ISSUE 02

TE RA TANGATA

WOMEN, EQUITY AND ACTIVISM IN AOTEAROA

TEU | TE HAUTŪ KAHURANGI

TERTIARY EDUCATION UNION

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HE HAKAMĀRAMATANGA O ‘TE IRA TANGATA’

Ko ‘Te Ira Tangata’ e hakaatu ana i te āhua o te noho o te wāhine me te tāne, otirā, me te tangata hoki ki runga i te mata o Papatūānuku.

I tīmata te ira tangata i te hononga o Tāne-nui-a-Rangi – mai i te ao o te ira Atua – rāo tahi ko Hine-ahu-one, i pokepokea mai – i te uku i Kurawaka – ka puta ko Hine-tītama. Mai i a ia, ko te tīmatanga mai o te ira tangata ki runga i te mata o te whenua.

I tīmata te ira tangata mai i te ‘whare tangata’ (wāhine) i te hononga o te wāhine me te tāne. Ko te ‘whare tangata’ ka noho hei āhuru i ngā mea katoa o te ao. I hakatōngia ai te kākano e te tāne ki te kōpū o te wahine ka tīmata te kukunetanga kia puta te ira tangata i te wheiao ki te Ao Mārama, ā, ko te kawenga nui o te ao kei runga i te wāhine. Koia, ko te ingoa o ‘Te Ira Tangata’ e hakaatu ana i tēnei mana nui a te wāhine.

The title ‘Te Ira Tangata’ epitomises the relationship between women and men, that is, as mere mortals living as equals on the face of earth mother.

The genesis of human beings began with the joining of the genes of Tāne-nui-a-Rangi – from the divine realm – and Hine-ahu-one, fashioned from the female element – of the earthly realm at Kurawaka – and begat Hine-tītama. From her, derives the origins of humankind on the surface of the earth.

The birth of humans has been through the ‘house of humanity’ (woman) in the joining of the female and male elements. Within her ‘womb’ being the sanctuary for all mortals. The seeding of the womb by the male element signals the birthing cycle that propels forth the child from the realm of dim light into full enlightenment, and, thus the greatest responsibility of the world is carried by women. Hence the title ‘Te Ira Tangata’ is an expression of this immense mana of the female element.

Nā Taua Roimata Kirikiri rāua ko Matua Hōne Sadler

CONTENTS

Editorial — 4
Miriama Postlethwaite & Sarah Proctor-Thomson

A place at the table — 5
Jo Smith & Donna Smith

I wear my pride upon my skin: Becoming more of who I am — 6
Hinekura Smith

The upper-class Māori — 10
Maia Ratana

Walk like an academic? The limits of academic freedom for those who are not white cis men — 12
Tara McAllister, Cat Pausé, Jan Eldridge & Jemaima Tiatia-Seath

He is a strong ally — 18
Tara McAllister

Alice Basten, pioneer accountant: Individual and collective emancipation in Aotearoa New Zealand — 20
Mohini Vidwans & Rosalind Whiting

EDITORIAL

Te Ira Tangata is a peer reviewed, biannual, and interdisciplinary journal setting new agendas for feminism, gender equality and activism in Aotearoa. This journal publishes creative writing and celebrations of research, teaching and activism that are supportive of Te Hautū Kahurangi | Tertiary Education Union's (TEU) commitment to progressing gender equality and the empowerment of all women.

The journal is a forum for the exchange of a rich range of ideas, debates and provocations. It aims to reflect the work of our members, highlight the triumphs of women within our sector and beyond, invite creative exploration of empowerment and in/equality, and inspire energy for future feminist activism.

The power of the pen.

Welcome to the second edition of *Te Ira Tangata*. As editors, we are tasked with providing an introduction to accompany the writings held within these pages. Such a task is a challenging one, as there is a responsibility to honour the voices of the authors who painstakingly put forward their writing for critique and publication.

In re-reading the articles herein and digesting the content, the challenge is intensified in adequately and concisely providing an editorial response to capture the significant messages within their writing. Writing on critical issues with personal reflections is an act of bravery. It is also a political act. We have selected the critical, personal, and academic pieces for this issue because they seek to make change. As a set, the pieces complement each other, revealing the underlying deeper issues of discrimination and marginalisation that are embedded in the colonial history and current context of Aotearoa New Zealand. The pieces each in their own way challenge relations of class, gender, and race to extend the boundaries of who gets to speak, who has voice, and which identity classifications carry legitimacy within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Such classifications shape the roles of staff and the politics of academic freedom in the tertiary education sector. Taking a stance on any number of provocative positions can put staff at risk in terms of their personal lives and working careers. That risk is intensified if you are identified as belonging to a marginalised group.

In this context, the power of the collective can provide a safer platform to express oneself. As the first piece in this issue reminds us, *Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa, let us keep close together, not far apart.* By bringing to light the issues we face as citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand, and as members of our union in tertiary education, we have a responsibility to create a safe space to discuss those things that cause discomfort and subsequently take action for change. In doing so, we expand the mindset of what appears to be extraordinary and different to become the ordinary, normal and acceptable forms of identity and expression.

In preparing for this publication the Editorial Board has found ourselves in the enviable position of having too many great articles to publish in just one issue. We have accepted more pieces than you will find here, and the pages of the next issue are already filling up. We invite you to submit your writing for Issue 3 and be part of our mahi for change.

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A PLACE AT THE TABLE

Colonised, disadvantaged, and irrelevant
I seek a place at your table.
So, listen carefully
to my silence, shouting loudly,
echoing amongst the babble.
Your privileged tongue
stifling, subduing
speed, creating no space for me to speak.
I am seated
but have no place.

I breathe, breathe again, exhale.
Grounded in my land, my place,
I whisper softly, slowly, tentatively. Gently.
So hear the sounds and feel the words.
Stop to honour the Promises, and
humbly still your tongue
to treasure the invisible voice.

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Dr Donna Smith (Ngāpuhi) and Dr Jo Smith (Pākehā) have worked, managed, and taught together for over 20 years. They have co-existed with different cultural identities as they co-manage the Bachelor of Therapeutic and Sports Massage Programme and co-lead the New Zealand Massage Therapy Research Centre at Southern Institute of Technology. Throughout this journey, they have observed, engaged, reflected, and learned about navigating biculturalism in an educational context. They have both witnessed and experienced the invisibility of one over the other. Their poem pays tribute to their observations and expresses a call to action: to truly hear the Māori voices at the table.

Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa
Let us keep close together, not far apart

I WEAR MY PRIDE UPON MY SKIN: BECOMING MORE OF WHO I AM

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Dr Hinekura Smith (Te Rarawa and Ngāpuhi) is a Māori woman, weaver, researcher, and mother who descends from the Far North of Aotearoa New Zealand. With over 25 years experience as a Māori educator, she began as a Māori language school teacher, before moving into tertiary education, lecturing, and researching. Hinekura's research interests weave together Māori identity politics, decolonising education, Indigenous arts-based research methodologies, and Māori and Indigenous doctoral supervision and support. She is currently a senior researcher at Ngā Wai a Te Tūī Māori and Indigenous research centre at UNITEC.

I wear my pride upon my skin

My pride has always been within

I wear my strength upon my face

Comes from another time and place

Bet you didn't know that every line has a message for me.

(Lyrics from the single 'Moko' by Moana and The Moa Hunters, released in 1998)

Introduction

Tua - beyond. Kiri – skin. Combined, tuakiri is a Māori (Indigenous Peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand) term for identity or that which lies beyond the skin. So, what if your skin does not match the phenotype of your tuakiri Māori – Māori identity? An identity which you have always known is you, one which you have actively and proudly fostered for yourself as a wahine Māori and mother. An identity that you teach in / about, research and write. What if your white skin offers all of the profound privilege that the society you live in affords your phenotype, but when you reveal your Māori identity – who I am beyond my skin – there is discomfort, confusion, distrust, and sometimes anger as the 'other' reconciles what their eyes see with what their ears hear, bound tightly by the limitations of their own storied definitions of what being Māori means. Now take that white skin and engrave upon its face the markings of Māori ancestry, a moko kauae (traditional Māori chin tattoo) as a powerful symbol of tuakiri Māori, displayed permanently and visibly on the skin, and more radically, upon the face. Kia ora (hello) meet me.

