

**AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE ON MODERNITY AND
DECOLONIAL FUTURES**

24 MARCH 12 pm

>>RINGA HÂPAI: Kia ora everyone, this is Grant Berghan speaking. Vanitha, kia ora, good to see you there Vanitha. Listen I'm just going to give it a couple more minutes and then we'll kick into our session with Yin. Tawehi, ngā mihi e hoa. Anita's got her pen and paper ready. Welcome. Rua te wā Manu, tēnā koe, nau mai haere mai e hoa. Sandra. They're all coming in Yin. Welcome Canada. Welcome Australia. All right, fabulous. Look, what I'll do is I'll make a start to our session. We've got lots of people joining as I'm talking, but I think we'll kick off. It's 3 minutes past 12.

So, tuatahi, ka mihi atu ki a koe, Yin, kei tahi o ngā haukainga ngā tangata whenua o tērā wāhi o Ahitereiria, nau mai haere mai ki tēnei wananga, ki tēnei hui korero, tino waimarie mātou ki te kite koe kei waenganui i a mātou i tēnei wā. No reira, tēnā koe e hoa, tēnā koutou katoa ki a koutou e whakarongo ma ngā i tēnei ahiahi. Good afternoon everyone, my name is Grant Berghan and it's my real pleasure actually to introduce you to our guest speaker, our brother from Australia. Professor Yin Paradies is an Aboriginal Asian Anglo Australian of the Wakaya people from the Gulf of Carpentaria. He is a professor of race relations at Deakin University where he conducts research on racism, anti-racism as well as teaching and researching indigenous knowledges and decoloniality. He is a climate and ecological activist who is committed to understanding and interrupting the devastating impacts of modern societies. He seeks meaningful mutuality, the mutuality of becoming and embodied kinship with all life through transformed ways of knowing, being and doing that are grounded in wisdom, humility, respect and generosity.

I have to say, Yin, that that resonates so much with us Māori, Pasifika and Asian peoples who are resident in Aotearoa New Zealand and other places around the world. Absolutely get that. So we've invited Yin to talk to us about an article that he wrote in 2020 and that article is called "Unsettling truths, modernity, decoloniality and indigenous futures."

But before I hand over to Yin and get him to talk about that article, he's going to give us a presentation, a series of slides. What I'd like to do is I'd like to invite Yin to give him a little bit about himself, Yin the man. We know Yin as the academic, I'd like to hear about Yin the man, something brief about his background. I'm particularly interested, Yin,

in how you became to be interested in the work that you're doing now and why is it that you've become this activist, you're interested and committed to climate change and you're doing the work around being an ecological activist. Kia ora Yin and welcome to this session, I'll hand over to you.

>>PROF PARADIES: Thank you Grant, great to have you here. Thanks everyone for turning up and thanks for inviting me along to this inspiring event over several weeks.

So for me, I guess it's been a fairly slow journey to understanding what's wrong with the world really, you know, it started with my background as an Aboriginal man, my grandmother was a member of the stolen generations, so we're not unfamiliar with the traumas of colonisation.

But I guess for me it's been trying to delve deeper into why we find ourselves in these predicaments, and why everything seems so wrong in modern societies in terms of that nourishing, that thriving, that wisdom and respect and care for each other.

So I started working in statistics, in indigenous health statistics, and then became interested in the social determinants of health and then racism as a particular social determinant of health which hadn't been studied a great deal in Australia at that time. And more recent, in recent years I've kind of gone well, isms, there's a lot of isms, but what's the underlying conditions that create those isms and that brought me back full circle to colonisation and decoloniality and indigenous -- the more formal study of indigenous knowledges and basically what are those underpinning foundations, those values really, of our societies that keep reproducing all these problems, including all the isms that we continue to have.

>>RINGA HÂPAI: Cool. Thank you Yin. What I'm going to do for everyone that's part of this webinar, I'm going to hand over to Yin and Yin is going to take us through a series of slides, and at the end of that we'll have an opportunity to ask questions and make some comments on Yin's presentation. So thank you, Yin, and I'll hand back over to you.

>>PROF PARADIES: Thanks Grant. Okay, I'm going to share slides, I'm going to go through these fairly quickly, I want to have time at the end for, as Grant said, discussion and questions and so forth.

So indigenous perspectives on decolonial futures. As Grant said, it draws from the paper which you can read at another point and it's available online as well. I have recommendations for a bunch of readings, actually, and things you could watch as well from people if you wanted to watch videos.

