the cliff" strategy (Marvelly, 2018). However, a critical mass of media promoting interventions that treat ill social contexts before individuals will be necessary if Manatū Hauora is to consider expanding its framing of depression.

Conclusion

Aotearoa's Ministry of Health bears the unique opportunity to inform New Zealanders of the socioeconomic determinants of stress, while emphasising diverse and personalised tools to engage with symptom advisories and intervention recommendations. However, Manatū Hauora continues to frame depression deceptively, minimising the role of inequitable socioeconomic contexts while maximising individual responsibility. Attempts to offer culturally specific treatment recommendations are not only broad but fail to account for entire ethnicities. Gendered lived experiences are ignored completely, while politicised documents cautioning antidepressant use obscure the Ministry's subservience to the medical model. A lack of recommendations responding to different socioeconomic phenomena leave low-SES groups vulnerable to misinterpreting information, as well as to depression interventions driven by profit over wellbeing. These findings speak not only to the inadequacy of the Ministry's depression resources, but also to how dominant framings of the illness have allowed its narrow scope to remain unchallenged. To date, very little work has been done to critically assess the efficacy of dominant sources of medical information for diverse readerships. Moreover, no research has pointed such assessment towards Manatū Hauora's mental health resources. While contemporary media serves a key function in the maintenance of medicalised epidemiological paradigms, the same systems are integral to mobilising social movements capable of calling the government to account for its framing of depression. These efforts could sustain a systemic reconstruction of depression's relationship with socioeconomic contexts, so that Manatū Hauora's resources are soon tailored to benefit all New Zealanders.

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Sociology 100

Issues and Themes in Sociology

Matt Waymouth

To Make Matters Worse – The effects of stigma, work, and consumption on mental illness

While societal attitudes towards mental health issues have improved significantly over the last century, sufferers still face considerable difficulty—the perception that something is intrinsically wrong with the underlying character of the mentally ill seems difficult to shake. Meta-analysis of studies on the effects of unemployment have shown a reliably negative effect on mental health (Paul & Moser, 2009), which I believe is a result of society's attitudes toward joblessness and a reliance on consumption. For many, including myself, the stigma of mental illness is intrinsically linked to the stigma of unemployment, and the resulting lack of access to basic commodities adds considerable complexity to recovery. To illustrate this, this essay examines the relationships between stigma, work, and consumption through the lens of mental illness.

According to Goffman, stigma is the result of a misalignment between public and private identities (1963). All individuals create a 'virtual identity', designed to portray socially favourable attributes and suppress any attributes that might be perceived as inadequacies. When the public learns that someone's true identity deviates from societal ideals, they are often socially discredited, culminating in rejection from 'normal' society (Goffman, 1963). While many New Zealanders advocate for the acceptance of mental illness, underlying this is the notion that sufferers of mental health issues possess unwanted attributes—which can significantly contribute to exacerbating the effects of their illness (Johnstone, 2001). This results in a 'phantom normalcy' for those who suffer from mental health issues (Goffman, 1963). They are told of their acceptance, but still perceive their own stigma through:

“the denial of the mentally ill's moral entitlements to the things that other so-called 'normal' persons may take for granted: function, a sense of place in an intersubjective world, empathic connection with reciprocating others, peace of mind, happiness, participatory citizenship” (Johnstone, 2001, p. 200).

I believe that the stubborn persistence of this notion has roots in socially favourable attributes that are based upon capitalist ideals; in particular, Campbell Jones' (2020) 'vulgar concept of work' and its interactions with consumption.

As capitalism has increasingly entrenched itself, society's ideas around work have manifested themselves in what Jones calls the 'vulgar concept of work'. Within this framework, society assumes that the decision to work is dictated purely by personal choice, and that certain forms of work are intrinsically more valuable than others. More importantly, it is the belief that work is the primary objective in life, that work adds something of value to society, and that its rewards are the natural result of individual effort (Jones, 2020). However, the 'vulgar concept of work' elevates employment beyond mere effort and reward: “Occupation is often viewed not only as the major source of income, but also as the main mechanism of social integration and the means of developing and expressing one's identity” (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2011, p. 697). From Marx's perspective, a subscription to the 'vulgar concept of work' illustrates a false consciousness. He believed that members of the proletariat were oppressed, unwittingly buying into the bourgeoisie's methods of labour exploitation in a futile attempt to gain social power—despite the fact the system was designed to keep power in the hands of the elite (1867). “The advance of capitalist production develops a working class, which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of Nature” (Marx, 1867, p. 523). In other words, when society regards employment as the only option, labourers motivate themselves to work. Broadly speaking, through the 'vulgar concept of work' the bourgeoisie no longer need to actively assert their position and are able to maintain their dominance over the proletariat while lessening their own involvement.

