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Any exercise in imagination confers but one restriction—no limitations. It is a vehicle to dream beyond the reality we occupy; to envisage a world that promises flourishing of a kind that our mokopuna (grandchildren) deserve and should inherit. For Indigenous peoples, imagination delivers a spectrum of emotions—guilt, desire, hope, despondency—that inevitably throw up a conflicting set of questions. Can we afford to dream? At what cost? Who forks out for it? If we are (materially or figuratively or both) landless, powerless, or being forced to dance on a knife's edge, are we not entitled to hope, if nothing else?

Imagining Decolonisation is a stocktake of decolonisation in Aotearoa/New Zealand: what it means, how it is anchored in this whenua, how it happens and 'unhappens', who is involved, who benefits, and where to go from here. Emerging from the need to develop an accessible, community-based resource, *Imagining Decolonisation* is intended for a diverse audience looking to grasp an understanding of decolonisation—both as a concept and a practice. More specifically, it is targeted towards rangatahi and younger adults. It is a short, necessary and practical handbook on how to materialise a "fundamental shift in ideas, knowledges and value sets" in Aotearoa, as contributor Ocean Ripeka Mercier (Ngāti Porou) puts it in her chapter entitled *What is Decolonisation?* (p. 51). Such a complexity of ideas requires an accessible metaphor if the uptake of this work is to be successful, and contributor Moana Jackson (Ngāti Kahungunu, Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Porou) provides this by conceptualising colonisation as a model of two houses, in which one house forcibly replaces another.

Decolonisation in the Aotearoa/New Zealand context might be best described by Ngahuia Murphy (Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Ruapani, Ngāi Tūhoe) as "confronting a continuing colonial agenda that manifests itself in myriad ways" (2016, cited in Mercier in this collection, p. 53)—a kaupapa [plan, topic, matter for discussion] which many are invested in; in the very least, a kaupapa that is beginning to stir local interest beyond Māori (and Indigenous-adjacent) social circles. *Imagining Decolonisation* topped the Unity Books bestsellers list upon publication and has been a staple feature of the top ten since. As with many conversations that are or ought to be Māori-led, it is a kaupapa that benefits all. To unravel ourselves, if that is indeed what we can call this process—an unravelling, detangling or 'stripping away' of the totalising global project of colonisation—we must define what it is we are doing from the outset. However, as noted by the authors of this collection, 'decolonisation' is a contentious and slippery term to define. It is at once a theory, a concept, a practice, a manifesto, a call to action, an affirmation and a dream; it can simultaneously be commodified as social currency, exploited as a marketing or branding opportunity and negotiated for power. It is precisely the vast scope of the term—its versatility in application—that makes it so complex to delineate how best to approach and operationalise such necessary work as that included in this volume. This difficulty is exacerbated by the sheer reach (real and perceived) and impenetrability of the colonising project, which continues to rear its head in new and sometimes unexpected fora. Indeed, the very persistence of the colonial agenda is contingent on its insidiousness and opacity. The scale of the task at hand is overwhelming.

In Chapter 1, *The Throat of Parata*, Mike Ross (Ngāti Hauā) describes the corrosive violence of this process instigated towards Māori (how else do you deracinate an entire whare [house] and replace it with an ivory castle?) as "te waha o te Parata"—"[unexpectedly] falling into a perilous situation]" (p. 21). Te waha o te Parata describes the voyage of the Te Arawa waka [canoe] being caught, without notice, in a whirpool in the middle of Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa [Pacific ocean]. In this context, Ross uses te waha o te Parata to delineate the enduring process of colonisation, which has brought Māori to the absolute brink of destruction. Strategies for colonisation—extermination,

protectionism, assimilation, amalgamation, extinction—deployed at different stages and contexts by settler imperialism, from Australia to Turtle Island, brought forth distinctive experiences and realities for Indigenous groups. While I do not necessarily ascribe to the description of these processes as unexpected, in some ways, as Ross notes, te waha o te Parata is applicable in the unpredictability of these campaigns. But in any case, having a shared understanding of how colonisation operates, how strategies pivot or remain the same, must come first and inform how we move forward. As with Jackson's metaphor, the foundations of the text-as-house must be strengthened if this decolonisation whare [house] is to weather storms to come. It functions to get everyone more or less on the same page about where we have been so that we all know where we are going.

