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– ARTICLE –

'MĀORI HISTORY CAN BE A FREEING SHAPER': EMBRACING MĀORI HISTORIES TO CONSTRUCT A 'GOOD' PĀKEHĀ IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

Recent upheaval in racism debates across western countries is exemplified in New Zealand in the decision to compulsorily teach Māori histories in schools. Until recently this history has been largely marginalised and ignored by settlers/Pākehā who maintained a belief in histories which served to legitimise the Pākehā position of power. Earlier analyses have identified how the media has maintained normative Pākehā dominance and power through a consistent dissemination of a limited set of racist discourses. Our thematic and discursive analysis explores how media that embrace Māori histories in the new curriculum (9 media items published 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019) work to provide discursive resources for Pākehā in navigating the current debates. A process of hard work followed by transformation into an enlightened future was identified as a pathway for Pākehā to navigate the current upheaval and construct a 'good' Pākehā identity. The construction of a racist Pākehā outgroup works as a comparison to emphasise the 'good' Pākehā as ideal, and to assign blame for past and present racism. Our analysis demonstrates that despite overtly positive coverage, media accounts can still work to maintain Pākehā centrality and sideline or render invisible structural racism and Pākehā privilege.

Keywords: te Tiriti o Waitangi; colonialism; media studies; discourse analysis; New Zealand history

INTRODUCTION

An intensifying process of change and upheaval in debates around racism is underway both in New Zealand and globally, and has been heralded in international media as 'the world […] metamorphosing into something new' (Solnit 2021, para. 1). Debates between left and right are becoming increasingly

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polarised and chaotic, with the current left-liberal social movement being described as 'the mighty river they [the right, White establishment] are trying to dam' (para. 2). In the New Zealand media, Māori have drawn attention to, and created resistance against, ongoing racism (both institutional and individual), and intensified demands for tino rangatiratanga (*e.g.* Jackson 2021). These calls for an authentic honouring of te Tiriti o Waitangi[4] have called into question many practices and institutions that maintain racism, Pākehā[5] privilege and the Pākehā dominant society (*e.g.* Waateanews.com 2021). The calls have also created an environment of shifting social expectations for Pākehā around how to address and manage our[6] relationship with Māori, te Tiriti o Waitangi and the history of colonisation (*e.g.* Margaret 2019). The decision to make New Zealand history compulsory throughout the primary and secondary school curriculum in part reflects this change. Although these shifts are not universal, and researchers note that media continue to echo racist tropes and do work to legitimise Pākehā dominance (MacDonald and Ormond 2021), the intermittent emergence of these alternate discourses into mainstream media may be making increasingly nuanced discursive resources around race relations and Pākehā identity more widely available.

Mass media entail a collection of social processes which construct 'representations through which most people experience and understand the social world, themselves and others' (Gregory *et al.* 2011, 52). This power to construct social understandings and identities is achieved through the double movement of telling audiences both *what* to think about, through news-making processes, and then providing the frameworks for *how* to think about it, through discursive constructions (Nairn *et al.* 2017; Poindexter *et al.* 2003). Through this process, the reproduction of certain understandings is made possible, which come to be commonly known, taken-for granted (Billig 1988), and therefore dominant. Moewaka Barnes and colleagues (2012) identified a group of anti-Māori themes across copious New Zealand media which have worked to reproduce the naturalisation of settler/Pākehā centrality and authority while delegitimising Māori sovereignty as the first peoples (see also McCreanor 1997; Nairn and McCreanor 1991; Rankine *et al.* 2014; Terruhn 2013; Thompson 1954). A key theme, 'Pākehā as norm', works to establish Pākehā as the 'natural, the nation, the ordinary, the community, against which all other ethnic groupings are viewed and measured' (Moewaka Barnes *et al.* 2012, 197). Pākehā are rarely named as an ethnic group, but our norms and priorities are evoked in constructions of a nation and community through the use of cues such as 'us'; Māori are othered with terms like 'they' and 'them'. Another theme is 'one people', where positive sounding values such as 'unity' are used to undermine ethnic diversity and justify continued Pākehā control. Nairn and colleagues (2017) describe how this centralisation

of Pākehā perspectives must be continuously maintained by institutions such as the media, because the legitimacy and normality of the state's power is repeatedly questioned by ongoing Indigenous (and Tauiwi of colour) resistance and innovation. This resistance has in part culminated in a model of constitutional transformation outlined in the Matike Mai report[7] (Matike Mai Aotearoa 2016). Moewaka Barnes and colleagues (2012) also proposed alternatives to the dominant discourses they identified. These alternatives operate from the perspective of acknowledging the sovereignty of Māori as equal treaty partners. The alternative to 'Pākehā as norm' involves marking Pākehā culture in texts, 'celebrating [it] as one culture among many' (199). In a context of some recent media indications of a desire to change their relationship with Māori (Johnsen 2020; Williams 2020), Moewaka Barnes and colleagues' alternatives provide a useful tool for assessing the extent to which actual changes signify substantive representational change.