On my mother's side I am a wahine Māori of the Te Rarawa and Ngāpuhi tribal collectives in the Far North of Aotearoa New Zealand. On my father's side I am English from South Hampton, England. I was born and raised in Auckland (the largest metropolitan centre in Aotearoa New Zealand), which is approximately a four-and-a-half hour drive from my tribal lands. I describe myself as tribally connected and urban located.

I do not possess a traditional Māori phenotype. My hair is red. My eyes are green, and my skin is white and freckled. As a teenager, I determined to learn my language as one internal (but invisible) cultural marker of my Māori identity and in doing so returned to my whānau the Indigenous tongue that was silenced through the assimilation of my grandfather's generation. Now as a mature wahine Māori and mother, I declare my Māori ancestry in an external and visible way through the moko kauae I carry on my face.

The turn of this century, saw a rapid and powerful return among wāhine Māori to carry moko kauae as a mark of pride upon our skin, a resistance and renewal of wāhine Māori identity (Te Awekotuku, 2007). While colonial oppressions of the twentieth century saw a massive decline in wāhine Māori receiving moko kauae, the practice never disappeared completely. The last decade has seen a huge revival amongst wāhine Māori of all ages taking up moko kauae throughout the country.

Māori scholar and moko kauae wearer Dr Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and her team documented this phenomenon in their critically acclaimed book Mau Moko (2007) prompting a resurgence, not only in the receiving and wearing of moko kauae, but also scholarly writing about moko kauae (see Higgins, 2004; Te Awekotuku, et al., 2007; Penehira, 2011). Concurrently, community-based wānanga (conversations), online writing, and photographic exhibitions led by wāhine Māori, for wāhine Māori, have created spaces for wāhine Māori to discuss moko kauae on our terms.

I like to tell stories. One of my favourite bedtime questions from my daughters when they were young was, "Māmā, tell us a story from when you were growing up". So, while autoethnography is a new theoretical field for me, storytelling envelops my wahine Māori shoulders like a comfortable, well-worn, and familiar smelling blanket. I understand autoethnography as yet another 'space between', another borderland encounter of storytelling, research, and academia (Russell, 1999) and that the autobiographical moves to the auto-ethnographical "at the point where the author understands their personal history to be implicated in larger social formations and historical processes" (Russell, 1999, p. 47). More specifically, I lean into Indigenous autoethnography, "the cultural interface where

Indigenous knowledge meets Western academia" (Houston, 2007, p. 45) to illuminate my complex dual identities as a way to navigate the borderlands of living as a white skinned wahine Māori wearing moko kauae.

Roaming these borderlands, these 'spaces between' (Webber, 2008), is sometimes a place of belonging and comfort and at other times is fraught with conflict and displacement. Telling my stories of 'once upon a time' is one way this wahine Māori makes sense of her world and who I am today. In this article I share stories of being and 'becoming more me' as I sought ways to bring my tuakiri – that which lies beyond my skin – to the surface. I do this for myself, but more importantly for my daughters and (future) grandchildren as I theorise the intersection of identity ascribed to my skin colour, the Māori identity of my whakapapa (ancestry), and now, through the inscribing of identity upon my face as an uncompromising expression of myself as a wahine Māori.

Māori identity IS Whakapapa – full stop.

Whakapapa, or Māori ancestry, is widely accepted as the key determinant in a Māori identity claim. Whakapapa connects people and places through time, provides a conceptual framework with which to view the world and, in Ani Mikaere's, words, "shapes the way we think about ourselves and about the issues that confront us from one day to the next" (2011, p. 286). Māori determine the issue of identity in our own way and on our own terms. Narrower definitions based on cultural competency such as language proficiency are generally rejected, acknowledging that colonising forces rendered generations of Māori unable, and then sometimes unwilling, to express a positive Māori identity. As Arohia Durie points out, whakapapa is "a governing factor in a Māori identity claim and in the establishment of rights and obligations which accrue in respect of that identity" (1997, p. 152). My responsibility to my whakapapa is to actively express a positive Māori identity and to pass that on to my children. Our language was the first identity marker to be reclaimed and revitalised and now I seek to normalise moko kauae in my whānau.

My mother and I received our moko kauae at the same time and are the only moko kauae wearers in our extended whānau. My earliest encounter with moko kauae was as a teenager when we would draw marks on our chins for cultural performances. These felt-tip squiggles were what we 'girls in the kapa haka' loved wearing the most. It made us 'feel' Māori and 'look' Māori. One rule was that you were not allowed to eat whilst wearing your drawn on moko kauae – not for any deeply spiritual reasons but in case you smudged it before performing – so we would not eat for as long as we could after a performance, until hunger got the better of us and we would reluctantly wipe it off.

Growing up I knew I was Māori because I had Māori ancestry despite constant challenges that questioned my identity because of my appearance. For as long as I can remember, my 'non-Māori' phenotype has presented challenges to claiming and asserting a Māori identity. I can recall being six or seven years old and playing with my Māori cousins at my grandparents' house when I realised for the first time that I looked different to them.

> *Mum comes outside and puts sunscreen on me. That thick, sticky old type of sunscreen. I squirm and wonder to myself, "Why she is not putting it on anyone else?" I look at my skin. I look at their skin and realise that I am different; I am white and have freckles. I think to myself, "I am the only one with freckles and I look different." In that moment I wish that I am brown like my cousins. Mum reassures me that my Māori whakapapa means I am 'Māori on the inside' – beyond my skin. But I want to be Māori like my cousins are Māori – Māori on the outside too. I wait, thinking. She finishes slathering on the sunscreen. I sneak around the back of the shed and wash it off. Maybe I can make my skin brown like theirs. Several hours later in the baking New Zealand sun I learn the hard way that that was not a good idea.*

My white freckled skin, red hair, and green eyes meant that I desired a more discernible set of identity markers to support my growing sense of my Māori identity.

Front row of the 'multicultural group' 1981

The whitest girl in kapa haka (Māori cultural group 1991)

I was born in 1976, a critical historical turning point for Māori identity (Rostenberg, 2010), known as the Māori renaissance (Harris, 2004; Walker, 1990) when Māori activism fought to resist acculturating social and governmental pressures. The Māori renaissance and concurrent feminist movements provided my mother with an 'identity crisis', a key turning point in her own identity development to 'reclaim' a Māori identity for herself and for her children. In a 2017 study I lead on wāhine Māori as critical reclaimers of Māori identity, she said:

> *It was about me being prepared to stand up and say if I want my children to live strong and positive as Māori then I have to do something about it (Smith, 2017, p.156).*

The 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand continued as a time of change, protest, and reclamation. Ironically, it was within the education system – the very institution that served to assimilate my grandfather's generation – that I began to learn Māori language and culture, awakening within me a desire to proudly claim my Māori identity.

A key cultural activity at our secondary school was kapa haka where myself and my predominantly Māori friends further developed our growing Māori identity as part of a whānau where we supported and learnt alongside each other. We knew we were Māori yet still I looked different to those who did not know me beyond my skin. After leading our kapa haka at a regional competition, my 16-year-old self was interviewed on national radio by a Māori radio announcer:

> *Alright, kia ora, we are back. We have just seen Taiohi Tātaki from Massey High School take the stage and I have here in front of me [finds his notes] Lisa Smith. Kia ora Lisa.*
>
> *Kia ora, kei te pēhea koe? [how are you?]*
>
> *Wow! Okay? Yes, kei te pai [I am good]. I have to say Lisa you are the whitest and red headest Māori I have seen? Are you really Māori?*
>
> *[I responded in Māori although I was not yet a confident speaker] heck yes I am! I am not a potato, brown on the outside and white on the inside … instead I am a jaffa!*

When I look back now, I am embarrassed that I used this disparaging description of assimilated Māori as potatoes who are deemed brown skinned but white thinking. Instead, I referenced an iconic Aotearoa New Zealand confectionery that is red on the outside and chocolate brown on the inside. This encounter reminded me that, while I might have Māori whakapapa, I needed to develop other outward markers of Māori identity such as my language.