Many have come to conceive of decolonisation merely as colonisation enacted by Indigenous groups. Much more than a replacement, or even displacement, of a house, as some might think, *Imagining Decolonisation* is primarily concerned with decolonisation as a merging of two houses—albeit on Māori foundations and on our terms. A marriage envisioned by our tūpuna [ancestors] from the get-go and dishonoured by our constitutional partners. All good planning for structural renovation processes begins in the mind.

Particularly of use for sociologists, Mercier's chapter, *What is Decolonisation?,* traverses some of the key facets of colonisation that need to be highlighted and dislodged in the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The global proliferation of decolonising discourse has made difficult the task of localising the work. It is helpful to think in terms of Gramsci's (2007) counter-hegemonic practices of a war of position and a war of manoeuvre. In a climate of independence decolonisation—where the Indigenous population has remained greater than the settler population—a war of manoeuvre—a material confrontation to overwhelm the coercive apparatus of the state—can be more effective because the authority of the imperial project is not rooted in civil society. Here in Aotearoa/New Zealand, as Mercier explains, Māori have been marginalised by the settler population. A war of position—in which culture forms the foundation for resistance to an imperialist hegemony—is both aligned with the intentions of rangatira [chiefs] who signed Te Tiriti o

Waitangi/[Aotearoa New Zealand's founding constitutional document] and He Whakaputanga/Declaration of Independence on behalf of ngā hapū [kinship groups, primary political units]—the desire to work with, and not against, tangata Tiriti ('people of the treaty', i.e., all non-Māori citizens of New Zealand)—and within the founding lore and law of tikanga. Strategically, such an approach recognises that despite how much we continue to fantasise revolution or revolutionary acts (our whanaunga [relation] Kalaimanokaho'owaha's first strike in Captain Cook's death comes to mind) of a kind that feel deft and swift, we simply do not have the numbers for an armed uprising! Yet.

Whichever term we land on—'decolonisation', 'counter-hegemonic practices', or Jackson's '*re*-Māorification'—and however contentious these terms are (does decolonisation just cling to a focus, perhaps to distraction, on the coloniser?), *Imagining Decolonisation* concedes that this is patient work that Māori cannot do alone. And while the benefits of decolonisation would not solely be vested in Māori, colonisation cannot solely be considered 'good' for Pākehā [New Zealanders of European descent]. In her chapter *Colonisation Sucks for Everyone*, Rebecca Kiddle (Ngāti Porou, Ngāpuhi) explores some of the Pākehā anxieties we Māori often like to dismiss in these conversations, not because they are not important, but because they should not be allowed to take oxygen away from the mamae (pain) Māori endure—which can and often does happen. But to get on with the task at hand, it is an issue which needs to be addressed. Kiddle's exploration puts into perspective the bereavement that must occur with any separation from a homeland and how, bereft of such connections, Pākehā identities have come to signal both Kiwi nostalgia aesthetics—Buzzy Bees, Fred Dagg, pavlovas, jandals, etc.—as well as the performance of, and claim to, Māori cultural practices on a global stage (Waitangi Day pub crawls in London with accompanying drunken haka [posture dance performance]) which are otherwise ignored at 'home'. Colonisation promulgates and reproduces fear of discomfort and exposure, of unknowing and ignorance as 'native' subjects, destabilising the claim to and performance of an autochthonous identity. Beyond identity, the import of Western economic and political systems (informed by class, race and gender)

has wrought further havoc on opportunities for an equal and just society. The desire for a reality free from social harms, with equity as a bedrock rather than an ideal, is not a vision exclusive to Māori. And as Kiddle makes plain, acknowledging the ways in which Pākehā have been harmed in the colonising process does not always have to detract from the disproportionality of Māori experiences under such a regime. Allies are integral, and if Pākehā are beginning to confront these systems as contradictory and to see themselves as both the disenfranchised and beneficiaries, not only are we more unified towards a different, more equitable (more tika [correct]!) vision, we are more readily equipped to identify how and where it operates, and who is targeted or affected.