So basically we're talking about the origins of modernity. So modernity is what we're in now. Traditionally it's sort of taken to be something that happened over the last 500 years ago or so, but actually it's got a longer history and it goes back somewhere between 8 and 10,000 years ago. A lot of human societies at that time had lots of things in common, including human kinship, egalitarian societies, but then certain things started to emerge, including constitutive violence, I'll talk about later, enduring hierarchies, giving other people orders, monotheism, war, prison, slavery, debt, private property as opposed to personal possessions, the rise of literacy was very influential, institutions and the beginning of nation states, which were really at the time just fiefdoms and kingdoms.

And this had huge impacts on societies, changes in -- for example, genetic studies showed changes in ratios of procreation with the rise of powerful alpha male elites and intensive patriarchy, and the changes in the way people lived in settlements from very egalitarian housing to the creation of the mansion for the powerful and rich, differences in nutrition across small settlements of up to 50,000 people and the way that burials were done, more ostentatious burials for certain people who were presumably elites in those places.

So that's where things started to go wrong, then they got much worse. This is every country that Britain has invaded, not the ones in white. I think that's fairly self-explanatory. Then we have European control of the world, similar story, more than just Britain obviously, European purple, green countries which have been colonised, controlled, invaded and a few other countries that weren't directly invaded but obviously are trapped in the global economic system that is very Euro-American in the way it's run.

So modern sort of 16th century onwards type of stuff is more about this. It's about colonisation, that's happened in the last 500 years, taking over of indigenous lands; it's the violent enclosure of European peasants' lands; it's also about witch hunts, crushing of feminism; the widespread adoption of literacy which destroyed oral cultures; and capitalism, which is about production, distribution exchange, wealthy elites, resource extraction, industrialisation, wage labour and societies that we have now which are about privatising profit and socialising risk. The best example of that would be bailouts of big banks, too big to fail bailouts where the government comes in and basically pays for private mistakes and continues to allow those banks to make private profits after they are bailed out.

So violence embedded in monstrous protection rackets of paternalistic care. That's probably the most succinct description of our modern societies. Backed up by information bureaucracies, lots of that, surveillance-type approaches, and a representative politics of contest, persuasion and spectacle whereby, you know, our politicians act like idiots in parliament, they're always getting in trouble for corruption and rorts and scandals. This is all actually just a continuation of the sort of thing you would have seen in the gladiatory arenas of ancient Rome, it's no different from that at all in kind.

So what are the dominant norms of modernity, where we live now? These are some. Things like separatism of mind, body, emotions; a failure to engage with inter-independence, the spiritual, the sacred, the intuitive, the holy; an approach to time which is linear, monetised, chronically deficient, quantity, so quantifying time, something you can save, spend, squeeze, waste, perform on, be rich or poor in. A kind of orientation to self-improvement. Everyone's responsible for their own lives but also they need to do as they're told; contradictory. Failure to account for the social context in terms of how people go in life.

Of course universalism, a kind of "we know best, science is the best, there's no other knowledge system worth worrying about", these sort of ideas, and a striving towards perfection and, of course, progress and development; competition is essential -- not essential, but common in capitalist contexts. Actually monopoly is the end result of capitalism, but there's a lot of talk of competition. And of course artificial scarcity is created for us to compete. And that produces self-interest and promotes greed and those sorts of things. And we have these strange concepts of merit and worthiness, which are very dubious to say the least.

Here's an example of some slogans from Fortune 500 companies, just to give you a sense of what are the values that come out, I guess, in some of the big organisations of the world. You can see they're very focused on the future, they're very focused on accumulation, reaching and encompassing things. What comes out is that we are in a risk averse society. We're very scared, fearful of risk, we're trying to control risk all the time. We're aiming for success, we're aiming for purity, to be the best, to get an edge above and beyond other people, in other words to scramble on top of our fellow humans and, I guess, fundamentally at the bottom here, defining the future. I mean couldn't you be any more arrogant than that. I'm not sure, how you would be.

Here we see some other examples from textbooks of what sometimes is called the anthropology. People analyse these commonly used undergraduate textbooks in different disciplines and figured out that underlying these textbooks were things like an ontology of separation, so a nature of the world that's about us being separate entities, distinct, defined from the rest of existence. Obviously that's rubbish, but that's what they thought and that's what they promote in these books. An epistemology of domination, even the scientific approach to sort of wresting the secrets from nature, these sort of things commonly been said over the last few centuries. To control, to progress, to develop; that's the way of knowing in epistemology, it's about that. An axiology or a moral of ethics of, as I already said, development. So those are just another example similar to the corporate slogan one but from educational textbooks.

