



Indigenous Lifeworlds: Recognition, Resistance, Response to State Harm

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A photograph of a dense forest with a thick layer of mist or fog. The mist is white and billowy, filling the valleys and partially obscuring the trees. The trees are dark green and appear as silhouettes against the lighter mist. The overall atmosphere is serene and ethereal. The text "Why are we where we are?" is centered in the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Why are we where we are?

Theorising Marginality: Rethinking Marginalisation



Robyn Kahukiwa *Environmental Product*

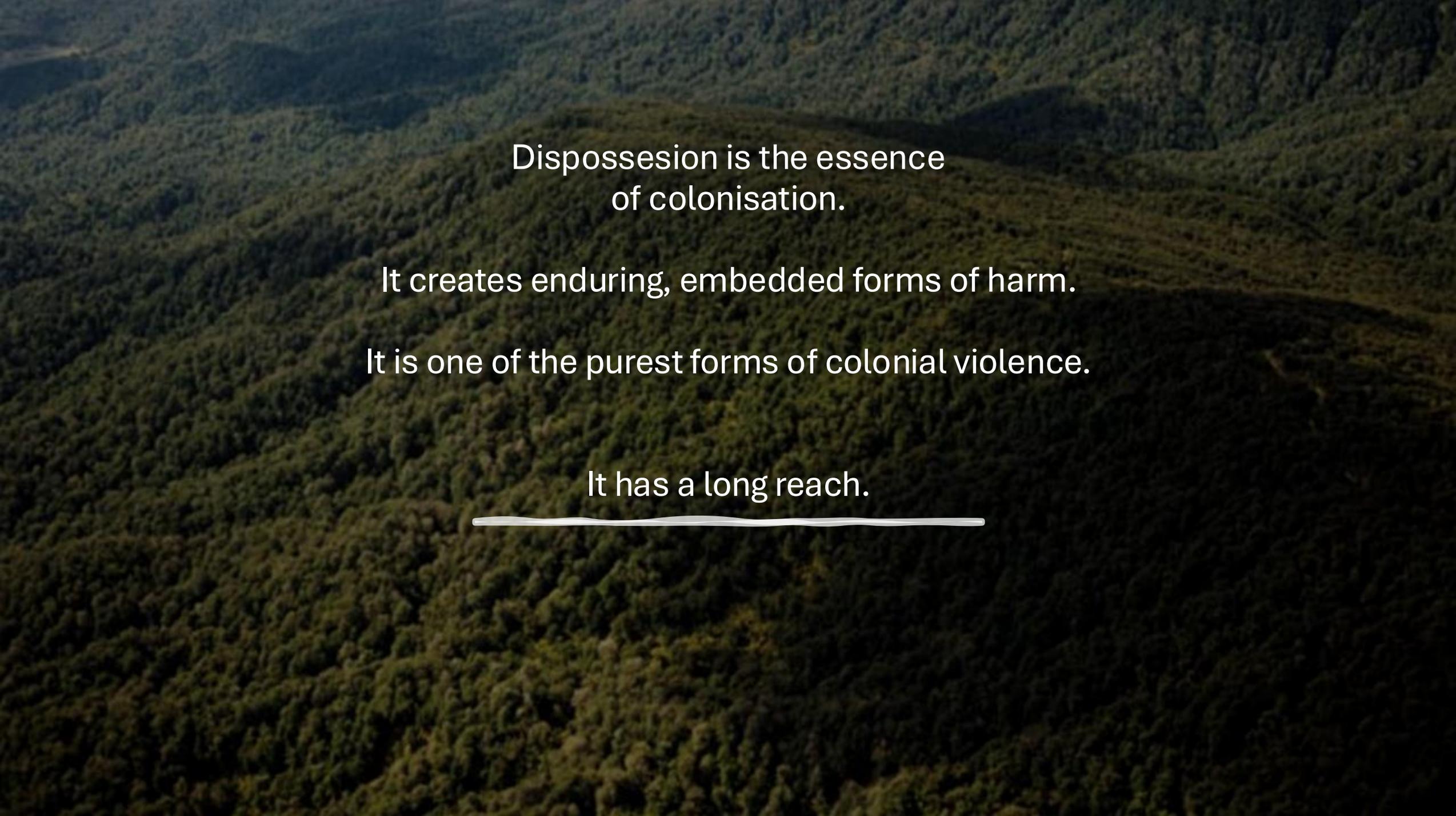
Theorising Marginality: Rethinking Marginalisation: Marginalisation as social action