The consistency of anti-Māori discourses in the media 'exposes Whites to countless daily racial stimuli that they unconsciously, yet systematically, internalise as racist attitudes, stereotypes, assumptions, fears, resentments, discourses, and fictitious racial scripts' (Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano 2007, 561). Because these discourses become so dominant, immediately accessible and naturalised, alternative readings are challenging to identify. In this way, a strong but very limited range of discursive resources are made available, from which Pākehā can choose to describe relations with Māori and issues of Pākehā identity (Matheson 2007; McCreanor 2012). This is complicated by the fact that these discourses are not only available to Pākehā, but also become a base from which immigrant Tauiwi (non-Māori) of colour form their opinions of Māori. Dominant discourses from mainstream media that negatively stereotype Māori have infiltrated Tauiwi of colour perspectives, through presenting these stereotypes as the truth, and providing few alternatives (Gregory *et al.* 2011; Liu 2009). The infiltration process may also be impacted by what Ahmed (2007) termed 'performing Whiteness': as well as experiencing racism and marginalisation from Pākehā, immigrant groups must take on White language, mannerisms and frameworks in order to fit in to the dominant group and 'move up' (160) the class hierarchy in their new country. Therefore, an analytic focus on the discourses in *mainstream* media is important, because they present some of the accepted and taken-for-granted 'truths' that can influence all people of the nation (Gregory *et al.* 2011).

A key component of the New Zealand State's attempt to legitimise its authority has been in persistent avoidance and suppression of histories that gave a truthful account of how it attained that power (O'Malley 2015; Walker 1990), along

with production and dissemination of histories that constructed colonisation as fair and lawful (Sheehan 2010). When texts avoid the actual power dynamics between Māori and Pākehā, they exert a form of 'lovely knowledge' (Kidman 2018), a bicultural nationalist discourse which allows Pākehā to 'visualise their role within the nation's story as benign, altruistic and at times, even heroic' (105). Renan (1990) describes how the creation of colonial nation states, and corresponding national identities, involves violent suppression of the Indigenous culture, therefore, 'progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for [...] nationality' (11), and, we would argue, for a national identity that is built on an idea of the colonial nation as legitimate and natural. As Renan claims that the achievement of a national identity based in unity necessarily involves the 'forgetting' of histories (Billig, 1995), the recent significant push for New Zealand to teach its history may indicate and predict an unsettling of identities that are based on the idea of a cohesive colonial nation. O'Malley and Kidman (2018) outline how the predominance of identities based in 'harmonious and homogenous' (306) settler colonial histories has been challenged, as authorised histories have shifted toward those that do not avoid the colonial violence that underpinned the Pākehā rise to power. These (new) authorised histories are likely to be at the heart of the curriculum, as the Ministry of Education (2021) has outlined a focus on Māori histories, the impacts of colonisation, and how the 'exercise of power' has affected different groups in New Zealand.

This is a moment of representational sociocultural disruption. Taking mainstream media items that support Māori historical perspectives as our focus, we aim to identify what discursive and interpretative resources Pākehā currently use in our construction of an identity in this current moment of social change. Research that continues to explore how the dominant group are discursively creating and interpreting our identity in a time of upheaval and potential threat is not merely of academic interest. It can facilitate Pākehā receptivity and desire to act towards equal/partnership relations with Māori (Matike Mai Aotearoa 2016), with the ultimate aim of a society which upholds te Tiriti o Waitangi.

METHOD

We chose to focus on mainstream media (as opposed to a broader cross section of media, including Māori sources) for this analysis because they provide the discursive possibilities available to a general Pākehā audience.[8] Data collection started with articulation of a research question, which was: what are the constructions of Māori, Pākehā and the Pākehā/Māori relationship within media items about the history curriculum change? A scoping review process involved establishing key terms and relevant dates that would generate a maxi-

mum number of articles that included this focus. The resulting timeframe (1 April to 30 September 2019) was selected as it covered leadup to and coverage of the curriculum change announcement on 12 September 2019. The search terms 'history curriculum', 'history teaching', or 'history education', and 'New Zealand' were used within the following search engines and websites: *NZ Herald,* Radio NZ, Google search, Google news search, Stuff Newspaper (which includes the regional newspapers), Newztext database (which contains New Zealand magazines, the National Business Review, New Zealand newspapers and newswires), and A & NZ Newsstream database (containing newspapers and wire feeds). A total of 34 articles were sourced, and the resulting sample included news articles, opinion pieces and letters to the editor. Articles that were not primarily focused on the history curriculum change, and not from mainstream news sites, were excluded.

Items within the dataset seemed to form four distinct groupings: one which supported the prioritisation of Māori histories in the curriculum (nine articles); one which worked to limit these histories or criticise Māori in general (four articles); one which sat between the two, tolerating pro-Māori values, while limiting Māori histories or criticising Māori in some way (eight articles); and one in which articles framed the conditions of the revised history curriculum in a way which did not deviate enough from the Ministry of Education press release to be able to assign them to any of the above groups (13 articles). The first three groupings were used as our dataset for analysis (21 articles), which was led by Rachelle Pedersen with supervisory input from Virginia Braun and Tim McCreanor. Analysis followed a slow iterative process, using tools from both reflexive thematic analysis (especially that of Braun and Clarke [2006]) and discursive analysis in psychology (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Wetherell and Potter 1992) to explore the discourses and subsequent identities made possible to Pākehā through these media data, in relation to Māori and te Tiriti o Waitangi. The theoretically flexible approach of reflexive thematic analysis allowed a critical, deductive analysis, grounded in a social constructionist epistemology. It also complemented the discourse analysis which built up a more detailed picture of how the media text worked to construct the identified themes and discursive resources. Analysis focused on what was possible to say around the history curriculum change; Māori/Pākehā relations; the type of person or nation that would be made possible by teaching New Zealand histories; and opportunities or challenges around teaching Māori perspectives. We proceeded through staged iterations of analysis, beginning with a more reflexive thematic analysis approach to coding and theme building, progressing to the more detailed discourse analysis. In our initial attempts we tried to include together the themes and discursive possibilities from all three groups identified in the

dataset. However, this resulted in some repetition of anti-Māori themes which have been already identified (Moewaka Barnes *et al.* 2012), and a complicated juxtaposition of the different work achieved by the three distinct groups. In this paper, we decided to focus on the 'pro-Māori histories' subset (nine articles), to provide a more comprehensive analysis of these newer, less examined discourses. In this present article, extracts will be identified with DI (for data item) followed by a number (numbered across the whole dataset) – *e.g.* DI34.