Obviously modernity now is a disaster, no need to go into the details too much. But huge amounts of poverty, continued extermination of indigenous peoples and, of course, the biosphere, eight men wealthier than half the world's population, 1.6 billion people without adequate housing, a quarter of children worldwide are malnourished. In a situation where we create artificial scarcity, so it's not even real. I mean nature is naturally abundant, but we create this social situation of scarcity.

Biomass disappearing, vertebrates disappearing, insects disappearing, topsoil going to be gone in a few decades. Possibility of CO² levels by the end of the century which literally damage human brains as we breathe the air. And lots of fancy documents with biodiversity and carbon emissions targets which just go whooshing by and have really never been met.

The heuristic diagram really just sums it up with "everything is awesome" in the middle. I've met several people over the last few years who, without a trays of irony, tell me that what we have now is the best that's ever been. The conversation that follows is quite long, but that's what they think.

You know, we have education, we have modern medicine, we live longer -- debatable in most cases, and mostly based on an artificial effect of infant mortality. We continue to protect our way of life, people in Africa have mobile phones, washing machines, yeah, that's the story. But then, of course, everything else we have around that, just, you know, mass migration, food, water insecurity, arms trades, mental health crisis that's indescribably awful, no-one can afford housing, jobs are precarious etc, etc, economic crashes, you know, the usual story.

Some good questions in the chat, I'll get to those in a sec. Let me answer this one about postmodernism. Yeah, from James, it is just part of modernism, yeah, I'm not talking about postmodernist philosophy as a solution here because that's just another philosophical distraction from modernity, it doesn't actually connect with the problems that we're having.

Here we have myths of modernity. So I mentioned separation from everything, denial of interdependence and our vulnerability to each other, unrestricted autonomy. There's nothing wrong with autonomy, but it has to be relational autonomy embedded in deep kinship relations, not unrestricted and individualistic. Entitlement, merit, innocence, these things are problematic. Denying complicity and harm, violence and exploitation, which we're all complicit in because we all live in modernity, almost entirely, 99% of us are complicit. Unceasing growth, progress, accumulation, consumption and waste. There shouldn't be such a thing as waste, that's a permaculture principle, no waste. And everything should be recycled into the biosphere to be used, which is what happens in nature. But in our society, which is kind of part of nature but kind of very different from it, we don't do a lot of that. Certainty, surety, mastery, control, that offer simplistic solutions to complex predicaments and deny the tremendous challenges we collectively face at this juncture.

The malaises of modernity; these are the underlying conditions that create all of the isms plus everything else that's going on. Artificial scarcity, as I mentioned, demand, profit, accumulation, hierarchies, especially fixed, ossified hierarchies; individualism, exploitation, competition, commodification of everything, including ourselves, human resources, natural resources, places, our time. The constant comparison, judgment, condemnation and alienation of each other over the most minor things. Cynicism, craving, fear, anxiety, guilt, shame, greed, control, conformity, coercion, compliance, cruelty, and, of course, purity. Protagonism, progress, even protest and popularity, certainly popularity. These are the underlying sort of values, or not just values, but habits, addictions that we are stuck in in modernity.

This is a great heuristic -- a lot of this stuff comes from an amazing collective called "Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures" noted at the end as a great resource. They talk about the house modernity built. A lot of what we talked about already. This is the house; it's created from global capital, nation states, separability, universal reason, it has a lot of hidden costs; maintained, subsidised by violence. It has different floors from the south of

the south to the north of the north -- global south, global north -- and it's the breaking down, the house is collapsing around us.

What are we going to do about it? Well, first we have to understand what underpins it. Here are some of the great ways that they've summarised it. "I think therefore I am", the classic Cartesian. Then we have "I say therefore it is", "I own therefore I rule", "I lead therefore you follow", "I arbitrate therefore you comply", "I rock therefore you suck". These capture some of the malaises in modernity that I mentioned before in a much more interesting way. In that reasoning, that utility-maximising, logo-centric reasoning we miss out on the erotic, the aesthetic, the intuitive, the divine, the hilarious, the other than human, they're all just sort of swept away.

Modernity is about fears, as I said, it's about scarcity. It's a failure to come to terms with death, pain, loss, emptiness, destitution, worthlessness, impermanence, insignificance, incompetence. We don't connect with those, we don't metabolise those things enough. But we do have a lot of desires for certainty, coherence, control, etc, mastery, validation, perceived entitlements, an idea of stability, of virtue or innocence, and, as it says at the bottom, this all is sustained by colonial addictions trapping human life force within the house that modernity built. But there's other ways to live, you don't even have to live in houses. If you're going to, you can live in different ones.