- Marginalisation, a socio-political process, is the peripheralisation of individuals and groups from a dominant, central majority (Hall et al., 1994).
- Marcia Tucker argues that marginalisation is ‘that complex and disputatious process by means of which certain people and ideas are privileged over others at any given time’ (1990: 7).
- It is a process that is centred in power relations; as power shifts any group can find itself ignored, trivialised, silenced, rendered invisible and made ‘other’ (ibid).
- As a concept, marginalisation has developed out of the political struggles of many diverse groups: the struggles and experience of women, Indigenous Peoples, ethnic groups, the poor, immigrants, People experiencing mental stress and gender and sexual minorities. These groups are amongst those that have informed the way processes of exclusion are understood.

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- When a socially devalued person is needed within a social, economic and political system as labour or as a scapegoat, for example, they are best referred to as marginalised; when ‘their existence as humanity is dismissed and their resources taken, they are exteriorized’ (Hall, 1999: 98).
 - The exteriorised find themselves in positions of absolute powerlessness, yet they are consistently characterised by those who exercise power as dangerous.
 - Their powerlessness and perceived dangerousness combine in a lethal mix that threatens their continued existence.
 - The exteriorised risk confinement, removal, torture, starvation and extermination.
 - The marginal existence in contrast, is one where limits and constraints are part of the day-to-day experience but where resistance and new social responses may be engendered.
 - This is not to argue that the marginal do not live in situations that are perilous, but that in many cases marginality does allow significant social engagement and the ability to collectivise and be disrupters and restorers .

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- For many Indigenous peoples, including Māori, exclusion and forced marginality is a lived reality.
 - We can take as a given that many Māori live lives that are at the margins of both 'mainstream' as well as Māori society. For too many, exclusion, in a myriad of forms, is an accepted part of life for Māori.
 - Extensive research on the Māori condition shows that Māori suffer disadvantage from birth.
 - Harm reduction in this country must address all forms of state harm



An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest covering rolling hills. The forest is a deep green color, and the hills are covered in a thick canopy of trees. The lighting is soft, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

Dispossession is the essence
of colonisation.

It creates enduring, embedded forms of harm.

It is one of the purest forms of colonial violence.