Through a process of socialisation that utilised the education, tradition, and habit mentioned by Marx, I developed my own belief in the ‘vulgar concept of work’. As a result, I found myself persisting towards a career despite the mental health issues I was beginning to face in early adulthood. However, as depression became increasingly hard to ignore, I was forced to withdraw from employment. As the subsequent social guilt and financial difficulties caught up with me, I was compelled to return to work. This cycle repeated itself multiple times, and eventually the reasons became clear: my perception of the ideal worker that I had shaped an identity around—my ‘virtual identity’—did not align with the reality of living with mental illness. I believed that my career should be my purpose, “not simply a burden and a necessity, a means of putting bread on the family table, but a performance of the whole individual” (Ransome, 2005, p. 16). Because of that, I felt it was necessary to push myself, to impress my superiors, peers, and family through hard work as a means of gaining social and financial capital. Whenever I was employed my work-life balance became increasingly work-heavy; I took on extra responsibility, volunteering for surplus labour and additional work from home. As a result, my feelings of alienation and isolation from social support increased until my ability to perform at work inevitably deteriorated—once again forcing me to resign. Whenever I left a job during these years of back-and-forth employment, I felt a deep sense of shame about my inability to succeed despite the ‘virtual identity’ I had attempted to construct.

Effectively, thanks to the weight wider society places on the ‘vulgar concept of work’, the stigma of my depression was compounded by the stigma of an inability to work. There exists an idea that “those who are not labouring under the command of others are somehow inclined to a wasteful or socially catastrophic form of idling” (Jones, 2020, p. 151). Because working is a choice that is inherently valuable to society, those who abstain make a conscious decision to withhold their contribution. As such, the unemployed are often viewed as a burden. Anyone not reliant on their own labour is constantly reminded that their survival is only possible through the collective responsibility of others (Ransome, 2005). This idea is exemplified by the prevalence of the ‘dole-bludger’ sentiment in parts of society, reinforced through messaging by right-wing politicians. The New Zealand National Party (2019) announced their intentions for a crackdown on welfare, promising more aggressive restrictions on unemployment payouts as an appeal to their voter base. This disdain for the unemployed shows a sort of self-perpetuating nature to the proletariat’s exploitation. When the unemployed are made to feel inadequate about their own lack of productivity, they are more likely to return to work—ensuring that labour is always available for the bourgeoisie to exploit.

My dependence on a state benefit also highlighted how institutions help uphold this stigma around unemployment. Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) provides the unemployed a regular taxpayer-funded income to facilitate consumption of the basic means of survival. However, WINZ works to invalidate illness: they maintain that even those unemployed due to health issues should aim to return to work as quickly as possible, monitoring a beneficiary’s ability to work through case managers. Their policy was made abundantly clear when the longstanding ‘Sickness Benefit’ was replaced by a universal ‘Jobseeker Benefit’ (Ministry of Social Development, 2013), effectively relabelling the ‘sick’ as merely ‘unemployed’. This constant communication of the need to return to work puts considerable pressure on beneficiaries in an aim to reduce the length of their financial dependency. While the minimised expenditure placates taxpayers in higher social strata, it also serves as a public message that work remains a necessity for all. Because of this pressure, my feelings of guilt caused by mental illness were further compounded by the systematic demonisation of the unemployed. These experiences were not unique to me. A study through the University of Canterbury found

feelings of shame, guilt, and the perception of being a ‘social problem’ were common in recipients of WINZ benefits (Gray, 2017). This is a direct result of a society that equates the ‘vulgar concept of work’ to normal human functioning; with the motivator of guilt ensuring compliance to a system designed to benefit the bourgeoisie at the proletariat’s expense.