So how do people respond to this? That's a good question, and there's the soft reform space, to the radical reform space, to the beyond reform space. And they use the game metaphor here, Sharon Stein's paper. So first of all the game is awesome, everyone can win once we know the rules. Never been happier, wealthier, healthier. Sure there's some problems, they sort of need tweaks to the system.

And then we get to the radical reform space which goes what about all these isms here, what are we going to do about these? And people might realise the game of modernity is rigged. If we want to win we need to change the rules. Okay, so we change the rules. Then we get to this space, beyond reform space, where we realise actually, to our horror, that race capital, hetero-patriarchy, that is modernity. It's not just some sort of problem that modernity has, it is actually the essence of modernity. We realise that the game is harmful, makes us immature, we're stuck playing it. We have to find a new game to play, or perhaps stop playing games at all and grow up. That's where hacking, hospicing, feeling into, exploring the possibilities of possibilities of the modes of existence based on different cosmologies.

Questions, I'm going to come to these now. "How is purity defined here as a malaise?" Purity is not something you want to try and achieve; perfection, purity. Everything is messy, everything is muddled, everything is intertwined and intermingled with the rest of existence. There's no such thing as purity.

"What is the role of modernity's conceptualisation of the past in environmental and social degradation in your view?" Very bad, that's what the role is. We have a very negative, inaccurate, twisted, biased view of what happened in the past in pre-modern societies. Constantly reproducing these Hobbesian myths and fantasies of how terrible everything was; which it wasn't.

I'll talk about what becoming unstuck looks like as we go and also what is hacking and hospicing.

Okay, next; decolonial perspectives. This is what different cosmologies could look like. These are the sort of values that underpin them. Nothing is complete, perfect or enduring, or pure. But all is alive, sentient, profoundly relational, and deeply sacred. We are immersed in mysterious worlds which we can learn to perceive, inhabit, commingle and grow with. And in fact we are invited to outgrow the often unquestioned obligation to obey, conform, judge and repress, which stunts our ability to express, create, connect and play.

We are called to conscious, embodied, loving reverent coliberation with each other, within the spontaneous, emergent, complex, self-organising, living cosmos. So hopefully you can see just immediately that's quite different from competition, artificial scarcity, achievement, entitlement and so forth, in many various ways.

"What could decolonial futures look like after we finished hacking, stalling, hospicing modernity?" Hospicing just simply means like someone's dying, it's a hospicing, you know? You honour their death, you care for them as they die, but you don't try and stop that, you don't try and run away screaming from death, you have to lean in, we have to learn how to die well. And how system of modernity needs to learn how to die well. We can help with that. So while we hospice a death we are midwifing the birth of something new. We're not giving birth to that, we are midwifing that. We're not in charge, we're not in control, but we can assist, we can be doulas for that process.

So what might that look like, something new? We don't really know, it's a possibility of possibilities, of something wiser, something other-wise in the future, and we're not in charge of that, we're not planning that out on a Gantt chart, we're not

spreadsheets that to death; but it could look like this. No more debt, no more private property, no more institutions, no more nation states, and that will help us overcome alienation from ourselves, from others, our socio-material conditions and so-called nature, which we are, of course, part of.

We could sort of lean into, we could invite, we could open to unlearning reductionism, truth, rightness, power over, ambition, affirmation, success, perfection, certainty, control, coherence, mastery, progress, virtue, fame, validation heroism, merit, entitlement, duty and sacrifice, among other things. We could explore ways of becoming, relating and perceiving that create a life beyond exceptionalism, exploitation, extraction, consumption, growth and human hubris.

And we could embrace indigenous perspectives, of which there are many. These are just some very broad-brush examples of what some of that could be. A different approach to time; cyclic, rhythmic, inside, grounded, outside presence and other side horizon time, where the future can be remembered, the past is yet to come and the now is experienced as spatial, slushy, textured everywhen. So not clock time, tick tick, none of that stuff. And both holistic alongside either/or binary thinking. Wisdom, humility, respect, generosity, response-ability, ability to respond with knowing, being and doing via many senses beyond just the visual. The ocular-centric, or even the audible, more. Combining reason, emotion, imagination, intuition, many other ways of knowing and sensing and understanding, comprehending the world. Connected, embodied relationships with humans, non-humans, country, land, sea, sky, within a living cosmos, understanding that all is life. That's why we are, because we're part of that all.

