

## Editorial

*Adele Norris*<sup>1</sup>

Terina Kaire-Gataula (Ngāpuhi and Niuean), during the 2022 Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (SAANZ) annual meeting, put forth the call to engage and embrace voices from recent history. During the plenary student address, *Losing hope, gaining hope: How academia is nothing if it doesn't help generate change*, she cautioned against the overreliance on historical voices in the absence of more recent local voices that spoke to the plight of a generation. Voices of those whose bodies bore witness to and remain sites of Eurocentric patriarchal violence offer theoretical insight into present-day social issues such as the hyper-imprisonment of Indigenous peoples. Kaire-Gataula highlighted the profound contributions of Haunani Kay Trask and Angela Davis, imploring listeners to honour the intelligentsia rooted in a specialised and intimate understanding of the legacy of colonial white supremacy violence. Violence so insidious, Kaire-Gataula wrote in her 2020 E-Tangata article<sup>2</sup>, *The struggle to embrace my identity*, “I absorbed these negative stereotypes and was embarrassed to be associated with anything Māori or Niuean”. For Tarina, grasping hold of Trask’s theoretical contributions was an exercise of survival and resistance through which she later learned that she was not alone in this struggle. Social change, for Tarina, meant regurgitating the message she received that caused her to believe that she and those who looked like her were a problem.

Ramari Jackson-Paniora shared similar sentiments during the 50th anniversary of the Māori activist group Ngā Tamatoa in 2022. In reflecting on her mother’s legacy, Hana Te Hemara (founding member), Ramari recalled how her mother was conditioned to be like Pākehā (white/European) through school, from her language being taken away to being shamed for her looks<sup>3</sup>. It was a type of conditioning that never led to her country treating her like a Pākehā person.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://e-tangata.co.nz/identity/the-struggle-to-embrace-my-identity/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://e-tangata.co.nz/reo/my-mum-my-mountain-hana-te-hemara/>

Tarina and Ramari emphasised the profound influence of rhetorical devices designed to minimise land dispossession and racism that relegated Māori to bare life. Racial oppression in its various iterations particularly expanded during the 1960s with the rise of racial unrest in the United States and South Africa. For example, widespread expectations for Māori to accept and appreciate that they were much better off than the Indigenous and Black people in Australia and North America incited a type of activism from young Māori during the 1960s that pushed against false narratives of racial harmony. The Ngā Tamatoa 1971 production, *The Fly*, was a self-published two-page newsletter in response to new challenges brought on by Māori urbanisation. The young activists, mainly composed of high school and university students, challenged prevailing narratives of harmony promoted by political and social rhetoric, endorsing New Zealand as having the best race relations in the world.

Donna Awatere, a founding member of Ngā Tamatoa, combatted false narratives by engaging in radical acts of truth-telling. The reality of the urban drift revealed the continuity of violence enacted a century prior. Her 1984 publication, *Māori Sovereignty*, theorised whiteness, white supremacy, and colonisation. The book was swiftly met with white backlash, hostility, and suppression, even among those who considered themselves allies. Although the account by Tarina comes over 40 years after Hana's and Donna's, it attests to the prescient voice and foresight of Donna Awatere. Awatere implored all readers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, to acknowledge and understand white cultural imperialism as a fundamental feature in Aotearoa New Zealand: the depths of its reach/effects, the ways it upholds and maintains white supremacy, and the ways it shapes, thwarts, and views a Māori consciousness as a threat.

Patricia Hill Collins' 1990 articulation of the matrix of domination describes domination as operating "by seducing, pressuring, or forcing [...] members of subordinated groups to replace individual and cultural ways of knowing with the dominant group's specialized thought" (p. 546) <sup>4</sup>. Collins (1990) draws on Audre Lorde's famous words: "[T]he true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape, but the piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within

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<sup>4</sup> Collins, P. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. HarperCollins.



each of us.” This is the call-to-action Awatere presents to us all in *Māori Sovereignty*.

In responding to the call made by Kaire-Gataula, this special issue draws attention to the incisive analysis and prognosis of Donna Awatere’s conceptualization of white cultural imperialism as ubiquitous – a force that shapes everyday life in New Zealand. In a celebration of the 40th anniversary of *Māori Sovereignty*, we have found ourselves living in a moment not dissimilar from the time Awatere published the book. Few will deny this moment as being fraught with heightened white supremacy and extreme-right movements, imported mainly from the United States but consisting of its own homegrown localised expressions. While former US President Donald Trump’s brand of misogynistic, racist rhetoric is easily identified, why his rhetoric appeals to and resonates with a growing segment of New Zealanders is the question Donna Awatere posed. She recasts Māori continued domination as residing in the forms of housing discrimination, growing imprisonment, and health and educational disparities, which she predicts will continue to mark Māori in the absence of sovereignty. The discussions presented in this issue contextualise the theoretical insights Awatere delivered in *Māori Sovereignty* in the present moment.

First, Arama Rata, Gabriella Brayne, and Simon Barber’s astute analysis of necropower explore Donna’s statement “Māori sovereignty or death”. The authors identify the growing prominence of fascism in Aotearoa New Zealand, outlining ways the anti-lockdown and vaccine protests in Wellington progressed. Drawing upon Awatere, who viewed formulations of whiteness as a system of racial exploitation and violence enforcing the state’s genocidal claims to sovereignty, the authors conclude that necropower – capitalism’s consumption of racialised death – requires a revolutionary movement, which begins with identifying strategies to circumvent anti-Māori populism and confront capital.

Adele Norris, Jennifer de Saxe, and Garrick Cooper explore white cultural imperialism, conceptualised by Awatere, as an inherent feature in Aotearoa New Zealand, and its connection to North American theorisations of whiteness as a global framework. With a focus on white body supremacy and epistemologies of whiteness, the authors explore the interlocking relationship between white supremacy, ignorance, and denial as foundational features across settler-colonial states that have received limited attention in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The last article by Brian Dawson, Adele Norris, and Juan Tauri puts Awatere in conversation with the US Black Power movement and Angela Davis' theorisation of the prison industrial complex. The authors highlight how much attention Awatere paid to the criminal justice system, particularly the law, as being the arm or hand of white supremacy, which is most evident in the racialised targeting and hyper-incarceration of Indigenous people. Colonized people, once the land, minerals, and fisheries are exploited, are merely left with their bodies as fodders to the prison industrial complex. The authors map how Awatere articulated multiple systems of Māori confinement since the Treaty, which engenders genocidal characteristics.

Delivering a Marxist analysis of *Māori Sovereignty*, Darrelle Howard's commentary examines the specific ways in which capitalism was thrust upon Māori, displacing Māori modes of production in New Zealand. A process that ensured the continued project of dispossession, capitalism – as Howard points out – is maintained through white supremacy, which perpetuates a particularly violent form of alienation for Māori.

Kelly Glubb-Smith and Karen Cherry's commentary on the tensions and responsibilities experienced in social work education when introducing students to the mission of bicultural practices draws on the macro-level analysis of Māori sovereignty delivered by Awatere. The authors suggest that further consideration is needed to explore places and spaces for Māori social work students to learn safely and develop a critical understanding of the need for Māori sovereignty.

Lastly, we thank all of the contributors and reviewers of this special issue as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Māori Sovereignty*. *Decolonization of Criminology and Justice* extends a special thank you to Donna Awatere for her activism, courage, and intellectual contributions. The enduring relevance of *Māori Sovereignty* continues to inspire us to question, examine and resist old and new forms of imperialism.