Our obligation to work is warranted by society because it facilitates the production of commodities and the wages that enable their consumption. Many workers, after their basic needs are met, spend a portion of their remaining wage—their disposable income—accessing commodities that operate as markers of class and status. Through the unique values society attributes to them, these commodities help to shape a consumer’s unique identity and allow participation in more social aspects of human life (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). With that in mind, “if we use material goods for defining an extended identity, it follows that their unintended loss should be experienced as a lessening of self” (Dittmar, 2011, p.747). This is justified through a lack of productivity—there is a belief that if someone is unemployed, the luxuries of consumption should understandably be out of reach. For myself, the reliance on WINZ assistance removed my disposable income; restricting access to the commodities I had created an identity around and the commodities that sustained many relationships. It became increasingly difficult to attend gatherings of friends and family that involved spending, even if that was merely transport costs. This is not without reason—by setting WINZ benefits at such low rates the unemployed have even more incentive to return to work, lest they lose out on access to the commodities that allow them access to social participation. Mirroring the findings of the recent Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (2018), which lists social exclusion as a key contributor to mental health problems, this inability to participate compounded the effects of my mental illness even further. However, it also highlighted a crucial aspect of capitalism as a whole. The desire to consume is heightened as commodities form the basis for creating an identity and actively participating in society. This, in turn, encourages the proletariat to embrace their position as a labour force: a fulfilling life costs money, and money comes from work. Simultaneously, the proletariat’s desire for consumption ensures a constant market, allowing the bourgeoisie to sell commodities back to the labour force that produced them in the first place.

In the scheme of human survival however, a loss of access to these commodities is relatively benign. The larger problem is the fact that basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare are intrinsically tied to consumption (Ransome, 2005). Returning to Marx, this shows that consumption ensures a capitalist system is upheld, because the cycle of production and consumption is about more than luxury. It keeps people alive. Under WINZ, I was not simply deprived of a disposable income; I did not receive enough income at all. I am incredibly privileged in that I have had family who could assist me financially when situations became dire, but even then, in a regular week anything beyond the consumption of food and shelter became simply unaffordable. Even with the help of WINZ systems designed to facilitate affordable healthcare and my own drastic cost-cutting, this created a financial inability to consume the goods and services necessary to ensure wellbeing, not to mention the added stress of being constantly in arrears on bills. Often, I was faced with a choice between spending my limited income on medical appointments or on necessities. However, mental illness made therapy and doctor’s visits themselves a regular necessity. Again, I am one of the lucky ones who could reach out for family support. Many people do not have such a safety net, and our social support systems are supposedly designed with them in mind. Over time, due to an inability to balance physical and mental health, my illness reached a point where I withdrew from society almost completely, neglecting my own physical and mental health to a point of crisis. Worse, I felt that this outcome was justified. Thanks to constant social and institutional

reminders, I had internalised the stigma of unemployment alongside the stigma of mental illness—believing wholeheartedly that I had become a burden to society through my inability to work. A significant number of depression sufferers report feelings of being a burden as a motivator for suicide (Baxter et al., 2014). As New Zealand continues to see growing rates of mental illness and suicide (Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction, 2018), and an increasingly unemployed population thanks to COVID-19 (Dann, 2020), this inability to consume due to the link between the stigmas of mental illness and unemployment is a serious issue.

The ‘vulgar concept of work’ is a system of thought that ensures the working-class embrace the idea of working, while condemning those who cannot. This has created the perception that the outcome of poverty on the unemployed is justified, even in the case of illness. New Zealand is in dire need of reform: we have a system that forces those with health issues into social and financial marginalisation while expecting a swift return to productivity. Though society cannot easily shift away from deeply embedded capitalist ideals, we must work to break the association between the stigma of illness and the stigma of unemployment.

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Politics 352

New Zealand Parties, Leaders and Elections

Michelle Chen

Beyond the Ballot Box: Why the Average New Zealander Should Not Vote in the Next General Election

1. Introduction

When political scientists look at the declining rate of voter turnout in New Zealand, it is interesting that their first reaction is to panic (see, e.g., Vowles, 2012). Underlying that reaction is an assumption that voting is the primary way for New Zealanders to participate in political life. This essay seeks to challenge that assumption. I argue that just because one *can* vote, does not mean one *should* vote. The average New Zealander should *not* vote in the next General Election for three reasons. First, to not vote is to withhold one's support for Government injustices or, more broadly, for an oppressive colonial electoral system. Secondly, voting has an extremely low probability of making a difference in either election results or public policy more generally. The time spent on voting should be spent on alternative methods of political participation which can better contribute to the common good. Finally, focusing on voter turnout without civic education simply leads people to make uninformed electoral choices that harm collective wellbeing.