So different approach to knowledge and understanding, so not treating knowledge as an acquisition, as a commodity, but as a living, interdependent, contextualised process, not a universalised static product on a shelf. So always in complete, embodied, collective experience, sense-making; truth via stories, facts as badly told stories which lack embedded context, learning, remembering and making kin with country by attending sensing, silence, stories, song, music, dance, painting, carving, weaving and games; not just reading and writing.

So if you want to be really sort of general and abstract, which is often dangerous, you could say that indigenous world views are more about this; relative autonomy, or what is sometimes called by Mary Graham autonomous regard within embodied constitutive, interdependent, communal relationships. So I think I've got some slides coming up about

this, but our relationships are the most fundamental things. They define who we are, what we are and how we are, and also why we are. Relationships for me are foundational to existence, not things, okay, relationships. Relationships are first, things are epiphenomenal or created on top of relationships.

So embedded, constitutive because they make us interdependent because we're always messily entangled with everything else, communal. Modernity is about growth, it's about order, it's about control, it is about exploitation and oppression, that's just the way it's set you, within individualistic, hierarchical relationships. Also relationships, but of a different kind.

So, what I'm saying here is that we are constituted through relationality, and there's different examples of that, I won't get into that, we don't really have time. But this diagram is sort of telling. It's a -- can't possibly read it, but it's a list of all the different cognitive biases that affect our brain, apparently, in the middle. What I'm saying is, how many biases do you need to have before you realise that we're not independent brains in head cases with bodies attached. Where actually we think with, by and via our environments, we think in a distributed, diffuse, diffracted way. We don't think just inside our brain case.

So they're not biases, they're just the way that the networks of cognition operate that we are embedded in, that we're part of. We're not separate, distinct entities, we're actually unfurling, membranic event fields. That's complicated to explain. We flow, we're part of a reality flux that's always on the move and that we are basically dissolved in. We think of ourselves as different, separate in frame, but we're not. It's always fleeting, it's always provisional, there's always the unpredictable, the unknowable, the irreducible as part of that existence.

Very different to a lot of ways that we think about things in modernity, thingifying everything. Experience is what's called panjective, it's neither subjective nor objective, it's consciousness in context, it's experience, it's not literal, it's much more metaphorical, it's not entirely that either. In the end, reality is a blended continuum in which there can be no essential or absolute difference between me and the rest of the universe at any time or place. That's what I mean by a living cosmos.

So, what does it look like to hack and hospice and all that sort of -- practically, that was not very practical; panjectivity, decoloniality via conscious action. Let's talk a bit about that. So what would happen if we tapped into the immense joy that comes from

forgetting who and what we think we are, and instead sensing the gift of not only being what we imagine ourselves to be. It's a very interesting question.

Some people have drawn a diagram of what they think it looks like to go from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. It's about stopping all this consumerism, enclosure, extraction militarisation, disinvesting from the bad system, bad system, and investing in a new potentially better way of living. I like the way they've got soil as a values filter. They talk about shifting control to communities, or shifting action and interaction and cooperation to communities, which is very much what I think is needed, radical localisation, drawing down in the middle here; and ending up with a society that's about deep democracy, regeneration, cooperation, caring and sacredness, ecological and social well-being. That sounds good to me, as one example.

This is one way we could -- another way we could think about it. We could sense into global patterns and enact local responses. We could seek a grateful, humble, ethical life that tunes in, heals, creates radical abundance, or at least connects with the radical abundance that's already there for all life, where our, our, life is about belonging not ownership.

Interrupt, block, boycott, embargo, spam, jam, snap, obstruct, protest, refuse, stall and starve modernity; many specific ways of doing that in your life every day. Reduce, repair, re-use, recycle, learn collective sufficiency and close loops in expanded commons; communities, commons, same thing. Abolish stock labour markets, commercial interests, compound interest, commercial banking, subsidies for rich people, commercial advertising, planned obsolescence, all the tax breaks and so forth for rich people, shell companies, and redundant trade. Just a few of the most egregiously ridiculous aspects of capitalism.

We could radically relocalise, you know, just connect with community, be part of mutual aid networks, co-operatives, commons, about sustenance, healing, caring, provisioning, entertaining, creating, volunteer, mentor, skill share, time bank, donate. As I said before, abolish various things, debt, money, private property, hierarchical institutional nation state-type stuff. Reject competition, stop being a consumptive spectator in our own lives and live, experience, participate in life in ways that are joyful but also simple, sufficient, frugal even.