When I started secondary school, I was placed in the 'top' academic class. After one week I was miserable. While I 'looked' like the other kids, I felt I didn't belong. Following some robust discussions with the school, my mother made the decision to move me to the whānau class – a class established on Māori values and beliefs – effectively taking me from the top stream academic class to one of the lowest. My mother shared this story with me:

> *When we moved you to the whānau class some of the teachers said you were 'too bright' for that class. Being in the whānau class was seen as a negative move. I think you had to work harder because many of those kids came from whānau who could not support them like we could support you. It was important to me that you learnt that you have a responsibility to yourself to succeed but you also have a responsibility to help others. It is not a 'success at all costs' scenario. (Smith, 2017, p. 9)*

My mother faced an appalling, yet still common dilemma for many Māori parents: a choice between academic achievement or developing a positive Māori identity and access to the Māori world. Being a young wahine Māori in a large mainstream secondary school in the 1990s was not easy.

> *As a teenager I was heavily involved in kapa haka, learning my language at the school marae and in the whānau class. Like many of my Māori friends we wore taonga (carved bone or greenstone adornments) around our necks as an outward expression of our Māori identity. My mother had gifted my taonga to me and I wore it proudly as a sign of my 'Māoriness'. One day just before a physical education (PE) class the teacher told me "that Mow-ree thing" would have to come off as it was jewellery and therefore, according to the rules, was dangerous. I informed her, in my assertive yet undoubtedly immature teenage language, that it was not jewellery and was of great cultural significance to me. She dismissed my comment saying that if she let me wear it, she would have to let others wear their 'jewellery' and besides, it was still dangerous. I asked her whom it might endanger and continued to explain that it had been placed on me using karakia [Māori blessing] and could not be removed. Before I knew what was happening, she produced a pair of scissors and cut the taonga off by its cord. It fell to the ground and a small piece broke off. When I told my mother she was enraged and stormed up to the school principal. The teacher was made to apologise to me – which as a teenager is in itself quite satisfying – but we were still not allowed to wear taonga in PE class. Instead, we enjoyed coming up with new and ingenious ways to hide our taonga and keep them safe, delighting in our ability to deceive the PE teachers. I still have that taonga. It reminds me that the struggle is not old, and it is not over. What was once cut from my neck – an outward symbol of my identity – can symbolically be taken and damaged in other ways. (Smith, 2017, p. 165)*

Encountering decolonising Indigenous theory through a PhD, and so many stories and experiences of identity later, I was ready to receive a taonga that, unlike the bone carving above, could never be forcibly taken from me. As Netana Whakaari of Waimana is recorded as saying:

> *You may lose your most valuable property… you may be robbed of all your most-prized possessions; but of your moko you cannot be deprived except by death; it will be your ornament and your companion until your last day (Cowan, 1921, p. 214).*

In my early forties I received my moko kauae.

> *I lay on the tā moko table in the living room of my mother's house surrounded by our whānau and friends. My young nieces and nephews run about, playing, laughing, tussling like puppies. They come over to the table peering, curious for a moment about what Nana and Aunty Hinekura are doing to their faces, before running off again. The older children sit there, interested – in between text messages. The room is filled with songs softly sung and laughter, some tears and some gentle teasing. Someone jokes "Bro it will be like tattooing dot to dot with her freckles eh?" Our kai tā moko (Māori skin carver), with gentle blessings murmured, and reassuring hands ready, brought to the surface that which lies beyond our skin, to rest upon our skin. It is our identity as Māori women – tihei mauri moko!*

Walking the world with moko kauae on white skin is complex. Sometimes I am met with stares, as eyes take longer than is polite to make sense of what they see – moko kauae on white skin. I can almost see the sense-making process, as they sift through files for something – anything – to help them understand what they are seeing. Sometimes I am met with smiles and a pleasant 'kia ora!' as eyes immediately recognise that my moko kauae identifies me as Māori. On occasion, Māori eyes will look at my moko kauae and white skin with suspicion – why does that white woman wear our ancestoral markings? It is the older, white male demographic, however, that appear most offended by my appearance and feel most entitled to tell me, a complete stranger, that I am ugly or a disgrace (read: race traitor) and 'why on earth would you do that to your face?'

As such, I have developed a set of coping strategies each ready to be used depending entirely on my mood in the moment. Sometimes I will respond with kindness and patience, sometimes with hostility. Mostly I am indifferent to the stares and side glances. Pre-moko kauae, I would make eye contact with strangers as they passed, now I am more likely to employ a middle-distance stare as I walk down the street – it saves me the energy of trying to interpret looks. I am not sure that my moko kauae on my white skin will ever appease all 'others', but it sure does please me.

Summary

A good story should lead to more stories, and there are many many more stories about moko kauae to be shared. As wāhine Māori, we each have our own reasons and stories for reclaiming and revitalising the treasures of our ancestors. Before recieving my moko kauae I questioned myself, buying into a set of colonially constructed criteria of what Māori should look like, sound like, be like, which only serve to limit our own self-determination of beauty and identity.

I have many reasons to wear moko kauae. I want my daughters to see moko kauae as normal and beautiful, to see a reflection of our ancestors everyday, walking this world, not in old photos and colonial portraits. I want my grandchildren to only ever know their grandmother as carrying moko kauae and only hearing Māori language from her tattooed lips. I want to smash stereotypes regarding what Māori look like, and in doing so, encourage other wāhine Māori who are 'waiting' to be brown enough, fluent enough, worthy enough, to receive what is their birthright – that is to wear their moko kauae with pride and with power. I wear my pride upon my skin.

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THE UPPER-CLASS MĀORI

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History

The ways in which Māori have been marginalised and excluded within tertiary education is unknown by most. In brief, Sir Apirana Ngata became the first Māori to receive a degree from an Aotearoa New Zealand university in 1893 (Sorrenson, 1996). He had been part of a cohort of Māori students from Te Aute College who under the leadership of John Thornton, passed their matriculation exams and went onto higher education. However, this development was not welcomed by Pākehā education officials who then sought to restrict curriculum content for Māori arguing that "the objective of Māori education was to fit pupils for life among Māori" (Walker, 2016). In other words, Māori needed to be educated enough to work for Pākehā, not compete with them economically (Morrison, 1999). Following the successful transition of this small group of Māori to university, Thornton was fired as principal of Te Aute College and new national curriculum guidelines ensured Māori students were taught only what was necessary to become labourers or housewives. These restrictions caused a fifty-year hiatus in Māori entering Aotearoa New Zealand universities until the late 1940s when Māori were allowed to apply to teachers' college. This strong, new collective of Māori scholars grew and, along with the likes of Ngata, paved the way for Māori in tertiary education.