All authors identify as/are Pākehā and position themselves as both enmeshed within, and actively resistant to, the sorts of Pākehā discourse we explore in this paper. Both Rachelle and Tim are actively involved in pro-Tiriti and anti-racism activism and scholarship. Tim's scholarship has often focused on Pākehā talk, text and discourses about Māori and the Māori world; Virginia uses such scholarship in teaching. For Rachelle entering this domain as a scholar, in a context of normalised dominant negative mass media representation of Māori, it was challenging to step back and be analytically critical about this shift to include comparatively pro-Māori discourses. It was easy to assume that the relatively new inclusion of themes that appear to work towards shared partnership values/honouring te Tiriti – such as critiquing colonial versions of history and recognising the importance of understanding the devastation caused by colonisation (Jackson 2021) – might also indicate a shift towards a genuine decentring of Pākehā dominance. Key to this analysis was moving beyond the surface representation to consider what the discourse achieved, within a social context that is very much still dominated by Pākehā perspectives. Discourse analysis was a useful tool for this, because it has been used extensively to analyse White people's talk about race (e.g., Augoustinous and Every 2007; Moewaka Barnes *et al.* 2012; Wetherell & Potter 1992). Relating discourses identified in text to social interests and practices of the group, allows us to consider what work is being achieved around the way power is constructed and maintained more widely.

The resulting analysis identifies discursive and interpretative resources that enable the construction of Pākehā who support Māori versions of history as 'good'. This is specifically achieved through comparing actions, thoughts and statements with a racist 'other' who is positioned as the problem that obstructs ideal race-relations. The 'good' Pākehā is constructed as undergoing the hard, emotional work of engaging with 'authorised' Māori versions of history, while the racist 'other' is described as avoiding them. Through this work, 'good' Pākehā are framed as creating/enabling transcendence into a future of idyllic race-relations, whereas the racist 'other' is positioned as staying stuck in a repeating and restrictive past. These 'good' Pākehā discursive resources enable Pākehā to traverse the changing expectations of the current social change by appearing to

be a part of and enabling the change toward an idealised future. However, as we will demonstrate, continuing to centralise Pākehā as 'good' while silencing our role as the dominant group allows us to remain disconnected from the current outcomes of the very histories these articles seek to support.

ANALYSIS

In the 'pro-Māori histories' data there is a clear shift away from alignment with colonial histories, and away from Pākehā identities constructed from the superiority inherent in them. They also move away from casting Māori as an inferior racial other, talking favourably about Māori histories. Many describe these histories as essential to understanding current events like Ihumātao.[9] In this way, the authors frame Māori understandings as 'truth' (D133), and activism as understandable and reasonable; many also characterise colonial history as a myth. They challenge New Zealanders to move away from 'safeness' (D129) and go through a 'raw and discomforting' (D129) process of painful conversations which will enable them to 'learn and move on' (D129). Teaching New Zealand history in schools is presented as the answer to racism and 'misunderstandings and miscommunications of Māori-Pākehā relations' (D134). While several identify that 'some people' (D134) will resist and struggle with Māori histories being taught compulsorily, Māori histories in particular are proposed as the histories Pākehā need to align with, and are described as 'honest' (D124), 'productive' (D104) and 'freeing' (D104). Colonial histories are described as 'myths' (D129), 'stereotypes' (D105) and a 'colonising tool' (D104), invalidating them as viable histories to believe in. The dataset presents a discursive alignment with Māori as a generalised group, who are described as intelligent influencers of a national culture and as a people whose differences are to be understood and respected.

While these data promote Māori history as important and true, they still perpetuate 'Pākehā as norm' (Moewaka Barnes *et al.* 2012) by presenting Pākehā norms and values as the natural priorities of a universalised and homogenised national group. For example,

> Maybe it's a level of self-confidence in ourselves as a nation that this missing element really needs to be filled in (D133).

This data quote universalises the Western psychological construct of self-confidence across ethnicities in New Zealand by applying it to 'ourselves as a nation'. Western psychology has long been critiqued as imposing psychological 'truths' onto people from cultures that have completely different psychological frameworks for understanding themselves (Groot *et al.* 2018).

Past research has identified that the Pākehā perceptions and priorities represented in media have been based in histories that legitimise Pākehā centrality (McCreanor 1997). However, these data move towards supporting Māori histories, which themselves recontextualise (and question) the hegemonic authority Pākehā have assumed. This divergence creates discursive possibilities for new Pākehā identities, especially among Pākehā 'supporters'. New discourses become available to Pākehā through the process of learning about and believing in Māori histories as legitimate and trustworthy. Pākehā adopting these historical constructions of ourselves allows for new 'interpretative moves', new ways that we can think and talk about ourselves, our current acts and relations with Māori, and identity in Aotearoa.

Positive self / negative other

One of the key constructs used to highlight the 'goodness' of the 'good' Pākehā is to compare it favourably to a racist 'other'. 'Positive self, negative other' is a discursive strategy widely used by members of dominant and elite groups to maintain their position of control, by comparing their group favourably to marginalised groups, for example, the way Māori are 'othered' in the 'Pākehā as norm' discourse (van Dijk 1993; Wetherell and Potter 1992). The way it is used in the articles in our dataset is to contrast between a liberal-minded, rational and progressive 'us' (the nation, or those who are pro-teaching New Zealand history) and a more individualised, emotionally reactive and racist Pākehā 'other'. This device is mobilised to construct a 'good' Pākehā identity.