Bunch of different actions from a really good book where they've outlined all that. There's a lot of things you can do. There's acts of commission, indirect action, acts of

commission, direct action, there's a huge number of possibilities that I mentioned before in terms of hacking and stalling and so forth. Check that out.

And then there's advice for how to actually do things. Not what to do but the process of doing. Process is so important and outcomes are actually sort of irrelevant. How you do things is most important, I think. Creating lines not circles, dialogue, inclusion, empowerment rather than hierarchy. Be humble learners, practice deep listening, plan and design with others, don't represent others. Move at the speed of trust, that's the most important and easiest to remember, the hardest to do. Centre lived experience, seek people at the margins.

So here are some questions to consider. What if we stopped trying to solve global problems by scaling up standardised solutions? What would it mean to accept ourselves unconditionally, exactly as we are, while staying wide open to growth? How can we invite material conditions and social relations which are conducive to life, beauty and thriving? How can we live with dignity, love, courage and truth while opening our hearts to those whose views and actions we profoundly object to. Is it possible to enjoy life's resonances, vibrations, textures, essences and emanations as we deepen our vulnerability to the suffering in, of and from the world.

And how can we engage with this invitation to societies that value self-realisation, needs, freedom, interdependence, care, love, connection, celebration, beauty, grief, cooperation without institutionalised hierarchies hoarding resources produced by the labour of others. Weave tapestry of empowered local cooperative communities grounded in anarchy, degrowth, wilding, unschooling, permaculture, decolonisation, myth, ritual and ceremony that inspire authentic, creative, thriving, playful, vivid, visceral, plural, messy, vulnerable, sacred, sensuous, joyful, senseful lives.

How can we embrace a kind of active receptivity to our own appetites, thoughts, feelings, emotions, moods, desires, sensations, yearnings, longings, yieldings, callings, instincts, hunches, inklings and needs. What happens if we offer ourselves in full to the world as it is without demanding acceptance, acting interdependently in ways that nourish your life and our life while being attentive to your limits and capacities within any given time and place.

Can we meet others with curiosity, courage, vulnerability, love, honesty, humility, sensing into their visceral needs behind their actions, learning and growing with gratitude,

connection and cultivation, minimising correction, contraction, attending to beauty even in dire and deeply violated situations.

What happens if we slow, we pause, we breathe, we meditate, we rest, we sleep, we idle, we lull? And what happens when we start to grow into catalysts, channels, doulas, delvers, guides for the possibility of the possibility of something different, something decolonial, something new which will be, in many ways, unknowable, unexpected, uncomfortable, uncertain, unthinkable and imperceptible. Can we make unique mistakes doing what is needed with maturity, sobriety and serenity beyond consumption, comfort, convenience, choice conviction or complaint.

What happens when we seek to, or we invite, or we are called to metabolise, integrate our own assumptions, aversions, addictions, habits, disguises, triggers, complicities, contradictions, projections, traumas, idealisations, demonisations and other ossified dichotomies? Can we discern, perceive, relate, communicate, become without necessarily using judgment, comparison, justification, condemnation, narrative, meaning, interpretation or even intellectualisation?

What happens if we took a braiding approach that was about awareness, plus self-implication, plus collective accountability, plus visceral responsibility as we move through the world? Recognise layers of complexity, accountability, trust and consent.

Can we talk the tightrope of intellectual rigour, relational rigour without either desperate hope from special practice, from right ideology, from heroic authority, from being the chosen people and without reckless hope, whateverism, nihilism, analysis of brutality and so forth?

And finally, a quote from a very good book. "Before anything different can happen, before people can sense, hear, relate and imagine differently, there must be a clearing, a decluttering, an initiation into the unknowable and a letting go of the desires for certainty, authority, hierarchy, of insatiable consumption as a mode of relating to everything, including experiences, sensations, material objects. We will need a genuine severance that will shatter all projections, anticipations, hopes and expectations in order to find something we lost about ourselves, about time and place and space, about the depth of the shit we are in, about the medicines and poisons we carry. This is about pain, about death, about finding a compass, an antidote to separability -- the deepest fundamental problem is separability -- This is about being ready to go, to befriend death before we are ready to return home and to finally live once again as grown-ups."

More to read in my paper, more to read from indigenous wisdom, authors, indigenous authors, other authors who are not indigenous but still wise nonetheless, and some wise websites. And some chance now to talk.

>>RINGA HÂPAI: Thank you so much, Yin. We've got Yin for another 15 minutes only and I want to spend this time -- actually what I want to do is hand the time over to some questions from our participants' comments and then we will invite Yin to respond. Yin, are you able to open up the Q&A?