2. Expressing Dissatisfaction: Not My Government

There are numerous reasons why the average New Zealander should be dissatisfied with the current political system. I will focus on how, at its core, it is a colonial structure in which the Crown has continuously failed to honour its obligations to Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi. Veronica Tawhai (2011) argues that, from its inception, the New Zealand electoral system has effectively been an instrument of colonisation. The Native Lands Act 1865 converted Māori communal land titles into individual titles under the guise of allowing Māori to meet the land ownership requirements to vote. However, this stripped Māori of their *tino rangatiratanga* over their lands, contributing to mass land alienation among Māori. As Tawhai (2011) argues, the long-term economic, cultural and social devastation of land loss to Māori communities “far outweigh[s] any benefits to Māori from being eligible to vote” (p. 164). Indeed, the right to vote was presented by the Crown as a ‘reward’ for Māori accepting the authority of the Crown. The Māori Representation Act 1867 provided that Māori could only vote if they had not “been attained or convicted of any treason felony or infamous offence” (s 6). Therefore, when Māori reject the vote today, they can be seen as standing with their *tupuna* in rejecting the authority of an oppressive Government.

This dissatisfaction with the colonial electoral system can go some way to account for the low Māori voter turnout. Only 71.1% of enrolled people of Māori descent voted in the 2017 General Election, compared to 80.35% of enrolled non-Māori people (New Zealand Electoral Commission, n.d.-b). Of those Māori who did vote, only 88% reported being satisfied with the voting process, compared to 94% of the overall voting population (Kantar TNS, 2018). The Government—and, indeed, many political scientists examining low voter turnout among minorities (e.g., Galicki, 2018)—tends not to view this low voter turnout as symptomatic of problems with the Pākehā political institution itself. For example, when investigating why people did not vote in the 2017 General Election, all the possible reasons proposed by the Electoral Commission relate to not being bothered, personal barriers, lack of knowledge, practical access barriers or the voting process (Kantar TNS). None of those options suggest any possibility of non-voters protesting the electoral system as a whole. Similarly, when Celestyna Galicki (2018) examined the emotional cost of voting among groups that traditionally have lower than average turnout rates, she made no mention of the anger and resentment that Māori may feel when participating in a political system which has historically not only ignored, but actively oppressed their interests. While it is true that factors such as procedural barriers do

contribute to low Māori turnout, history provides a better explanation for why Māori, more than other minority groups who may be affected by those same procedural or personal barriers, have a low voter turnout. For Māori, not voting is “a rejection of the state as perpetrator of sustained violence against Māori communities through the removal of Māori rights and confiscation of Māori resources” (Tawhai, 2011, p. 159).

Even if one is not part of the 16.5% of the New Zealand population that identifies as being of Māori ethnicity (StatsNZ, 2019), one should still feel a duty to stand with the tangata whenua whose land we now call home. Injustice is still injustice even if it is not happening to oneself. If voting is about expressing how one believes our state should be governed, then not voting sends a message just as powerful—if not more. Low voter turnout signals to the political establishment that the political status quo is inadequate, and politicians need to provide policy options that better align with the people’s values. If more people abstain from voting, then turnout rates will fall to a point where it forces politicians to reevaluate whether they actually have the mandate to do the things they do.

On a personal level, not voting keeps one’s hands and conscience clean of the injustices that one perceives the Government may be committing. By not contributing to the mandate of the Government, one is able to say, “That is not my government, and those injustices are not done in my name”. One common argument against non-voters is that, if one does not vote, then one has no right to complain (“Editorial: If you don’t vote, don’t complain”, 2013). In fact, a non-voter has more right to complain than a voter because their vote represents their participation in, and therefore their endorsement of, the political system that is committing injustices. This means that a non-voter has legitimate grounds for protesting government policies, such as those that continue to deny Māori tino rangatiratanga in violation of te Tiriti. For example, non-voters can stand in solidarity, without hypocrisy, with the prisoners who have been stripped of their ability to vote (see Waitangi Tribunal, 2019). Instead of lacking civic awareness and engagement, as the common criticisms go, the non-voter’s awareness of the historical injustices and autonomy to control their political contributions in fact makes them a more responsible political citizen.