> Taking an honest view of New Zealand history, rather than painting a rosy, nationalist picture, requires some painful conversations. Some old myths and stereotypes must die hard. But as O'Malley has said, 'we need to know our own history, warts and all. It's what a mature nation does' (D105).

In this excerpt, those Pākehā who continue to believe in colonial histories are separated out from a new, enlightened national ingroup, and an oppositional dynamic between the two is evoked. The national ingroup is constructed as advanced, superior, and virtuous in that they are honest and they bravely face hard work in order to transcend into maturity. Because the nation is framed as needing to let go of myths and stereotypes, those who do not let go have no place in this imagined, ideal, non-racist, equitable future. They are cast as insignificant relics of the past, biased, ignorant and avoiding the 'truth'. Because they are framed as believing in, and really holding onto, a past that is not true, there is a sense that they are foolish and unintelligent. The phrase 'painting a

rosy nationalist picture' works specifically to undermine the legitimacy of the other group's arguments. The metaphoric suggestion of 'painting a picture' hints at an element of artistic license and subjectivity in their argument, as opposed to the more logical and rational positioning of the ingroup. The word 'rosy' evokes a commonplace phrase, 'rose tinted glasses', which refers to a person who refuses to apprehend the truth because they only see their own side of a situation. Together, these dynamics work to invalidate this group's argument by positioning them as subjective and biased as well as providing a limited and inadequate view of history.

In comparison to the outgroup, the ingroup's description appears more nuanced and sophisticated, and their argument more connected to people's lived experience. The text works to appeal to the interests of the reader through a stake construction, a rhetorical device designed to convince people of something by outlining the potential benefits (Whittle *et al.* 2011). Here a compelling picture is created of an enlightened and advanced future that is available to all who identify with this group. Their account is constructed as reliable and trustworthy, through evoking 'honest' views, and naming a well-respected Māori-centred, but Pākehā historian. The dynamic created in this excerpt follows that of a well-used tactic for solidifying an argument, that of emphasising the rationality and reasonableness of the ingroup's position, while casting the opposition as irrational or emotional (Wiggins 2017). New Zealand's liberal polity celebrates a rational ideal citizen who is impartial and detached, and an emotionally based framework is seen to belong to a less advanced past (Wahl-Jorgensen 2008). Implying a person is emotionally motivated positions them as a part of this regressive past that operates without the enlightenment of reason. Also, historical constructions of women as emotional have long been used to invalidate them as lesser and weaker than men, who were constructed as rational and capable, and these associations still linger in common-sense talk (Mendus 2000).

The acceptability of racism changed after the social movements of the 1960s and 70s, so that being racist became socially unacceptable behaviour for 'good' White people (DiAngelo 2018). This situation created conflict for White people who remained prejudiced but were socially obligated to present as unbiased (Wetherell and Potter 1992). Key methods for resolving this tension and deflecting any accusation of racism were to disguise racist ideas through a process of 'sanitary coding' (Reeves 1983), producing what has been termed 'modern racism' (McConahay 1986). The Positive Self/Negative Other discursive strategy aligns with what has been described as the 'bad apple' approach (*e.g.* Siegel 2020), rhetorically protecting against the conclusion that racism is widespread or systemic

by pathologising an individual or outgroup. The only way this conceptualisation could be constructed was to reduce racism to extreme and isolated acts of intentional prejudice. 'For most whites […] racism is like murder: the concept exists, but someone has to commit it in order for it to happen' (DiAngelo 2018, 72). In our data, those who are 'resisting' the teaching of (Māori) history become framed as 'committing' racism.

> Naysayers who have responded to Labour's announcement of a compulsory history curriculum by demanding to know 'whose version; will be taught, or who want assurances it will be 'honest and factual. Bah, humbug, social engineering, and all that … On it goes, people choosing sides while hoping for a unifying curriculum (D104).

> Others use them [the New Zealand wars] as a platform to remind Māori of their 'savage past' and how fortunate they are to be colonised by a benevolent Britain (D124).

In these excerpts, a racist 'other' is paraphrased as maintaining colonial versions of history to naturalise their own positions of power within reported acts of racist speech. This construction of racism as an act that is committed by a stereotyped racist works to resolve the tension Pākehā face between the need to appear anti-racist while continuing to avoid examining our own racism and privilege. It creates a point of focus, outside of and distanced from ourselves, to problematise as the source of any current racism. This enables a construction of the 'good' Pākehā as irreproachable.

Pākehā avoidance of being implicated in racism is also achieved through direct identification of people who are 'committing' the racism.

> The racist underbelly of Aotearoa New Zealand society has been given scrutiny following the March 15 Christchurch massacre (D118).

Here, the problem that teaching New Zealand histories is purported to fix is 'the racist underbelly', a term which works to decentre and vilify 'racists' as a subsection of society so at odds with social norms that they must hide. This is a grouping most 'good' Pākehā can easily disidentify with and blame as the cause of the problem. Racism becomes extremised and contained and the everyday (good) Pākehā can position ourselves outside of this racism. Evoking these extreme versions of racism as existing in individuals or small groups also conceals how racism throughout the institutions of New Zealand, including the

Education system (Consedine and Consedine 2012), has worked for decades to block progressive change such as the teaching of New Zealand histories (Manning 2017). The individualisation of racism in these excerpts works to erase the structural and social aspects of racism. Hill (2009) posits that the tendency to compartmentalise racism in problem individuals obscures both the role that elites have in maintaining racism and White domination, as well as the pervasive way it is perpetuated through the inferences and implications in everyday talk and text.