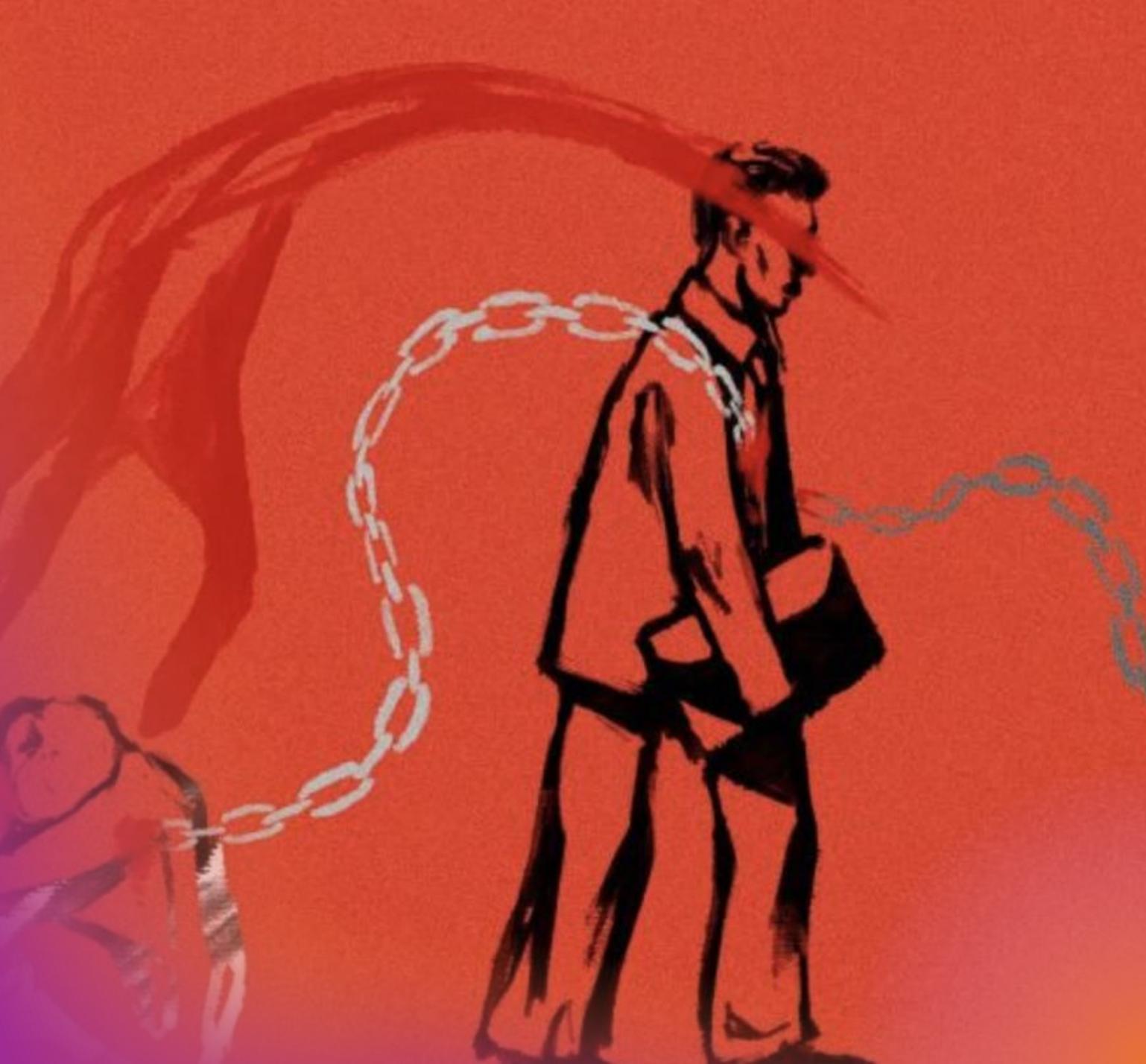
It has a long reach.