3. Alternative Methods of Political Participation

Some might argue that rather than abstaining from voting, one can better reform a dissatisfactory system from within—that is, by voting for candidates who can advocate for one’s causes (see, e.g., the “intellectual” type of leader in Ranginui Walker, 2006). I propose two counter-arguments. First, there is an extremely low probability that one’s vote can actually make a difference to either the election results or to public policy more broadly. Secondly, even if it does, voting is not the only—or even the best—way of achieving one’s political goals.

At least in recent times, there have been few elections won by small margins in New Zealand. For example, in the 2017 General Election, the smallest margin of victory was 1,039 votes in Te Tai Hauāuru (New Zealand Electoral Commission, n.d.-a). Even in the 2014 General Election, there were only four electorates won by a margin of less than 1,000 votes, with the smallest margin being 600 votes in Auckland Central (New Zealand Electoral Commission, 2014). Furthermore, the complex nature of modern bureaucracies means that many decisions are not made by elected politicians, but by bureaucrats and administrators on the ground (Howlett, Ramesh & Perl, 2009). This means that one’s vote for elected officials will not make much practical difference to policy implementation, especially given that both of New

Zealand's major parties lean towards the centre of the political spectrum. Therefore, voting is not the most effective way to get one's voice heard.

Rather, I argue for a broader conception of what constitutes political participation. Ariadne Vromen (2003) argues that political participation is not just citizens acting in the role of "activists", but also when they are acting as workers (producing goods and services that others want) or family members (developing social capital) (p. 371). These are more direct ways in which one can contribute to the community at grassroots levels, instead of voting. More broadly, one can also protest, volunteer in community projects, donate money to charitable causes or write letters to politicians. As Jason Brennan (2009) puts it, "debts [to society] can be paid with multiple currencies" (p. 543). All these methods give the citizen more autonomy and scope to express their political opinions than simply voting. For example, one may support a political party overall, but disagree with a specific policy. If one votes for that party, then one is seen as endorsing *all* the party's policies. However, if one instead writes a letter to the politicians, one can explain one's dissatisfaction with that policy, advocate for change, and have that specific opinion be taken into account. Therefore, one should not vote because the time and energy spent on voting can be more effectively used in these alternative ways to be a good citizen.

In the New Zealand context, Maria Bargh (2013) argues that focusing on low Māori voter turnouts ignores the other forums in which Māori are politically active, thus perpetuating "erroneous and stereotypical assumptions about Māori as politically apathetic or disinterested in politics" (p. 454). For example, in post-settlement governance entities, Māori have worked with the Government to co-manage their economic and cultural assets in ways that empower *tikanga* and Māori *tino rangatiratanga* (Bargh, 2013, p. 447). Notable instances include recognising Te Uruwera and the Whanganui River as legal persons, of whom Māori act as *kaitiaki*. Similarly, pan-iwi bodies, such as the Iwi Chairs Forum, provide expert advice to the Government on nationally significant matters, or bring Māori issues before the Waitangi Tribunal to advocate for Māori rights (Bargh, 2013, pp. 447–448). Less visible are the voluntary responsibilities taken up by Māori on the ground, such as managing local *marae* (Bargh, 2013, p. 448). Since the *marae* is a vital site where *mana* and Māori political authority originate and are exercised (Bargh, 2013, p. 448), Māori participation in *marae* activities are instances of Māori engaging politically on their own terms, through their own *kaupapa*, literally on their own grounds. Therefore, Māori should not vote because their time and energies can be better utilised in these politically empowering ways, rather than relying on the goodwill of those in their oppressor's House.

4. The Bigger Problem: Lack of Civic Education

A blind focus on increasing voter turnout often masks the bigger problem: the lack of civic understanding among our voting population. In the 2017 General Election, 20% of non-voters stated that they did not vote because they did not know who to vote for (Kantar TNS, 2018). Furthermore, 62% of non-voters reported that they did not understand the voting process (Kantar TNS, 2018). Since this lack of knowledge is self-reported, it can only indicate the tip of an iceberg: that a sizeable portion of the population do not feel like they have the knowledge or skills to make an informed political decision.