Hard and painful work / Avoiding the 'truth'

A construction of 'hard and painful work' featured throughout the data as a crucial component of being a 'good' Pākehā. Learning the 'right' history is described as hard and uncomfortable.

> No doubt a great deal of our history is raw and discomforting, but it is nevertheless important to learn in its entirety (D134).

> But without confronting the injustice and inequality in our history, we cannot learn and move on from the mistakes of our shared past (D129).

'Painful conversations' and the work of learning about 'the entirety' of history is described as 'fundamental' to the project of becoming an idealised citizen who sees and believes the historical 'truth'. Belief in hard work is embedded in the White neoliberal framework, through shaping subjects into believing that individual hard work on developing the self can solve life challenges or create an optimised self (Kanai and Gill 2020). This construction validates the person and the process evoked, allowing a positive positionality for the self, and a negative positionality for those who do not undertake such work. For most Pākehā, having been immersed in the last approximately 40 years in neoliberal values and discourses (Anderson 2016), individual hard work on developing the self (by learning about history) is a logical solution to the challenge of becoming a good Pākehā (Hall and O'Shea 2013). While neoliberalism is often conceptualised as a top-down framework, its disciplining of the neoliberal subject also means that individuals actively create themselves as productive subjects in and for a capitalist marketplace (Larner 1998). In neoliberal societies, individualised 'hard work' is closely linked with how 'good' a person is seen to be (Larson and McHendry 2019), and constructions of self-worth as a valuable member of society (Nairn & Higgins 2007).

Work is also evoked through the emotion that is described as being an outcome of learning about New Zealand history.

> She says it can be a hard and emotional experience for teachers to confront the truth about our history. 'They feel anger, they feel relief, they sometimes have tears' (D133).
>
> I felt incredibly sad and uncomfortable upon learning of my family's contribution to land clearances (D129).

The description of these emotions has a different effect than that of the emotions ascribed to the racist other. Firstly, these emotions are stated and owned by individuals and in this way are legitimised as appropriate and socially acceptable. Secondly, instead of working to limit the rationality of the person or group, the framing of these emotions works to evoke a cleansing from trauma of the past, a progression to a better place. There is a therapeutic quality to the expression of these 'hard' emotions, so the discomfort, and the use of the words 'relief' and 'tears' work to denote a process of psychological purification. This move has a liberating effect, through a discourse in which 'good' Pākehā are moved to a higher plane of relationship with Māori that appears to absolve them of the crimes and failures of colonisation.

Riley and colleagues (2018) outline how psychological language that constructs emotions as transformative has become an everyday way people make sense of themselves, so that we all imagine we 'have a self who would benefit from 'emotional healing' and associated transformation towards greater wellbeing' (19). The emotional process and subsequent liberation (through this 'work') speaks into the constant development of the self that neoliberalism ascribes. A focus on individual emotion individualises the level of change, and thus constructs the problem and panacea at the level of the Pākehā emotional process, and their consequent goodness. Māori and other academics have outlined how White emotions are often centralised and naturalised in discussions around race, which works to reinforce current inequities and devalue the emotions of the oppressed group (Jones, 2001; Wetherell *et al.* 2015). In contrast to a centralising of Pākehā emotion, Māori emotions and processes around the history of New Zealand were mostly absent from the data; the consequences of our history rendered affective only for the (innocent, good) 'winner'. Pākehā readers of these 'pro-Māori' articles are not asked to consider or navigate what emotions Māori may have around New Zealand's history, but centre our own (for individual change).

While we critique the particular way the centralisation of Pākehā emotions worked in these data, Pākehā emotional labour has been described as potentially important for understanding our identity and working towards upholding te Tiriti (Bell 2006, 2008; Boler and Zembulas 2003; Russell 2021). Bell (2006, 2008) outlines how remembering history may unsettle Pākehā identity and centred-ness which may lead to understanding ourselves as situated in relation to tangata whenua. Russell (2021) theorises how the teaching of New Zealand histories may challenge and discomfort Pākehā identities in particular, and posits that potential emotional responses (which she has identified as anxiety, guilt and shame) could be useful for a working through of Pākehā complicity in the colonial national project. Our analysis does not suggest an either/or, but shows how emotion potentially works to centre Pākehā in the narrative, which may work against more radical change.

Emotion was deployed in quite different ways in our data. Emotions ascribed to the racist other (anxiety, resistance, and struggle) are framed as unhelpful and personalised as symptoms of a bad internal disposition (Hill 2009). In contrast to the good Pākehā, who becomes liberated through the cleansing process of 'facing' history (emotional 'work'), the racist other is contrasted as 'avoiding the truth' to stay safe.

> Linda Levstik found that students are less interested in studying New Zealand history than in learning about other parts of the world. But such attitudes can, and should, be dissected and confronted. Levstik argues that this desire to look outward may originate from a discomfort to engage with the difficulty of our past, and the relative 'safeness' of learning about distant stories of the wider world (D129).