Contemporary views

Despite the time that has passed and some growth in Māori students and teaching staff in higher education, the lack of Māori faces and spaces continues to be fuelled by systemic racism and a disregard for Māori within our institutes, universities, and government. In a recent interview, Jacinda Ardern was asked what the Labour Government had done for Māori during her term as Prime Minister. Her answer was that Labour had delivered a lot for Māori communities, "In fact, when you look at unemployment, we've got the lowest rates of unemployment under this government than we've had in a decade, we've seen more young Māori in apprenticeships. We know there is more work to do but we have made good progress" (RNZ, 2020). It is evident from these words how Jacinda Ardern, and no doubt much of Aotearoa New Zealand's population, views Māori achievement in terms of jobs, trade training and apprenticeships. Her words allude to long standing ideas about what Māori success looks like; that is, success for Māori is often not imagined in terms of higher education or the professional realm. Although trade training is valuable for many, Māori, like other people in Aotearoa New Zealand, are diverse, and the assumption that Māori are primarily interested in trade or apprenticeship training conforms to old ideas about the kinds of talents, abilities, and interests of Māori. Such a view undermines the so-called 'progress' that has been made in our education system, and it continues to communicate to Māori, and the wider population, that as long as Māori have a job, the box has been ticked. Māori have put up with this type of stereotyping for generations. Not only from our most senior leaders, but within the education, health, and justice systems, all of whom have impacted Māori capability and hindered Māori with a lack of self-esteem, courage, and ambition.

Personal reflections – identity disjuncture's

For much of my time in higher education, I have struggled with feelings of inadequacy and not understanding why I found university study so hard despite having the pre-requisites to succeed. At eighteen I left home in Rotorua, moved into a hall of residence at the University of Auckland and began a degree in classical music. While I was at music school, I was described as an 'upper-class Māori' by a Māori friend who I lived with. In fairness, being a classical violinist made me like no other Māori he had ever met but, while I laughed it off at the time, it is something I have never forgotten. It reminded me of another time when I was a junior at high school. I was one of two Māori students in the accelerate class, and while being Māori didn't make you a minority in the wider school population (Rotorua Girls High was around 50% Māori with high rates of Māori success), I was definitely a minority in the classroom. I remember sitting with some friends, all of whom were Pākehā, and some Māori girls walked past laughing and swearing. One of my friends made a derogatory comment about the girls and then looked over at me and said, 'oh not you though, you're different'. It is my earliest memory of feeling that awkward, painful blow to the guts that is racism. I was left speechless and uncomfortable around those who I considered to be my closest friends. These, and other experiences during my education, left me feeling confused by the way I had been put in the 'other' category. Not only because it meant I was different, but because I felt pressured to succeed in the dominantly Pākehā world

I found myself in. Not being a Te Reo Māori speaker also had me questioning my integrity and authenticity as a Māori voice and as such I was left torn and unsure of where I fit in; not Māori enough to be Māori, but not Pākehā enough to be Pākehā either. I began to question whether my intelligence was based on my academic credentials or the fact that I am Māori and because the expectation for Māori to succeed academically is low, my intellect made me different to the 'norm' in both Māori and Pākehā contexts. Tertiary education should have ensured my skill set was fostered, instead I continued to second guess my talents and abilities because of a lack of role modelling and sense of belonging. Subsequently, I spent years in and out of university finishing various qualifications and relied heavily on the few Māori staff and students who supported me throughout my studies.

Conclusion

Whilst Aotearoa New Zealand has come a long way in its offerings for Māori in education, in many ways the colonial government succeeded in their intention to create a manual workforce. Māori are still encouraged into the trades and while the numbers of tertiary students are growing, less than 5% of academics in tertiary education are Māori (RNZ, 2018). Many Māori academics have argued that tertiary providers must start to 'walk the talk' because despite all tertiary institutes now having strategies for Māori success, this is still not evident in the number of Māori staff being hired and as such is causing many of them to be overworked and stressed under the pressure to support the growing number of Māori students, as well as non-Māori who want to learn.

I feel I am now part of the fight for Māori leadership, Māori content, and Māori participation within our tertiary education sector. My master's thesis gave me an opportunity to better understand my struggle and to realise that higher education was never intended for me. Ensuring safe spaces for Māori staff and students in tertiary education is crucial because despite those who have and continue to pioneer a new way forward for Māori, we continue to suffer from generations of oppression in a dominantly colonial system.

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WALK LIKE AN ACADEMIC? THE LIMITS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT WHITE CIS MEN

Tara McAllister

Dr Tara McAllister (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Porou, she/her/ia) is a māmā and academic. Her research spans freshwater ecology and racism in the tertiary sector. Tara's recent research has focused on the under-representation and under-valuing of Māori academics in Aotearoa New Zealand's universities and the research sector more broadly. She is currently a Research Fellow with Te Pūnaha Matatini | School of Biological Sciences at the University of Auckland and will shortly be joining the Centre of Science in Society at Victoria University of Wellington.

Cat Pausé*

Dr Cat Pausé is a Fat Studies scholar at Massey University in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research is focused on the effects of fat stigma on health and well-being on fat individuals and how fat activists resist the fatpocalypse. She has called for a new fat ethics, acknowledging the role science has played in the oppression of fat people and ensuring that research around fatness centres a fat epistemology.

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Jan (JJ) Eldridge

Associate Professor Jan (JJ) Eldridge (she/her/them/they) obtained a PhD in astrophysics at the University of Cambridge in 2005. After time spent at the Institut d'Astrophysics de Paris, Queen's University Belfast, and the Institute of Astronomy (Cambridge), JJ was appointed as a Lecturer of Astrophysics at The University of Auckland. Her research is focussed upon the lives and deaths of stars.

Jemaima Tiatia-Seath

Dr Jemaima Tiatia-Seath (she/her) is the Co-Head of School, Te Wānanga o Waipapa, School of Māori Studies and Pacific Studies, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland. She is of Sāmoan heritage and has a public/population health background. Her expertise lies in Pacific Studies, Pacific health, mental health and wellbeing, suicide prevention and postvention, health inequities, climate change, and youth development.

Academic freedom is a hallmark of being a critic and conscience in Aotearoa New Zealand. But not all academics are awarded academic freedom in the same way. Many are silenced, censored, and even threatened for contributing to public discourse. In this panel discussion, a small group of women academics explore the limits on their academic freedom and the costs associated with insisting that their voices are part of the larger conversation. The panel highlights the necessary inclusion of these voices and concludes with suggestions for how others in academia can support those whose voices are marginalised.

Setting the scene

Two Indigenous and two tauiwi academics in Aotearoa New Zealand participated in a panel at the Tertiary Education Union's (TEU) Academic Freedom Conference 2021. In the discussion, they explored the limits of academic freedom for those academics who do not "look like an academic". The panellists came from different academic disciplines, and while their experiences with academic freedom were varied, the impacts of racism and sexism were common across the group.

The panel was organised by Cat Pausé, a tauiwi social scientist at Massey University. Cat has been involved in the leadership of the TEU and was invited by the conference organiser to chair a panel. One of Cat's passions is epistemology (Pausé, 2020; Smith, 1999); Who gets to produce knowledge about the lived experiences of marginalised groups of people? Who gets to be a knower? Taking this passion, alongside her enthusiasm for social media, had her wondering about #ThisIsWhatAScientistLooksLike as an inspiration.

#ThisIsWhatAScientistLooksLike is a hashtag used by scientists and scholars to humanise their work (Jarreau et al., 2019; Muindi, Ramachandran, & Tsai, 2020). In addition to humanising scientists and scholars, the hashtag and others like it such as #ActualLivingScientist and #WomeninSTEM, push back against conventional ideas of who scientists/scholars are and what they look like. It allows scholars of colour, women in the sciences, scholars with disabilities, scholars who exist beyond the colonial gender binary and more, to widen the representation of how scholars/scientists are represented.

Cat reached out to academics she admired on Twitter, inviting them to join the panel. For the programme, she wrote a short abstract:

> Who is allowed to speak with academic authority? What does an academic look like? Sound like? In this panel discussion, we explore the limits of academic freedom for those of us who do not "look like an academic".

Cat titled the panel, "Walk like an academic?[1] The limits of academic freedom for those who are not white cis men" and was pleased when it was scheduled to be a plenary event. The following is an edited transcript of the panel that occurred on 1 September 2021.

The panel

Cat: Kia ora, everyone. My name is Cat Pausé and I am very pleased to be the host of this panel, about what it means – and who gets to – walk like an academic. I'd like to invite the members of the panel to introduce themselves and speak briefly as to what academic freedom means to them.