>>PROF PARADIES: I'm going to start looking at the Q&A now, yeah.

>>RINGA HÂPAI: If you have any other questions, people, for Yin, here's your chance to ask him questions of his presentation. Thank you Yin.

>>PROF PARADIES: Thank you Grant. So questions about how does unsettling modernity differ between different countries? A lot, but I don't think countries are really the right level of analysis. I think our responses have to be particular, localised, specific contextualised, not by country. There's no universal abstract guidelines I can give. You need to feel into your local context and respond. That includes every day, you know, everyday practises are reproducing modernity as we speak. Feel into, sense into, attend to those, figure out what they are, respond.

"If you want to abolish the system of private land ownership, how would you go about planning that as a community side change process?" Well, you could start with communal ownership of land, group purchasing, I guess, of land. Obviously we don't want to be purchasing and owning land at all but you've got to start somewhere. That's the sort of stuff that will disrupt private -- it's very hard, all of this is not going to happen overnight. And some of it will need to wait for certain conditions to be available for us to be able to act. We can sow seeds in the ground, but if the conditions are not right they won't germinate.

"Would you be willing to expand on validation as something to divest from?" Yes, I would. Validation is something that is about your ego, it's about thinking that you're good, kind, wonderful, arrived, a person who's arrived somewhere. In fact none of us have arrived, we're still on the journey. So to not invest overly in validation means to continue to embrace humility, courage, respect, and the journey towards some sort of wisdom ongoing.

Here we have something about someone who read my article, thank you for that, that's quite nice of you to do so. "Do you think it's possible to achieve health equity

without assimilating? How can we maintain what is unique, indigenous and benefit from western systems?" Well, what I'm saying is we're not about -- I don't think we should be trying to achieve health equity. I think that the world should be indigenising and decolonising. So we should all become much more indigenous, we should learn a lot from other approaches to health outside western allopathic medicine. It has its uses but not as much as you might think. There's a lot of other ways that we can achieve health.

"The difference between personal possessions and private property." Aah, that's a relatively simple one. If you can carry it around or leave it in your house, it's your personal possession. Might be your mobile phone, or your car, or your cooking pot or something. If you own 17 skyscrapers or 26 apartment blocks, those are not your personal possessions, those are your private property. They're not with you, they're not connected to you, you don't use them other than to create profit.

"How do we move away from this being just an intellectual pursuit, how do we bring people along who are pinned down by the realities of modernity?" Well, first of all do some stuff of your own, that's my suggestion. Invite the possibility of becoming other-wise yourself. It's not intellectual, it's actually experiential what I'm suggesting. Modelling different values, modelling different ways of moving through the world, different ways of relating and interacting with yourself and others. It's actually not that intellectual at all, it's very felt. It's about feelings, it's about embodied, visceral responses and reactions.

And don't try and bring people with you. That's a modern approach. Just be open to the possibility of transformation and metamorphosis. People will see what you're doing, people will feel into what you're doing. You're all connected anyway, so what you do will have ripple effects through the world. This is not about convincing anyone, it's not about bringing people along, it's actually just about inviting change from the living cosmos. There's much greater metabolic intelligences out there that we can connect with. It's not all up to us as humans, this is the thing.

It's sort of an invitation, a letting go, a surrender. It's kind of like when you're trying to -- you can't force yourself to fall in love, or you can't force yourself to fall asleep, these are parts of our life that require a certain letting go, a certain openness, a softness, a soft fascination with the possibility of those things occurring. The same with metamorphosis and change.

"Isn't intellectual rigour a core tenet of modernism ascribing to a knowledge hierarchy?" Rigour, validity, fidelity, they're not just modern, there's ways of sensing into patterns of the world, you know, what happens as the seasons change, when this flower blooms these bees are doing X, Y and Z. It takes a certain attention, a rigorous attention you could say, a sort of focus to notice these things. People have been doing this forever, pattern thinking.

"How can people challenge the status quo when those who benefit from modernity have so much power and control?" Well, guess what, those who benefit from modernity and have so much power and control are the most dependent people in the world. The richer you are, the more dependent you are. You have a chauffeur, someone cooks your food, someone does all your accounting, somebody buys your toilet paper for you etc. So they depend on you, just remember that. What you do is important, because they depend on you.

"Can Pākehā adopt a wisdom from the teachings of ancestors that are not theirs without appropriating?" Yes, they can. First of all, Pākehā have ancestors that were indigenous. I'm talking about primal societies. Anything that existed before about 10,000 years ago, and in some parts of the world before 200 years ago, is radically different, the societies that people lived in were radically different to modernity and in many ways, the most important ways, more healthy, more thriving, more nourishing.