In this extract, groups of people (including students) are framed as uninterested, uncomfortable and anxious about learning Māori histories. This excerpt does some work toward contextualising and 'humanising' the motives of the resistant (racist) 'other' by linking to states of mind and emotions that may be understandable to a reader. However, these emotional responses are framed as unacceptable, and to be overcome for progressive change through the hard internal work of conquering emotions. People who do not believe in Māori histories are here framed as subjects who are 'pre-work', situated at the beginning of a linear scale of (likely never started) progression into a transcendent identity. Being framed as not ready/willing to optimise the self through hard work further invalidates the racist 'other' as unvaluable members of the neoliberal society (Kanai and Gill 2020), a construction which centres the neoliberal individual as the catalyst for progressive change.

Transcending into an enlightened future / Stuck in a restrictive past

The hard work that Pākehā are constructed as undertaking through such education is framed as culminating in the creation of a transcendent, liberated individual and nation that enjoys ideal race-relations.

> Let's mandate the teaching of our colonial history to pursue a more sophisticated Aotearoa (D120).

> It makes us better, and surely, that's what education is about (D113).

> Educators get transformed because they realise 'oh my gosh, there's all this stuff that we don't know' (D133).

Transcendence-through-history-education was largely framed as a universalised, national possibility. But through the use of aspirational language commonly found in self-development or pop psychology discourses, transformational possibility was also presented as available to the reader as an individual. Riley and colleagues (2018) describe how psychological language can offer a liberated vision of freedom and self-actualisation: 'the emancipation of transformation, and an understanding that through working on the self we can achieve happiness and the good life: fulfilment in our work, our relationships, our lifestyles, minds and bodies' (19). Portraying learning New Zealand history as a transformational process makes possible the construction of a 'better', more enlightened self and (by implication) future. Delfino (2021) similarly describes how through aligning the (White, progressive) self with the Black other, and talking about learning their privilege, 'woke' White people in the United States constructed an enlightened 'Whiteness-as-virtue' identity that was contrasted to an uneducated and regressive racist (White other) positioning.

Transformation is constructed as a process existing on a linear, time-based scale where those who believe in Māori histories are progressing towards a liberated and transformed future, and the racist other chooses to stay trapped in a repeating and restrictive past:

> Knowing the true history of Aotearoa can only make us stronger now and for future generations (D113).

> As painful and unjust as Tūhoe's history and present is, [Tāmati] Kruger promotes an inclusive Aotearoa based on the principles of

> tangata whenua and kaitiaki. It is a level of enlightenment we should strive for (DI20).
>
> Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it (DI05, DI29).
>
> Being ignorant of one's history leads to a general ignorance of one's culture (DI29).

In their study of racist talk among Pākehā, Wetherell and Potter (1992) identified discursive constructions of the flow of time that varied dependent on the situation and how much freedom and power each gave the Pākehā speaker. Progression was positioned as part of a continuous history which resulted in an imagined 'golden future'. In that account, the past, present and future flowed progressively. The past was a dark and brutal time, but the future will naturally become enlightened as 'people will get more advanced, rational and society is more liberal, just' (184–5). In our data, history is always to be confronted on a journey of conscious, continual self-improvement, which ultimately renders it past. In contrast, those who will not face Māori histories, who ignore (the 'truth' of) history, are 'condemned' to irrelevance as they refuse to change. The future is gifted to those who will progress/evolve through the transformative process of learning history. Delfino (2018) noted that White progressives in the United States construct themselves as actively working within a linear concept of time, a 'racialised space-time narrative' (p. 240). In this construction, the past is regressive and racist (embodied by the racist other), the present is where the 'good' White people are progressively creating anti-racism, and through this work, the future is envisioned as one of racial equality. Our data similarly evoke an enlightened future created by the conscious work of Pākehā through self or national development. Not only does this individualise the work of social change, it also perpetuates 'Pākehā as norm', as Pākehā are centred as the group that makes the decisions and does the work, thereby creating and controlling the change.

The descriptions of the enlightened future gained through teaching New Zealand histories includes explicit reference to Māori and Pākehā living together in idealised race-relations.

> NCEA's curriculum itself envisions classrooms wherein 'young people … will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Maori and Pakeha recognise each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring'. How can

> this be achieved when the rich stories of our shared culture are not encouraged and promoted in classrooms? (D129).

This excerpt – from a data item written before the announcement – quotes an objective of the Ministry of Education that is framed in the media account as not possible without teaching New Zealand history. The reported speech describes a future of idealised race-relations between Māori and Pākehā. Being worded in a nominalised way (shifting of nouns to verbs so that the responsible party is not named; Mueller and Whittle 2011) works to obscure how Pākehā, as the group that have the power in New Zealand, control the extent to which te Tiriti will be upheld, and other cultures valued. Indeed, the only thing preventing this from occurring is the colonial-based system's rigid maintenance of Pākehā dominance (Thiruselvam 2019). The silencing of the role Pākehā have in maintaining this status quo is reminiscent of the work that 'lovely knowledge' achieves, which allows Pākehā to imagine we are 'timelessly noble' and 'morally sound' (Kidman 2018, 98). MacDonald and Ormond (2021) outline how 'lovely knowledge' reinforces the 'affective sensibilities of Pākehā influence [that] pull towards a harmonious and resolved settler–Indigenous relationship' (158). While the history that Pākehā are framed as needing to face is constructed in the data as the opposite of lovely knowledge, the future created through facing it is one where Pākehā roles and responsibilities in benefiting from and maintaining the existing inequity are erased. The data work to pull the narrative back towards a harmonious relationship by constructing the very act of accepting difficult histories as the means to which Pākehā can regain a 'morally sound' position.

> I believe that a lot of misunderstanding and miscommunications of Māori-Pākehā relations stem from the fact that people don't understand the history of New Zealand (D134).