Tara: Kia ora koutou, I wanted to start by sharing a little bit about my kind of positionality and a bit about who I am. I'm a Māori woman, I'm a māmā, I'm an emerging academic compared to many of you, and I'm a member of the precariat. My pronouns are she, her, and ia. My PhD was about toxic cyanobacteria, so technically, I'm a freshwater ecologist by training (McAllister, Wood, & Hawes, 2016). I'm really driven by doing research that I consider to be impactful, and I know that my idea of excellent and impactful research does not align with universities. I speak as someone who has lived experience of being excluded and at times silenced within universities, despite academic freedom, but also, as someone who is doing both qualitative and quantitative research around racism in the academy. So, what is academic freedom to me? Academic freedom is applied and enforced differently for different people. It is influenced by the underlying and embedded structures within universities – things like racism, sexism, transphobia, and ableism. These structures often influence who can, and who can't, speak with academic freedom and under what conditions they are allowed to do so.

Another thing I think is important to mention in the present discussion is the space between academic freedom, freedom of speech, and hate speech. When something is being said about a group of people that is harmful, then I don't think that should be covered under academic freedom. Academic freedom should not give grumpy old white professors a free pass to be racist. A Māori scholar, Brooke Tohiariki (2021), said recently, "Challenge my ideas, not my existence".

Jemaima: Mālo le soifua, good morning, everybody, Jemaima is the name. I'm the Co-Head of School for Te Wānanga o Waipapa, School of Māori Studies and Pacific Studies, within the Faculty of Arts, Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland. Also, I am a Board member for the inaugural Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. I hail from the villages of Taga, Salelologa, and Vaimoso, and am an Aotearoa New Zealand-born Sāmoan. Academic freedom is where everyone has a right to it, but there's a fine line obviously, around the acceptability of what's being spoken about and the platform that's being used. However, I consider that we have a responsibility in that we cause no further harm. And so the question I consider is that, in terms of academic freedom, who is setting the rules and who are the gatekeepers? They certainly aren't people that sound and look like me.

JJ: Kia ora. My name is Jan or JJ Eldridge. My pronouns are, she, her, them, they. I'm originally from the UK, but I've been in Aotearoa New Zealand for nearly 10 years. I'm a non-binary trans woman. I'm an astrophysicist, and so I've got this great catchphrase, *"I study exploding binary stars while trying to explode the myth of the gender binary"*. I'm the current head of the Department of Physics at the University of Auckland. And what's academic freedom to me?

I just want to echo what has already been said by Tara and Jemaima. But I will add that I don't define academic freedom as what it is, but it's where the limits are. And Tara said it very well, it's not an excuse for professors to be racist. Another example is that because I'm transgender, I know that there are people who use academic freedom to attack transgender people and attack my human rights. To basically say that I'm not a person because I'm transgender. People who deny that [I'm transgender] have a

[1] Earlier in the year, Cat had attended *Jersey Boys*, the broadway musical story of The Four Seasons, and spent much of the following year humming the melody of "Walk like a man".

peculiar argument because it suggests that a doctor who looked at me for 30 seconds just after I was born knows me better than I know myself, over the last 40 years.

Cat: Thank you for those great introductions and short commentary on how each of you approach the topic of academic freedom. Who is allowed to speak with academic authority in our current society?

Tara: Yesterday Dr Sereana Naepi mentioned how Pacific academics comprise about 1% of professors in Aotearoa New Zealand Universities (Naepi, 2019) and I'd like to highlight the inverse of this statistic; of New Zealand professors employed in 2018, 73% were men, 71% were European (McAllister et al., forthcoming). This is important because not only does it draw attention to the overwhelming whiteness and masculinity of the Professoriate, but it's also important to think about the context of who academic freedom is designed to protect.

Jemaima: You can probably count on one hand how many academics sound and look like me. I guess the quandary is having to navigate those colonial structures set against our own values and beliefs. And often those that are on the 'periphery' don't necessarily fit the western modes/models/ideals and so going against that conventional grain may be seen as stepping outside the rules or going rogue. Not everyone necessarily likes change, and for those underserved populations in the academy, a lone voice is not necessarily the loudest; I find that the challenge is oscillating in and between those places where you haven't historically belonged and trying to establish that belonging as a brown Pacific woman in the academy.

JJ: The only thing I'm going to add here is, it's interesting with being transgender, because I transitioned from being a man to woman, and what I'm allowed to speak on with academic authority has changed over time. Back before I transitioned, I would get asked to talk about astronomy and science because that's what my field of study is. Now that I've transitioned to a woman, I get invited to talk on other topics like this panel about academic freedom. I also have more requests to talk about the inclusion of trans people, to discuss how to make your company or university more inclusive of trans people (e.g. Eldridge, 2020).

Cat: There's an idea, then, of what an academic "looks like", and that idea impacts who dominates in academic spaces; who is invited to speak on academic topics; who is asked to be an expert for the media. What are the costs for individuals such as yourself who don't fit into what an academic look like? What cost do you have to pay to engage in your academic freedom?

Tara: I think, for me, speaking on my own personal experience, there is a significant risk speaking out as a Māori woman. The risk level associated with speaking out depends on who you are, the position you hold within the academy, and the topic that you are speaking on. For example, if you're a Māori woman speaking about racism within universities themselves then you are going to be at a much higher risk compared to say a white male professor speaking about a topic that doesn't necessarily bring the university into disrepute. For me, one of the costs of speaking out and being a critic and conscience is that I think that my advancement within the academy and my trajectory will be limited. I think that I'll have a black mark next to my name, perceived to be a troublemaker or an angry Māori woman who often tells people to "f**k off" on Twitter. But, like many Māori scholars before me, I'm willing to sacrifice my advancement within the academy if it means that it's slightly easier for the next generation of Māori scholars.

Speaking out can limit employability, but there are also bigger consequences in terms of safety. I don't want to kind of go into too much detail about what the ramifications of academic freedom have been for myself and my family, but it's varied in severity from emails from a particular Vice-Chancellor that tinkered on the edge of bullying, to having harassment orders against white supremacists and needing home security.

I want to mention The Listener letter here. Their thoughts were covered by academic freedom. But as Stewart (2021, pg 2) stated "The seven professors are expert in their disciplines (Biological Sciences, Psychology, Philosophy, Education, and Psychological Medicine) but none of them profess public expertise in the study of Māori knowledge". They used their roles within the academy and associated institutions (i.e., the Royal Society | Te Apārangi) to position themselves as experts on a topic that they arguably having a very dubious understanding of (The Hui, 2021).

Compare that to my experience in organising a celebration of Mātauranga Māori on campus in response to the letter. We had organised food, senior and emerging Māori and Pacific scholars to speak, poets, a beautiful poster, even stickers. It was going to be a great celebration of Mātauranga Māori on campus. But even though the letter was not mentioned as part of the planned event, the University would not allow it to take place in the form we had planned. So, the seven authors of the letter were allowed to publish their ignorant ideas under "academic freedom", but I and others were not allowed to do this event on campus. This is an interesting contrast that illustrates who academic freedom applies to and who it doesn't.

Jemaima: It is getting used to being unpopular, which most often triggers trolls and diatribe; I usually give my family a heads up. Something I may express may be controversial to others because I represent not just the institution or my faculty but, first and foremost, my family, specific communities, and so forth. And it is a long haul when you are given a platform to a certain extent, and one needs to develop a certain grit and resilience. I'd like to also take this opportunity to thank TEU and Barry Hughes for checking in with me around the time when I received that racist voicemail (see Tahana, 2021 and Tapaleao, 2021 for media coverage). It didn't take a rocket scientist to establish the caller wasn't entirely well, but the things she had to say was something that I and others have experienced daily and in very subtle ways and in other ways, very overtly. You have those challenges on top of trying to make your way through academia. There are costs and risks and you do wonder whether your academic career may be short-lived because you are standing up against things that you don't necessarily agree with. And I find myself having to grapple with that. Quite a lot, because at the end of the day, you are an employee of an organisation, you did sign a contract; but at the same time, I refuse to be gagged if it means that it's constraining the values, beliefs, and perspectives of say, specific student populations, families, and communities.