So Pākehā can connect with their own ancestors. They can also connect with Māori ancestors and Māori people respectfully with humility. And if you approach something with respect and humility, you're not appropriating are you. Appropriating comes from arrogance, comes from knowing it all already, it comes from a failure to engage with your own complicities, your own limitations. We all have a chance to learn from anyone really. Every person we meet we can learn from, so that includes ancestors.

"I would love you to speak about the role of language if there is time." Language, yes. Well, there's a lot to talk about the role of language. First of all, the speaking of a colonial language of English is not ideal. English is a language with too many nouns not enough verbs, not enough expression of feelings, not emotions but feelings; feelings are much more important than emotions. Emotions are like -- all the emotions are like the difference between ten different car horns, not much. Feelings are like a kaleidoscopic explosion of the entire electromagnetic spectrum in front of your eyes. We don't have enough words to describe those.

But also what language we use in English, of course, is very important. For example, do we talk about oughts and shoulds a lot, "you ought to do this", "I should do that". This is a problem. We need to be more able to welcome the signs and the languages of the body, the environment, not be suppressed and overshadowed by what we think we should do, or what we think others ought to do. It's about that opening to those we profoundly disagree with but understanding where they come from.

We also use a lot of war metaphors in modern societies. People are constantly talking about fighting all the time. "We need to fight for social justice, we need to" -- the most ironic of all, "we need to fight for peace". How the hell are you going to fight for peace? Ridiculous.

"Talks a lot about capitalism as modernity, how about communism, socialism, social democracy?" Yes, all those are problems. Almost any political system of modernity is problematic because it's not based on -- it's against the motto "nothing about us without us", it's against the people that are affected by decisions making those decisions. The only one that's got potential is anarchy. Anarchy is political approach, which is literally about people making decisions for themselves, without any enduring hierarchies.

Anarcho-primitivism, anarcho-indigenism; these kind of connections of indigenous traditions with anarchy, very fruitful, worth exploring.

"Sounds like opening self to indigenous spirituality." I tell you what, we need a lot of opening to spirituality, to the sacred, to the holy, to the divine, and to ritual myth and ceremony which are missing or perverted in modernity. People have been, you know, telling stories around firesides, engaging in ceremonies and rituals for hundreds of thousands of years. And I feel that in my heart, that hollow, that scooped out eviscerated place where ritual and myth and ceremony should be.

I'm almost caught up on the questions, you better bring them on faster. Just kidding.

>>RINGA HÂPAI: I just want to check if there's anymore very quick questions. We've got a couple of minutes and then I'll close us off.

>>PROF PARADIES: I just want to say one thing about "be the change you want to see in the world". Just wanted to say that change and transformation, metamorphosis and catharsis and epiphany are something that happen to you, you don't create that change. So there's a great diagram of someone, a speaker at the front saying "who wants the world to change?"

Everyone puts their hands up. Then they say who wants to change themselves?" And no-one puts their hands up.

The thing is that you invite change from the living cosmos, you sort of descend, you compost and metabolise and you become with the soil of the earth, the mother earth, and you seek guidance, yeah, from the mother. Don't force yourself to change, don't be one of those people who goes "I need to do this, I ought to do this" and then you feel bad afterwards if you don't.

Change is something that sort of just naturally emerges when you're open to it, it's not one of those things that -- it's not about stopping yourself from forcing others and then continuing to force yourself. We've got to get beyond force, we've got to get beyond war-like metaphors. Will, "the will to" whatever, just try not to -- to try and feel into something else, be open to something else that could be a bit more like falling asleep, or falling in love. Something softer, a soft fascination, a wide-angled sensing of the possibilities that sort of are everywhere around us. We're blinded to them by modernity, to those possibilities of something else. Every moment has an infinite, bounded infinity of possibilities. To be able to resonate and sense into and perceive those is really what I'm talking about.

Now we're out of time.

>>RINGA HÂPAI: Thank you, Yin, for your uplifting kōrero to all of us today. We've been lucky to have you join us, to share yourself which is also your wisdom and knowledge. On behalf of this event, on behalf of all the participants that have joined us this afternoon and on behalf of myself, ngā mihi ki a koe e hoa, me koutou katoa, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa. Thank you, Yin, and I'm going to join you immediately after in another room.

>>PROF PARADIES: Thank you, Grant, so much. Thank you everyone.