This excerpt frames as 'misunderstanding and miscommunications' what is a politicised and systemic relationship, where Pākehā structures and institutions subjugate Māori through enforced and ongoing illegitimate colonisation (Mutu 2019). In this framing, the issue becomes a personalised problem, based in innocent and benign interactions, absent any malintent.

The data also suggest a future where Māori and Pākehā could live together in idealised race-relations.

> Kruger also discussed the type of society New Zealand could become. 'Some Tūhoe think that in the distant future, there may no longer

> be Europeans living in Aotearoa, because Europeans live in Europe', Kruger said. 'That, maybe, in a long distance, the only people you find in Aotearoa are tangata whenua, you and I tangata whenua' (D120).

In this excerpt Pākehā (here named 'Europeans') are given a way we can establish a legitimate identity in New Zealand as tangata whenua. Although tangata whenua is a term used to describe Māori indigeneity, it's usage here (potentially ascribing it to Pākehā) works to offer an *authentic* claim to the often-touted 'one people' argument (Moewaka Barnes *et al.* 2012). Literature has identified the unsettled identity position of Pākehā (as the people who came to New Zealand second), because of the problematic way our culture was superimposed (Bell 2009), and the desperate longing that some have to find a legitimate belonging in New Zealand (Bell 1996; Mikaere 2004). Bell (1996) claimed that, in discarding colonial histories, Pākehā 'desire to be "born again" New Zealanders, disowning their parents and imagining themselves adopted' (156). While these articles instead suggest claiming certain New Zealand histories, they similarly evoke a future where once that work is done, a return to 'moral soundness' (Kidman 2018) and legitimate belonging is available to Pākehā. Considering the excerpt from a perspective of Pākehā desire for legitimate belonging, it is a stake construction, where a change is constructed as benefitting a group in order to convince them to comply with that change (Mueller and Whittle 2011). Appealing to the Pākehā desire to belong, this excerpt offers this ultimate belonging – tangata whenua status – like a dangled carrot, to incentivise Pākehā acceptance of teaching New Zealand history. Such claims offer a hopeful, idealistic future for Pākehā, and an inspiration for social change (albeit just supporting the history curriculum).

DISCUSSION

These articles construct a story of people who are emerging from a state of ignorance, going through a hard process of learning Māori histories, to become enlightened, and 'better'. The 'good' Pākehā is contrasted with a racist 'other' as doing the hard work of facing history, which is constructed as required to bring the nation into an enlightened future where the dream of 'one people' can become a reality. This process is constructed as being finite, with a promise of harmonious race-relations as the inevitable outcome. We have shown how these interpretative resources are used by Pākehā to construct a 'good' Pākehā identity, an identity which allows navigation through challenges that the current social change brings to a (hopefully) previously mainstream ('ignorant') Pākehā identity.

The themes identified in our analysis of media items presenting a 'pro-Māori histories' position offer possible discursive moves for Pākehā to advocate Māori histories and challenge colonial constructs of history. However, our reading suggests that the polarised way they present the two subject positions of the 'good' Pākehā and the racist 'other', and assign divergent futures to each group, constrains the positions and actions for Pākehā change. Because 'accusations of racism have become some of the most potent and unsettling insults that can be leveled against someone, and the fear of being labeled a "racist" can be paralysing in its perceived character assassination' (Lopez 2020, 15), fear of this may cause 'White fragility', where a small amount of racial stress 'becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves' (DiAngelo 2011, 54). DiAngelo (2018, 2021) outlines how progressive Whites make 'moves' – such as being careful not to say the wrong thing or minimising the harm of racism – which work to protect us from being positioned as a 'bad' racist. The reductionist binary between 'good' and 'bad' constructed in these data provides only very limited discursive resources for Pākehā to describe potentially complicated and nuanced responses to our current situation. With a risk of being 'bad' at stake, Pākehā are incentivised to construct our perspective within the fairly rigid bounds of the 'good' Pākehā position, which may prevent deeper reflection about our own behaviour or the harm racism can cause (DiAngelo 2018).

Aligning with wider social justice calls for the privileged to 'do the work' (*e.g.* Saad 2020), decolonisation work that Pākehā can undertake has been identified (mostly by Māori, *e.g.* Jackson 2021; Ngata n.d.). Such work has been described as needing to be grounded in Pākehā and the State recognising Māori as independent and sovereign (Moewaka Barnes *et al.* 2012). It represents a substantive shift which would make a myriad of social and political changes and actions obvious and necessary, to actualise the honourable relationships that te Tiriti o Waitangi prescribes (*e.g.* Matike Mai Aotearoa 2016). Constructions of the required 'work' in the data are internally directed, intellectual in scope, avoid a focus on structural power dynamics and are conceptually 'closed', prematurely evoking an idyllic, post-work state of equality. In contrast, the substantive change asked for by Māori scholars must address the privilege and power gained through colonisation and work to destabilise the system on which these depend.