JJ: If we go back to when I was a man, I didn't have to worry about any of this. I was the perfect role model of an academic, and you know, I could just carry on working but I was not happy because I wasn't myself. Now I've transitioned, I am generally happier but

when I transitioned, and I knew this before, I opened myself up for these kinds of issues. Of course, not the same because I'm white, so I don't have to necessarily worry about white supremacists. Although of course, they'll attack me if I support my Māori and Pasifika colleagues as I want to do. The real problem for me is social media because I need to worry about trans exclusionary radical feminists, or TERFS, who would use personal details to attack my family. When you're on Twitter you have to worry about the entire international community because what you say can be seen around the world.

There is also another risk for people who are not cisgender white men; one risk I was made aware of by Dr Chanda Prescod-Weinstein. She's a cosmologist in America and has become well-known for her work on equity and inclusion. The problem is she would always get invited to give talks on that subject, but no one would invite her to talk about science. As I said earlier what I'm getting invited to speak on has shifted, I'm getting asked more to speak on inclusion of rainbow communities within academia. Which is okay because I don't mind doing that kind of work, but it does make you worried that the risk is that everyone will forget my science. They will only think, "Oh, they are trans! That's their thing they can talk on, right?" All the wonderful other stuff we do is forgotten.

Cat: I think you have all given us a range of the violence – what you're talking about is violence – that people experience when they don't fit into that "idea" of an academic; of what an academic is supposed to look like or supposed to be. From dealing with trolls in online spaces, to needing actual police protection. And, of course, we recognise that our home institutions are often part of what contributes to said violence. What would you say is the responsibility of your institutions to protect you from that violence?

Tara: When I was dealing with targeted harassment from white supremacists, the university had been rather useless in providing any support or protections to me. My immediate managers, who have always been awesome, were great, but the university really failed in my opinion to do anything meaningful to support me. One of the things that happened during this targeted harassment was that some of the white supremacists started sending complaints to the university about me, and the university investigated those complaints and initially took them seriously. I was disappointed that energy was put into dealing with those complaints rather than the targeted harassment that I was facing. Interestingly when the university eventually responded to those white supremacists who were complaining about me, there was no mention of academic freedom or my role as critic and conscience like there was in the defence of the professors who wrote the letter to *The Listener*. I thought that was again an interesting divergence. So, the senior (mostly white) academics who wrote the letter were protected under academic freedom and they were being the "critic and conscience", but I was not.

Jemaima: My experience was a little different and I'm grateful because I'm based within a faculty that is very proactive in protecting us. I worry about those other faculties that don't have that privilege. I felt protected although, I must be honest, I would walk out on to my driveway and take a look up and down the street, you know, there's that kind of fear. You just never know. Is this the kind of environment that we are building, nurturing, and continuing to perpetuate for our junior and emerging scholars? Who would likely take on what we're experiencing now? So, in terms of building workforce capacity and capabilities, I do have some concerns around that.

JJ: I have not experienced anything this bad, but I worry about it. And again, it's because I cheated; I did academia on easy mode as a man and then upgraded halfway through to being a woman. But only after I had my academic reputation for my skills, then it gave me the ability to be slightly safer. I worry about this being a head of the department and having to deal with these issues from the other side. Because I listen to people like Tara; I know that if this happens, I will try and stand up. But I'm learning it's difficult to be in the middle as head of department because you've got the senior management and you've got the people you actually care about, your staff members, who you want to succeed at work, and what I'm still trying to work out is how to try and find the best way to support people like Tara in the future.

What's the best thing for the Department to do in this kind of situation? We know that this is an attack and just because it's against the postdoc who is employed on a fixed-term contract they shouldn't be treated differently to a permanent staff member. We know there are white supremacists on campus, and we all need to grapple with that. And I hope I can help try and make it better, which is one of the good things about being in a leadership role. I can try and make changes. But sometimes it's just a long road. We'll get there eventually, hopefully.

Cat: I think we can all agree that the University of Auckland has an awful track record when it comes to dealing with white supremacy on its campus. And while I agree with JJ that it is a road we are on, I cannot help but wonder why/how are we not there yet?! How much longer will it take? We are not there for Tara, for Tara's mother, or for Tara's grandmother. I would argue that it's our institution's responsibility to ensure that they have policies in place to protect academic staff members when they come under attack, and face violence, for exercising their academic freedom. That's something that I've been trying to get my own university (Massey) to do for years. I was excited when they finally put together the social media policy. But that policy ended up just being about Massey branding use in social media. My fight in that space continues, and I will keep pushing that the core responsibility should be with our institutions. What are ways we can support each other? What are ways that the union can help support us? What advice might you give to other emerging academics or academics who are just now kind of coming into more public spaces with their work?

JJ: While some of these issues are difficult to fix across the university system, I'm planning to look at what I can do immediately within my own department. I can make changes in physics and then share good practice with the rest of the faculty to start making wider change. It's a good way for everyone to help towards change, work in your own department first, then work towards the broader university.

Jemaima: I think we need to realise the potential of our emerging and early career academics, and not feel threatened by their potential. I also wanted to draw upon the fatigue we endure. I'll speak from my own experience, as being a Pacific woman in many spaces – there's a fatigue that exists with having to educate others.

What I think needs to happen, is to stop asking us the questions, and put us at the tables. Hop out of your seat, let us sit in that seat, give us the space because we have the answers and it's good to express to an organisation, to dare them, to have dedicated specific spaces to be able to talk about our own issues and how they can be addressed.

Tara: I think one thing I would really like to see is co-leadership within universities reflective of a true Tiriti-partnership. At every level of seniority within universities, if there was a Māori person for every Pākehā/tauiwi manager all the way up to Vice-Chancellor that could enable some transformative change and to help things occur.

Jemaima: I think we, in positions of leadership, need to check ourselves because it's very, very easy to slip into a privileged self, and you can quite easily become blinded and lose track of your vision and what you're meant to be doing. I do consider that being in leadership, you do get a sense of how you can navigate both spaces for the next generation coming through, and at times you also tussle with this – —like you're living these multiple lifestyles on the daily.

Tara: I just wanted to add something about the extra energy that it takes to kind of educate non-Māori/Pacific people about the racism and sexism and other -isms that we experience. I want to highlight that Māori and Pacific people have been writing and speaking about these issues for a long time (McAllister et al., 2020; Mercier, Asmar, & Page, 2011; Ruru & Nikora, 2021; Staniland, Harris, & Pringle, 2019, 2020). Look at Professor Joanna Kidman's work and educate yourself about how people are marginalised within the academy (Kidman, 2019; 2020; Kidman & Chu, 2017).

Cat: That's a lovely place to wrap up. I want to thank the panel; thank you for accepting my invitation and for your great conversation today.

In closing

Both the panellists and those in attendance felt the panel was a success; participants shared privately that it was their favourite session of the conference. As demonstrated by the panellists, academic freedom is not something that is enjoyed by everyone in the academy equally. Wāhine Māori, wāhine Pasifika and trans women are often not perceived to be capable of academic authority. This is an example of infantilisation where Pākehā perceptions shape who we perceive to be experts. We can see this in who is invited to speak on tv, or in media interviews, and in who is rewarded and recognised within academic institutions.

There is also a divergence between how lived experience and purported expertise influences who can and can't speak with academic authority. When you belong to a "minority group" like a trans person, Māori or Pacific woman, your work in whatever field you were initially trained in is often overlooked as you are required to do "diversity, equity and inclusion".