Forms of violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

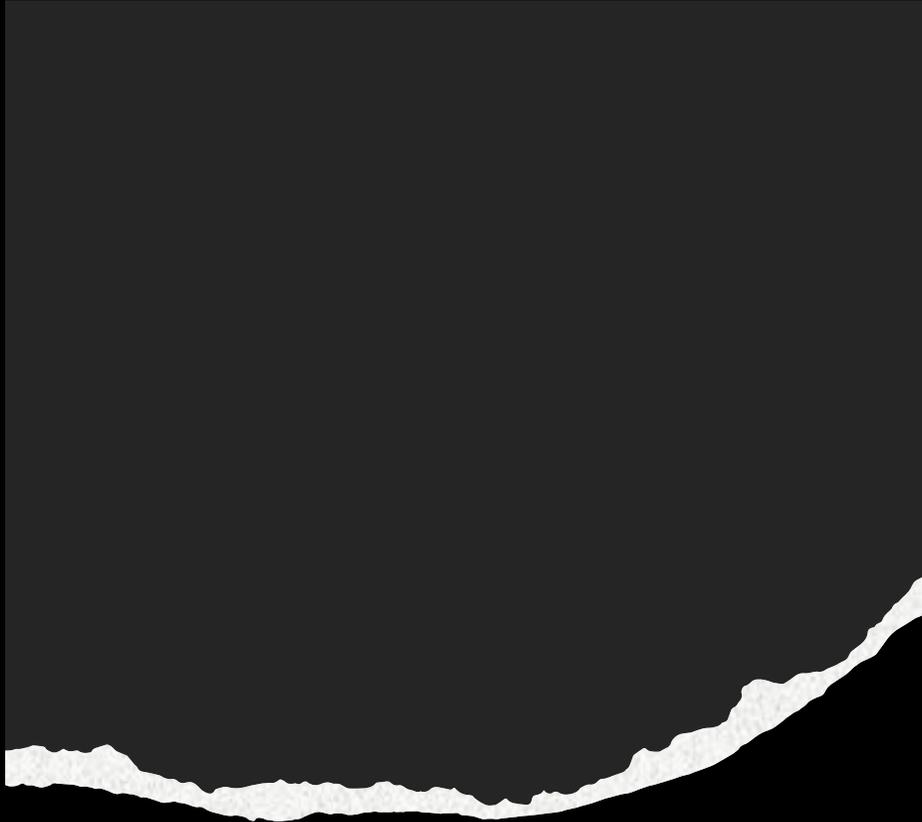
- State violence
 - Colonial/neo-colonial violence
 - Religious/spiritual violence
 - Legislative violence
 - Structural violence
 - Political violence
 - Economic violence
 - Cultural violence
 - Institutional violence
 - Collective violence
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- Physical violence
 - Sexual violence
 - Psychological violence
 - Emotional violence
 - Family violence
 - Whānau violence
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- Slow violence of racism, poverty, frustration of aspirations.

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- Fast violence' refers to violence that is literal and immediate, often explosive and unexpected. It can also be manifested in ways that are systematic.
 - Fast violence is the violence we consume.
 - Fast violence is communicated through screen culture.





Nixon (2011) describes slow violence as ‘violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all’



Slow violence is accumulative, and the damage that is done at the collective level creates these ongoing states of dislocation and deprivation, forms of marginalisation that are fundamentally predicated on dispossession.

This dispossession of land, dispossession of place, dispossession in terms of language and culture: these are the foundational elements of the settler state that render Indigenous people subject to the powers of the state and to subjugation within that state apparatus.

Disasters of everyday life

- Steve Matthewman notes that the 'normal' functioning of society is a catastrophe for too many.
- As the Tūhoe disaster scholar Simon Lambert (2022: 74) put it, '[w]hen Indigenous People suffer, the system is not broken but merely functioning as it was intended. Indigenous communities have had their sovereign status, including the right to identify and manage their own emergencies, systematically and violently taken from them'.





The state as parent

- The state is a legal person and in the case of wards of the state, it is also a legal parent. Consider an individual being accused of the crimes this entity is accused of (and has been found guilty of or admitted to in a number of cases): serial rape of children, torture and violence against children, neglect of children, with the numbers running into the tens of thousands. It would be considered one of the country's worst offenders and most abusive parents.
- Aaron Smale (Ngāti Porou, Ngāpuhi) North and South, July 2018

Royal
Commission
Evidence
Tupua Urlich

- I have had so many examples of racism, while I have been in care and protection. I remember one incident when I was about 15 years old. I went into the Children and Young Persons Office (CYFS) in Takapuna. I was hanging around waiting for a Social Worker. One of the Youth Justice Workers said to me "Oh are you youth justice?" I replied "No, I'm care and protection." He replied, "Oh future justice then." I will never forget that comment, it really stuck with me. This attitude was coming from a person who is working in care and protection and is supposed to be offering us hope for our future and that is their attitude?