Given this context, Brennan (2009) argues that voters who are not "adequately rational, unbiased, just, and informed" should not vote because their irresponsible voting can harm the

collective wellbeing (p. 536). They do this by voting, without reasonable justification, for harmful policies, or for candidates who are likely to enact harmful policies (Brennan, 2009). For example, one participant in Galicki's (2018) study "admitted to voting 'randomly', not knowing anything about the parties, just to experience the ritual of voting" (p. 50). While one individual vote may not make a difference, it is reasonable to theorise that this is a more widespread concern because of the high number of uninformed voters. The problem with Brennan's argument is that, as he acknowledges, "the people [he] describe[s] as bad voters are not likely to recognize that they are among those obligated not to vote" (Brennan, 2009, p. 547). Furthermore, the cost of attaining sufficient knowledge to make an informed decision is high (Brennan, 2009, p. 543): ideally, one needs knowledge in as wide-ranging a field as economics, philosophy, sociology and current events. Therefore, not many people would qualify as competent voters for Brennan. On this view, one should not vote because one is *probably* not a competent voter.

I take a more moderate approach. One should not vote if one feels that, on their *own self-assessment*, one does not have the knowledge or capacity to make an informed decision. If so, they then have a duty to educate themselves and develop their civic understanding, even if they do not end up voting for other reasons. Furthermore, the Government should supplement voter turnout campaigns with civic education campaigns.

5. Conclusion

Abstaining from voting is not just for those who are living the #RebelLife. I have proposed three principled reasons why the average New Zealander should not vote in the next General Election. Given that the electoral system—and the political authority of our Government more generally—is built upon a history of oppression, not voting is a powerful withdrawal of one's support for a Government that perpetuates injustices. Individual votes make almost no difference to the political scene, so that time and energy can be better spent on alternative—and more effective—methods of political participation. One should also not vote if one is not sufficiently informed to make a responsible political decision, to avoid harming the wider community.

This essay has tended to draw on Māori experiences because, despite Māori having lower than average turnouts, government campaigns have largely ignored the real reasons why Māori choose not to vote. #ForFuture'sSake, don't just vote (see Litmus, 2019). A successful society is not based on ticks in boxes, but on citizens who have the knowledge and confidence to critically assess their political options and make informed political choices that genuinely contribute to the common good.

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English 344

Writing Creative Prose

Lily Holloway

Auckland in 100 Words: A Sequence of Short Prose

DRINK

The post-party lull is quiet, teenagers are sleeping sprawled on the couches, draped over each other. Someone is vomiting on the manicured berm into the cold Rothesay Bay morning, frightening early morning joggers.

Young men from the North Shore tease each other for drinking RTDs so the concrete floor of the garage is littered with empty bottles of Corona and Lion Red. When the vomiting stops you can hear the waves crashing on the beach at the end of the cul-de-sac. You are the last one awake, sole witness to the suspended moment: alone in the museum after closing time.

GREEN

While walking through the Torbay bush, my brother, Frano, points out mushrooms growing on crumbling logs and tiny flowers sprouting out of climbing moss. Pīwakawaka hop semiquavers after us, looking for insects stirred up by our footsteps.

‘Since you’re thirteen now, it’s your turn to pick up the dog poo,’ I joke.

‘Not likely!’ he replies.

Frano leads us out from under the fringe of native bush that drips with past rain and onto a grassy clearing sparkling in the sun. His blonde tufts of hair look like cherub halos when lit from behind. When did he get so tall?

DIRT

In Tonkin+ Taylor's underground Newmarket car park, my girlfriend, Angela, shows me where they store the samples. In white corrugated boxes stacked up to the roof are cylinders of extracted earth. Some of the samples have retained their shape but most have collapsed.

'See those,' she says, pointing at the undecipherable black scribbles on their sides.

'Those tell us the extraction sites.'

'How long do you keep them?'

'Until someone remembers to chuck them.'

Angela walks up to the wall of containers and pulls one down. She opens the box and sifts the sand between her fingers. 'This one's from Takapuna.'

STREET

Emlyn Place sits on the rolling Torbay hills near the cell phone tower, flanked by valleys of native bush. Mornings are for tūi, pīwakawaka and pihipihi, evenings for the woodwind hoo-hoo of the ruru.