Being a critic and conscience and invoking academic freedom can come at a huge cost to individuals. But from the experiences of the panel (and many others who have shared their experiences with friends, colleagues, and in safe spaces online), the extent of this cost, the price, is often linked to who an individual is and what position they hold within the academy. It may also vary based on what they are speaking out about. The costs are wide ranging and for members of the panel have included racist harassment in the form of emails and phone calls to physical safety threats. Tara alluded to the danger of career implications for someone speaking out against racism, in a way that could bring universities into disrepute. These costs often go beyond the individuals speaking out and can affect their wider whānau. We spoke about having to be careful with what they shared on social media to protect their families from potential and realised harassment.

When this harassment is received, tertiary institutions have a responsibility to look after the health and well-being of their staff. We collectively received different support from institutions when facing harassment related to exercising our academic freedom – Jemaima had excellent wrap around support from the university, whereas Tara's experience was different. Also, our positioning in the academy is different. Jemaima and JJ are both senior managers within the university, both leading schools and departments whereas Tara is a precariously employed research fellow. Universities must do more to protect staff from harassment that is linked to being a critic and conscience and exercising academic freedom. This is especially true for the most marginalised of staff members; those on casual contracts.

In addition to holding our universities to account, we can do more to support one another. First and foremost, join the union. The TEU is our way to collectively support one another and fight for a better system for us and our students. We can also look at what we can do in our units. JJ points to changing things within her sphere of influence in the department that she leads. Change comes from putting different people in positions of power, giving them a seat at the table and a share of decision-making power. A move towards co-leadership and a true and authentic Tiriti partnership could help alleviate some of these pressures.

We must be mindful, though, of the work – mental, emotional, and spiritual – that is involved in educating others about why Māori, why Pacific, why women, why trans people, need to have several seats at the table. There is a level of exhaustion tied to excess labour which often does not result in systemic change. There are already many published papers and books which speak to our lived experiences; please read them before expecting more unpaid, excess labour (Erickson-Schroth, 2014; Pausé, 2020; Smith, 1999). We encourage everyone reading this article to seek out existing spaces of knowledge before asking a more marginalised colleague to educate you.

We hope that you are already supporting your colleagues, especially those who come under fire for utilising their academic freedom in private and public spaces. Being a critic and conscience is everyone's responsibility.

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HE IS A STRONG ALLY

This is Tara's first poem and was written in response to the letter to the editor written by seven University of Auckland professors published in The Listener. Here she repurposes the responses of several settler professors to problematise the violence and ignorance of their words.

I am not Māori but
I understand the impact of colonisation
The faculty is fractious and fragile
Violates our code of conduct
Invited dog whistlers and keyboard warriors
Never mind the racists on the payroll

The location of your event is provocative
He means us maowries can stick to the marae
That would be like seven Professors walking onto
Waipapa marae and giving a public lecture on
"The defence of science"
That would be bad tikanga
No
I want to know more about Mātauranga
For my own personal enlightenment
Gaslighting

I apologise unreservedly
We have done lots of good things for Māori, like
Tuia250
It's not your job to fix it *but*
I would greatly appreciate your thoughts on how
to fix it
Our values are manaakitanga, whanaungatanga,
and kaitiakitanga
Please live up to them
Get fucked

This is a healthy debate
An issue near to my heart
Science welcomes everyone who wants to engage
I support academic freedom
Freedom to debate my humanity
Again, get fucked

Death by a thousand cuts

Tara McAllister
TE PŪNAHA MATATINI,
UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Dr Tara McAllister (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Porou) is a māmā, scientist, and a scholar activist. Tara's research spans freshwater ecology, Mātauranga Māori, and racism in the tertiary sector. Her work seeks to highlight the underserving and undervaluing of Māori academics by universities to create change for the next generation. She is currently a research fellow in Te Pūnaha Matatini, University of Auckland.

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HE WĀHINE, HE WHENUA, E MATE AI TE TANGATA

This whakataukī is often interpreted as meaning 'By wāhine and land, tāne are defeated'. Dr Rangimārie Rose Pere notes that it also refers to the essential nourishing roles that wāhine and land fulfil, without which humanity would be lost. Wāhine are the essential element (Mahuta, 2018)[2]. As we push forward for equity in Aotearoa New Zealand, we can draw strength and nourishment from wāhine who have gone before. In each issue we will profile one or more treasured wāhine who have carved a path for us to follow. Our successes are founded on their mahi.

In this issue Mohini Vidwans and Rosalind Whiting introduce us to Alice Basten, a pioneer, a leader, and a guide.

[2] Mahuta, N. (2018). A legacy of Mana Wahine – Women's Leadership. Opening address to the Māori Women's Welfare League 66th National Conference. Available from: https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/legacy-mana-wahine-%E2%80%93-womens-leadership

ALICE BASTEN, PIONEER ACCOUNTANT: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE EMANCIPATION IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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Mohini Vidwans is an academic at Lincoln University. The underlying theme of her research is discrimination (gender and race) and her work helps identify the crafting strategies used by trailblazers to achieve success in challenging circumstances which could be useful for the present and future generations. Current projects include investigation of the causes and remedies for underrepresentation of Māori accountants in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Introduction

Women have made great strides in participation in professional employment over the past century. However, during the 19th century, the social, economic, and political oppression of women meant that females were not even permitted to be members of Chartered Accountant (CA) professional bodies in all countries in the British Empire, including Aotearoa New Zealand (Vidwans & Whiting, 2021). The public domain belonged to men, and the women's domain was limited to the private world of social and domestic matters (Kirkham & Loft, 1993). Ingrained stereotyping and discrimination based on gender and morality actively discouraged women from working outside the home.

Nevertheless, New Zealanders prided themselves on their egalitarian principles, and their ability to break away from the British class system and tradition (Emery, Hooks & Stewart, 2002). Aotearoa New Zealand was the first country where women won the right to vote, in 1893. As well as political participation, women were increasingly well-educated (Brookes, 2016). Free primary education and the establishment of girls' secondary schools in all the main centres (in the 1870s and 1880s) provided an essential base from which girls could move into tertiary training and professional work (Davies & Jackson, 1993). At that time, women in Aotearoa New Zealand were already working alongside men in establishing homes, farms, and a livelihood. It was difficult to exclude well-educated women from the professions (Devonport, 2008). In addition, the influence of the first wave of feminism, the suffragette movement and agitation by some "difficult" women (Lewis, 2020) finally succeeded in females gaining the right to become members of the CA profession. This article highlights the work of one such female pioneer accountant, Alice Basten[1].

Aotearoa New Zealand's Accountancy Profession

In the Aotearoa New Zealand accountancy profession, many accountants hailed from Great Britain and accounting practices tightly followed British accounting even after independence (McNicholas & Barrett, 2005). It is evident that in 1894 the structures, names, branches, and examinations in Aotearoa New Zealand were copied from Britain (Graham, 1960; Parker, 2005). Most early colonial accountancy associations established the accounting domain as masculine (Kirkham & Loft, 1993) and had explicit bans to exclude women members (Emery et al., 2002). Throughout the 19th century, beliefs about the abilities and place of women were evidenced in exclusionary arguments (Vidwans & Whiting, 2021). Women were perceived as not having the intellectual capacity, stamina, and head for figures required in examinations and professional practice and were considered too weak, emotional, sentimental, and lacking in confidence to make

[1] The authors recognise possible limitations to the findings as the historical research is based on publicly available documents only.

rational judgments (Spencer & Podmore, 1987).

The Incorporated Institute of Accountants of New Zealand was established in 1894 with the Accountants' and Auditors' Association established a few years later in 1898. Initially these associations did not permit women to sit their examinations and they were therefore excluded from membership (Devonport, 2008). However, The Accountants' and Auditors' Association changed its rules in 1901 and Miss Eveline Pickles (Christchurch) and Miss Winifred Hill (Nelson) became the first women members of the Association in 1902 (Graham, 1960). The two accountancy bodies amalgamated in 1908 to form the NZ Society of Accountants (NZSA, later ICANZ, NZICA and now CAANZ) and the female members of the Accountants' and Auditors' Association automatically became members of the NZSA. Emery et al. (2002) argue that Aotearoa New Zealand was the first in the British Commonwealth to admit women into the profession and it happened with "very little fuss."