But what, these authors ask, can we tangibly achieve? What day-to-day changes can we action? Aside from a karakia [incantation] a day for some sort of major catalyst which will push Aotearoa/New Zealand into tomorrow, what can we manageably undertake today? (revolutionary ideations again). Amanda Thomas traces the small to significant acts we can perform with sobriety. Getting names right is the first and, I would think, the easiest. I do not know what stage of decolonisation I am at with my own name, if I no longer have the energy to correct every barista, every email, phone call or otherwise. I am unsure if I ever had such capacity; I do not remember a time where it was not mispronounced. But I do remember how it felt the first time someone outside of my whānau [extended family] and friends said my name right the first time without prompting, coaching or practice. Correct pronunciation (Taupō is another example that comes to mind) signifies recognition, not just for the person, place or object, but for the histories, people and places inscribed and carried by that name. Relationships are our lifeblood (Tracey McIntosh, personal communication, 18 May 2020), and if we concretise these relationships with core values—respect, manaakitanga [hospitality], etc.—trusting and listening (the next two on Thomas's list) are quickly naturalised. These perceptibly 'smaller' acts lend themselves to larger acts of concession, like denying the Pākehā claim to indigeneity (despite protestation from the Trevor Mallards, Michael Kings and Don Brashs in our communities), power sharing, advocacy, and allyship (without saviour

complexes). Inevitably, as Thomas warns, there is the ever-present danger of good intentions. Embracing te reo, for example, is a welcome gesture. However, if it comes at the expense of the displacement, shame or mamae of Māori, how effective or needed is your allyship? Maintenance of particular attitudes, particularly when informed by tikanga, can be particularly effective at disarming such outcomes.

Still however, a fundamental question plagues the reader. Where are we going? Elsewhere I have seen Moana Jackson described as our (Māori) prime minister (Godfery 2021). Not that our social or political structures function in those ways, but the comment was made in the context of how highly and meaningfully we regard, and anticipate, his work and service. In terms of the timeline for the Matike Mai Aotearoa—Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation (2016) report, Jackson and Makere Mutu (Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Whātua, Te Rarawa), as convenor and chairperson, respectively, outlined 2021 as a pivotal year to discuss and develop a comprehensive engagement strategy across the Aotearoa. And while I went looking for imaginative speculations (land back cannot purely conceptual) that I had, selfishly perhaps, hoped to project onto, and have answered by, Jackson with this pressing 2021 kaupapa in mind, I was reminded of a few things. The first being that imagination remains a thought exercise unless we embed the tangibles. Critically, this is where *Imagining Decolonisation* pulls threads of continuity between the chapters together. We have to know our histories (of place and people), we must define what it is we are doing (whether we disagree on the semantics of the term or not), we have to understand how global systems operate and who is affected, and we have to do what is within our power to do. Impatience to suddenly bring about a kaupapa that extends long before us might be naive or ill-considered, but the resulting frustrations do not affect or accelerate the time it takes to do this work responsibly and according to tikanga [correct procedure, lore, method, habit]. As Jackson elaborates for those impatient readers, me included, the kaupapa of constitutional transformation, our next steps, are enduring and evolving, too. It is crucial that those who want to be involved in such conversations, particularly Māori, are invited to do so. Rather than these audiences being left

behind, *Imagining Decolonisation* ensures they are afforded appropriate voices and resources to help navigate such a complex and often confusing discourse.

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