The Pākehā idealisation of future harmonious race-relations discourse can be understood as enabled in part by wider anti-Māori themes identified in media (Moewaka Barnes *et al.* 2012). However, our dataset also present a divergence from dominant anti-Māori media themes. In our data, colonial history is constructed as having had a detrimental and sometimes devastating effect on Māori,

who are positioned as still impacted by this. This is an important departure from media representations that position Māori as naturally deficient and ungrateful (e.g., Nairn and McCreanor 1991). It initiates a new relational perspective not based in White supremacy, but in the idea of Māori and Pākehā as two different but equally capable peoples. If this perspective continues to become more dominant in mainstream media (therefore reflecting the viewpoint of the dominant national group), then the possibility of a genuine honouring of te Tiriti o Waitangi may become more tangible. However, as we noted in our data, what is offered by this perspective on Māori and colonisation is limited by its one-sidedness. Pākehā remain conceptually disconnected from the relational web of colonisation, and the group benefits that result from it. In the context of the current social change, which may indicate increased calls for Pākehā to engage in potentially uncomfortable discourses that may work to disrupt their identity as the dominant group, perspectives that do not compel Pākehā to think about our own position are relatively benign, rather than transformative. Not explicitly identifying and interrogating the dominant group's role and power risks the impact of colonisation on Māori being framed in ways that maintain Pākehā dominance. The perpetuation of the status quo in media has been described by Lopez (2020):

> Despite the fact that news media fixate on the progress they seem to herald, the reality is that as quickly as a glass ceiling is shattered, it is replaced by a newer version that is designed to prevent further breaches. After each of these temporary respites, the status quo resumes with its normal patterns and familiar behaviours. (14)

Our analysis suggests that even as progress is evoked in a 'genuinely supportive' way, its transformative potential is limited by the discursive resources available to describe positionality and change.

CONCLUSION

By ostensibly embracing Māori histories while reproducing a well-worn Pākehā nationalism, the data co-opt Māori histories, enlisting them to work in the discursive emergence of a new 'good' Pākehā. The universalised nation is framed as benefitting from Māori history in that it is constructed as important for Pākehā growth. Māori are positioned as crucial both to the liberation of a national identity, and to a Pākehā journey away from the restrictive racist past (which will lead to this enlightened, equal future). Even though these articles focus on Māori perspectives of history (which should then centre Māori people, worldviews and emotions), they effectively work to recentre Pākehā – emotionally,

psychologically, and in terms of process. These media still work to naturalise the universalised Pākehā nation as the font of knowledge about Māori and Pākehā identities and possibilities. While these discourses may appear pro-Māori at the present time (within a certain, restricted perspective), they are vulnerable to the fluctuation of political and social trends as long as the power to define Māori remains within the Pākehā-dominated system. Relying heavily on the common-sense discourse that the future will naturally be more liberated and just (Wetherell and Potter 1992), erases the significant and important impact that both media representation and the complex, variable impacts of such presentations have on Māori (Moewaka Barnes *et al.* 2013). The wider context is one where the media and government have swung between more positive and negative constructions of Māori, depending on the political situation and issues in the moment (Matike Mai Aotearoa 2016). Māori exposure to the whim of the Pākehā political system's unpredictability has been noted by Māori leaders and underpins their push for a complete constitutional transformation (Matike Mai Aotearoa 2016). Our data indicate that the discursive resources needed for substantive social and political change are not (yet) represented in the even ostensibly pro-Māori media we analysed.

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NOTES

1 Rachelle Pedersen (PhD Candidate in Psychology, Waipapa Taumata Rau – University of Auckland): My research interests are around investigating the ways that the talk and text of individuals, organisations, institutions and the media both reflect and produce wider social and structural inequities, with a view to supporting social change.

2 Tim McCreanor (Professor in College of Health, Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa – Massey University, and Senior Researcher at SHORE and Whāriki Research Centre): My broad public health orientation and interest in the social determinants of health and wellbeing, provide a platform for social science projects that support and stimulate social change. In particular, my research seeks to foreground, critique and redress the mechanisms of talk, text and other forms of communication that operate to produce, maintain and naturalise the disparities, exclusions and injustices so evident in our society. Key topics include decolonisation, social justice, racism, media representations and systems change.

3 Virginia Braun (Professor in school of Psychology, Waipapa Taumata Rau – University of Auckland): I am interested in examining the relationship between the social, the scientific and the individual, in relation to bodies, sexuality and health. My research examines the influence of culture and society on individual choices, thoughts, feelings and behaviours, as well as on broader issues like public health policy and practice. My research is specifically influenced by feminist, social constructionist, and discursive theory and practice, and tends to employ qualitative methodologies.

4 Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the founding document of the nation and guarantees Māori sovereignty (although the nation state has been operating, and continues to operate, in breach of this). Here we refer to te Tiriti o Waitangi, as opposed to the Treaty of Waitangi (English version which is not a direct translation in that it claims Māori ceded sovereignty, and was not present at Waitangi when the signing occurred; Mulholland and Tawhai 2010), or the 'Treaty Principles' which were adaptations of the English version of the Treaty.

5 The term Pākehā is gifted by Māori and identifies people derived from Europe, particularly Britain, who have in common privilege as beneficiaries of colonisation (Margaret 2019).

6 In writing this paper, we deliberately use 'we' when we refer to Pākehā, not only because it reflects our identity positions, as noted, but also because it locates us within – and thus as potential articulators of – the very discursive resources and representations this paper critiques. We do this explicitly, to emphasise complex enmeshments in discourse, rather than inadvertently and invisibly (re)creating the Pākehā norm.

7 The Matike Mai models for constitutional change form an excellent example of how the genuine power-sharing outlined in te Tiriti can be actioned.

8 This analysis is intended to inform further social justice research with Pākehā participants and provide a general understanding of emerging dominant discourses Pākehā may be engaging with and drawing on in their talk. While this could be read as also re-centring White talk, a focus on Pākehā discourse remains necessary, as otherwise its longstanding naturalisation (e.g. 'Pākehā as norm'; Moewaka Barnes et al. 2012) protects such narratives from critical analysis.

9 Ihumātao is an archeological site and former pā site in Māngere, Auckand. A Māori occupation from 2016–2019 resulted in illicitly confiscated land being purchased from a corporate developer by the Crown for iwi purposes.

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