Despite the lack of formal barriers, accountancy was still perceived as a male profession and women's participation grew slowly (Devonport, 2008). By 1911, there were only 16 female members (from a total of 2000) and this remained until 1921 (Graham, 1960). The two Basten sisters, Alice and Caroline, were among the first female public accountants to be registered by the amalgamated New Zealand Society of Accountants (now CAANZ) in 1911 (Devonport, 2008).

Figure 1. Alice Basten, Auckland City Councillor
Source: Research, Heritage and Central Library, Auckland

Alice Basten (1876–1955)
Alice Henrietta Gertrude Basten was born in Auckland in 1876, one of five children. Her mother, Rachel Lang ran a boarding business and her father, George Basten, was a coachbuilder (Dalziel, 1998). After Alice's father's death in 1893, her mother supported the family with her expanding boarding business. Alice was educated in the state system and was 17 when her father died. In order to assist her mother with family responsibilities, Alice decided to become a secretary. Her schooling and attendance at night classes in typing and shorthand gave her the qualifications for her first secretarial job.

In 1898, Alice moved to Coromandel to take up a position as secretary in a mining firm (Dalziel, 1998). Dalziel (1998) notes that in the masculine and cut-throat business of mining, she competently managed the challenging relationships in her first job. Miss Basten became known for her integrity and her ability to maintain confidentiality (Dalziel, 1998). When the company closed in 1910, she returned to Auckland to take up another secretarial position.

Alice and her sister, Caroline, might have been influenced by their mother's entrepreneurial spirit, because they decided to establish a business that utilised the skills Alice had acquired during her 13 years as a secretary. Along with their business as reporters, typists, and accountants, they established a Commercial Training college at 81 Queen Street, Auckland (Anonymous, 1911). Realising the importance of a professional accountancy qualification, Alice and her sister, Caroline, studied for and passed examinations to become associate public accountants (Devonport, 2008).

Empowering other women through collective action and coalition
Alice not only expanded her individual accounting career but worked through established "men's" organisations and new women's channels to empower and enhance the lives of many women. A range of women's associations formed in the early 20th century. The Government's National Efficiency Board that explored the potential of female labour, and the Women's National Reserve which undertook voluntary registration of women willing to replace male workers, enhanced the acceptability of women working outside the home. However, women had limited opportunities for career success in businesses controlled by men. The establishment of her own business with her sister made it possible for Alice to pursue an independent professional life. The Basten sisters trained hundreds of young women through their college until the 1940s, not only facilitating their acquisition of business qualifications (Dalziel, 1998), but also conducting speed typing classes for improvement of typists and also helping them find positions like invoice clerks, lady bookkeepers, and correspondence clerks (Anonymous, 1911).

In the early 1900s women in Aotearoa New Zealand could hold offices of importance, which facilitated Alice's active role in various women's and political organisations. In 1927, Alice was elected to the Auckland City Council with endorsements from the Protestant Political Association of New Zealand and the Progressive Citizens. She was the third woman to be elected to the Auckland City Council and was re-elected in 1935. Particularly noteworthy is that she was nominated and supported by both men and women (Anonymous, 1927). The nomination (Figure 2) noted how Alice had contributed to different spheres in the society – to women, the business world, workers, educationalists, public servants, returned soldiers, and social workers.

AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

Miss Alice H. G. Basten's nominators are:

DR. HILDA NORTHCROFT.
MRS. W. H. PARKES.

Supported by:

MRS. B. N. BENFELL.
MRS. C. NEAL.

MR. ROBT. BURNS.
MR. F. J. HUTCHINSON.
MR. F. J. HUTCHISON.
MR. D. R. COOPER.
MR. T. U. WELLS.
MR. H. GOLDIE.

WOMEN!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN
Has been largely instrumental in establishing Mothers' Rest just opened.

BUSINESS MEN!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN A.P.A. (N.Z.)
Has proved her business ability by making a success of her own enterprises.

WORKERS!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN
Has done her bit toward relief of unemployment.

EDUCATIONALISTS!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN
Hase Dominion-wide reputation as Principal of Commercial College.

PUBLIC SERVANTS!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN
Is known in practically all your Departments.

RETURNED SOLDIERS!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN
Advocates concessions to those disabled.

SOCIAL WORKERS!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN
Is accessible, sympathetic, practical.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN
Belongs to Court Maid Marian, A.O.F., and her family have been associated with I.O.F. over 50 years.

SPORTS!
ALICE H. G. BASTEN
Can be depended upon to play the game.

Figure 2 Alice Basten's nomination for Auckland City Council
Source: Anonymous (1927)

Alice was the branch president of the National Council of Women of New Zealand and an auditor at the national level. She was politically aware and encouraged women to participate in their voting privileges, responsibilities, and other public affairs, so that a female Member of Parliament would be elected[2] (Anonymous, 1928). She sought friendship and support from leading women activists in her work for women's welfare. When suggesting the formation of what was to become the Tamaki Women's Progressive League, Alice was quoted as saying that "A united body is always able to accomplish more than individuals" (Anonymous, 1928).

Alice served on several committees focusing on improving women's welfare, for example, the construction of women's restrooms and the right for women to carry collapsible prams onto trams. She argued that playing areas should not be occupied by sports in which only men participate (Anonymous, 1928). She joined the executive of the Auckland Unemployed Women's Emergency Committee. In January 1931, Alice became a Justice of the Peace. In 1934, she joined a 12-women delegation at the third conference of the Pan-Pacific Women's Association (Dalziel, 1998). She belonged to the local Mutual Improvement Society, where she contributed satirical and other poetic offerings (Dalziel, 1998).

Conclusion

Alice Basten experienced an environment that was relatively more supportive of women's advancement in accounting than female accountancy pioneers in other British Empire countries during the same period (Vidwans & Whiting, 2021). Remaining single and childless is likely to have contributed to her extensive business and community involvement. This appears to be a shared experience of many (but not all) female accountancy pioneers (Vidwans & Whiting, 2021), and is indicative of the social environment in the early 20th century that impeded women's opportunities to pursue a career and family. Marital and parental status is still identified as impacting on women's accountancy careers today (Whiting, 2008; Kristensen et al., 2016).

Alice was intelligent, hard-working, had an ability for figures, and was passionate about her profession. She was independent, proactive, goal driven and resourceful. Like other pioneer female accountants, Alice was nonconformist and started her career young (Vidwans & Whiting, 2021). Although not initially a rebel seeking to change a male-dominated field (McKeen & Richardson, 1998), once Alice became part of the professional domain, she actively tried to change the environment in order to progress women's social, economic, and professional empowerment (Dalziel, 1998).

Alice Basten's pioneering career has implications for the accountancy profession today, as researchers still comment on the profession's male domination and gendered culture. In a review of 25 years of critical accounting research on gender, Haynes (2017) commented that ". . .much has changed and yet little has changed". Aotearoa New Zealand female chartered accountants now account for 44% of their professional body, but gender inequity still exists. Issues such as vertical segregation (White, 2018), a substantial gender pay gap (CAANZ, 2021), and limited workforce diversity to reflect the characteristics of the base population and enable connection with its client base (Bishop-Monroe et al., 2019) are prevalent. Changing attitudes in society will enhance the process of change, but Alice's story demonstrates that champions and first movers are essential to this process. Their individual actions, agency, and activism foster and are supported by environmental change through subsequent coalition and collective action.

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[2] Women were not allowed to stand for Parliament until 1919 and the first female MP was Elizabeth McCombs elected in 1933 (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2020).

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