BOOT CAMP

TE WHAKAPAKARI YOUTH PROGRAMME

A case study of State-funded violence and abuse of
children and young people needing care and protection

JUNE 2024

 Abuse in Care
Royal Commission of Inquiry

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- Cruelty
 - Coercion
 - Compliance
 - Complicity



Survivors of abuse in care in New Zealand have called for a comprehensive and trauma-informed redress system, prioritizing their involvement in the design and implementation of any new processes.

Paora Moyle, expert, researcher, writer, activist, survivor:

One of our most powerful recommendations effectively said: “If you don’t love a child, you shouldn’t be making decisions about their care and wellbeing. People who love the child must do that.”

Response, Resistance, Refusal

- Indigenous scholars have argued that *resistance* is a far better concept than resilience (Penehira, Green, Smith & Aspin, 2014).
- Why should colonised people adapt to land alienation, the loss of sovereignty and institutionalised racism?
- Similarly, Critical Disaster Studies (CDS) scholar Raja Swamy (2025) has noted that vulnerability is not a permanent condition but a direct consequence of particular set of material social relations.
- Commonplace hazards that people contend with are frequently productive, even necessary, for capitalism's everyday functioning.

Responses

In responding to the harms of colonisation a **cultural** dimension must be addressed.

We should not expect or accept that we should find cultural solutions for structural problems . Structural problems will need structural solutions.

This will mean the need to redistribute resources and put decision-making in the hands of Indigenous peoples and the communities that support them.

Transformative responses that seek positive outcomes must address cultural aspirations of Māori peoples to live life as Māori.

The solutions will need to be evidence-based, adaptive to the realities of everyday life and culturally informed.

Any reframing of drug policy must ensure that those most impacted by drug policy are at the forefront of consideration.

Policy and practice must be formulated with past harms, current issues and future prospects in mind, understanding that there are pathways in and out of drug harm. They must be informed by those who have lived experience and expertise.

A recognition that those that have deep understanding and experiential knowledge of the drivers of drug harms are knowledge holders. This type of knowledge is key to effective solutions.

Given the nature of the drivers that have led to the magnitude of drug harms experienced in Māori communities complexity is acknowledged as a perennial theme.

The issues are simultaneously personal and collective, material and spiritual, physical and cultural, individual and structural, Māori worldviews are holistic and responses to drug harms will need to be similarly holistic.

Ngā pānui ki ngā tāngata o Aotearoa Messages to the people of Aotearoa New Zealand

These words are from survivors who met with the Inquiry kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) in a confidential private session. The Inquiry gave them the opportunity to write a message to Aotearoa New Zealand on a postcard.

The Abuse That Happened To
US While IN State care Be
Brave And Tell your story It will
Make you a Stronger Person
Let's Do This together To Stop
It From Happening to others
Violence IS Not Abuse in Care

"The horrors have become
intergenerational. They are now
like a festering wound. Speak up
- speak out - so these atrocities
will not happen in the future"

If I'd been valued imagine who or what I
could of been?

Never Again
He-Tangata He-Tangata
He-Tangata.

"I hope and pray that children
of today are loved and
treated with care."

I AM NOT a number, I am a human
being Tihei Mauri Ora

"If good people
are courageous,
we can stop abuse."

Together we can make a difference.

"We are desperate to
create more peace
inside ourselves."

don't let the dark shadows of the past
cloud your future

Listen to the
Children's Voice's

There is always hope for change.

Please
protect
the next
generation
from
abuse - violence

"We Wonder if someone will
genuinely listen and understand."

To feel validated after so long of
being powerless is an important part of the
healing process.

KNOW ME BEFORE YOU JUDGE ME!

A new approach to harm
reduction:

**He aronga hou mō te whakaiti
pāmamae:**

decolonise, depoliticise,
destigmatisise, mobilise

**he purenga ihomatua, he
purenga tōrangapū, he purenga
taunu, he whakaoreore**



**Te Puna Whakaiti Pāmamae Kai Whakapiri
New Zealand Drug Foundation**