I'm regaining the confidence to walk on my street. Sometimes, I even make it to the bus stop five minutes walk from my house. On these days, I say good morning to Paul tending to his bromeliads and he'll reply, 'Thought you were your mother for a second there.'

These are brilliant days. Scrawled into the concrete on the corner is 'glenn u r a homo'.

MAGIC

The waitress at Uncle Man's on Karangahape Road knows our orders by heart: dhal with flaky roti canai and the tangle of flat noodles that is kuey teow goreng. Twenty-two dollars in total.

We sit in our favourite spot, the table by the window, and look onto the street. Sometimes, though, I'll turn to face the other way and watch the chef. Her black hair is pulled back in a slick ponytail. She never takes her eyes away from her hands as they beat out the rhythmic spell in the airborne roti dough.

SPRING

Late in the Spring, I notice that some of the ducklings are missing. But today, ten fresh and downy ducklings bob down Taiaroa Stream after their mum. The sun shines on the gravel path lined by ferns and bottle-brush. You're surrounded by native bush but can still hear the constant drone of cars.

A see-through fluorescent green plastic bong sits on a gorse bank but the leisure-wearing dog walkers don't notice: they're busy chatting about the warmer morning air.

Under the eaves of the Browns Bay Whitcoulls, the swallows swoop down from their nests and the children shriek with joy.

UNIVERSITY

I can lead you to the places in the University of Auckland quiet enough for a breakdown. If you have a panic attack at the free books table in the New Science building, take your scavenged Fiona Kidman and slink into the bathroom behind the glass-encased lifts. If you break down in Munchy Mart, avoid the bathrooms behind the bus timetable stand. The busy rhythm of doors opening and closing will remind you that everyone else is moving on.

The counsellors might squeeze you into five minutes between sessions and, if you're lucky, scribble down 'Headspace' on a post-it note.

WORKSPACES

I think it's fair to say that lockdown this year made us very aware of where we do our mahi, and how that environment affects us. For some, that work/life balance may become even harder when it all happens in the same space; for others, this balance may become a lot easier, without losing hours of the day to a commute. As a student, I loved the freedom of being able to work anywhere—libraries, cafes, empty lecture halls, my part-time job, the bus—and took this freedom into my working life, as a remote worker... Growing up with one internalised, capitalist ideal of what a 'real job' would look like (a commute, an office, structure I didn't get to control), every workday at my dining table or from my bed felt like a small rebellion against the system. Proof to myself that I don't have to catch a train, work in an office, or wear uncomfortable clothing to earn a living and be considered 'valuable'.

Lockdown created a lot of disruption in many work lives, including a shift in what people considered their workspace, and what people's jobs became. Discussions of unpaid and unnoticed labour, life childcare and housework, were back in the public space; but at the same time, it felt like we often forgot the many people who simply can't work from home. The builders, the performers, the delivery workers, the suppliers and drivers, the medical staff—some who were considered essential, some who weren't. And yet again, a capitalist idea of who and who isn't of 'value' came into play again.

As most people who already worked from home pre-Covid can attest, working in lockdown is not the same. Whether that mahi is listening to lectures and writing assignments, or a remote job like mine, the ability to 'do it anywhere' isn't the same when there is nowhere to go. At *Interesting Journal*, we often just deal with the end products—the assignments after they have been produced and assessed; but these works are never written in a vacuum. People's lives are mixed into the works we publish—their troubles, their successes—and there is nothing like the disruption of a global pandemic to remind us of that.

This year, we asked each author to send us a picture of the workspace they had during the lockdown, and where a lot of these works were written. For some, nothing may have changed, for others, they could be in different parts of the country or working under very different circumstances. With their permission, we've included these pictures in the journal as a little window into the life of who wrote each piece, and the unusual circumstances we all found ourselves in. We wanted to see what our authors saw during lockdown, where the work was produced, and remind ourselves (and our readers) that value is everywhere. It is looking after your little sister while you listen to lectures, it is researching on the bus to your supermarket job, it is being stuck in your hall of residence without your family, it is trying to work when your six housemates are working from home as well—it is as much in the words we published in this journal as it is in every submission we received and everyone who found a way to exist through Covid.

Alika Wells

