

NURTURING WAIRUA, ANCHORING ACTIVISM IN PLACE
DR EMALANI CASE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LEWIS WILLIAMS

27 MARCH 2.30 pm

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora tātou, nau mai haere mai. We'll just give a few minutes to let people join us, but welcome, welcome, welcome. Too keen I love it, I love it, that is the vibe we want for a Sunday afternoon. We haven't even started talking yet but clearly we're already doing the right thing, so nice to see you. Welcome, welcome. Kia ora tātou, yes please share where you're joining from around the motu at the moment. Kia ora Catherine, kia ora Morgan, kia ora Sharon, welcome, welcome. We'll just give a couple more minutes for any of our 4 pastors perhaps, who is usually me, not going to lie. Kia ora Kavika, kia ora Fiona, welcome, welcome. Kia ora Gay. Just down the road. What an amazing list of participants and attendees we have here.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Yeah.

>>MS CASE: I'd love to sit and listen to many of them.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: I agree. Unfortunately it's on you today, Emalani. There are so many incredible people who are tuning in.

>>MS CASE: Yeah, thanks for joining us.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Geraldine, beautiful place down there. I climbed that Little Mt Peel once, it was the most hardest day of my life, I'm not going to lie. Nearly cost me my relationship. We won't be talking about that in indigenous connection to place today. They're still trickling in. (Inaudible). No, you know the situation and it was the first time I'd ever climbed a mountain let alone a hill, so it was, yeah, it was a tough time.

Okay, e te whānau, I might actually get us started now so we can hear from our incredible kaikōrero. So nau mai haere mai ki te kōrero i tēnei wā. Welcome, welcome, welcome to our Sunday kōrero. And you will see on our screen if you're not here for "Nurturing wairua: Anchoring activism in place" you may be in the wrong place, but I suspect that you're all exactly where you're meant to be.

So I might just ask our tech support crew to move over to our next slide and get us started. I imagine some of you have already been to our sessions, but our ten days together is really important to be able to know how we are in right relationship with each other. So our community code for all of these kōrero is that we are curious, open and respectful, we make generous assumptions, we treat this room with a degree of confidentiality, so we can share what needs to be shared. One person one mic. We speak from our own experience,

we accept that no-one knows everything but together we know a lot. We make space, we take space. We understand that we can't be articulate all the time, and we try not to take ourselves a little bit too seriously, which I think as activists we do from time to time, so we'll try to keep it a little bit real as we go.

And on to our next one. Awesome, fantastic. So a little bit of housekeeping before we start. And you may have been to some of these sessions before already, but important to know that as you are doing right now, you can keep interacting in the chat, you can also ask questions in the Q&A box as well. We also have a moderator on hand to be able to facilitate discussion, so please do keep this going. We might not always have the time to be able to respond to everything that's going on in the chat box, but it's really important that we can be interacting particularly at this time when I think a lot of us have been quite isolated.

So any other whakaaro, I think those are the main housekeeping things to note. Yeah. So I'm going to just start us off with a karakia to enter us into our kōrero, that feels appropriate. So just want to acknowledge where you may be joining us from, who you are bringing with us in this kōrero, who you might have running around in your home, people who you might have in your place or your whānau who might be recovering or coming down with Covid and all the people that you're connected to at this time. So thank you for deciding to share space with us today on a Sunday afternoon. Tukua te wairua kia rere ki ngā taumata, hai ārahi i ā tātou mahi, me tā tātou whai, tikanga a rātou mā, kia mau, kia ita, kia kore ai e ngaro, kia pupuri, kia whakamaui kia tina, tina; haumi e, hui e, tāiki e.

Ka pai. So my job here is ringa hāpai, my job here is facilitator, he uri tēnei no Ngāti Raukawa, ko Kassie Hartendorp tōku ingoa. But my job here is to be able to provide space for our incredible speakers, Lewis Williams and Emalani, to be able to share some kōrero with you here today.

Now we had a bit of a brainstorm, a bit of discussion before today and we started to be able to sow some seeds of what we might be able to share today. So I will be prompting us as we move through. We have a few different topics we'd like to kōrero about, but also please do share into the question box and I will draw out some of the questions that we might be able to share as well should we have time. The main thing here is just being able to be together across oceans actually and share in this quite important kōrero.

So instead of not doing (inaudible) justice and going through a bio, I think it's really important that all indigenous people can speak for themselves and introduce themselves. And so I'm going to hand over and first start who you are, no hea koe, where are you from,

maybe a bit about what brought you here to this day to this point. And I'm going to turn over to Lewis to get us started, kia ora Lewis.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Kia ora tātou. Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou katoa. (Te reo Māori). Ko Lewis Williams ahau. I'm actually talking from the traditional territory of Deshkan Ziibi here in Kanata. So I'm speaking today from the traditional territory of the Anishinabek, the Haudensosaunee and the Lunaapéewak people. So very warm greetings across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, it really warms my heart to be connecting up with my homeland and Pacific as well, so that's really great.

Gosh, so I just, you know, I just told you that my ancestry is from Ngai Te Rangi, Tauranga Moana, but also Scotland, Germany, and Wales and so these are my ancestral lines, they're all part of me. Very quickly, I grew up in Tāmaki Makaurau, I grew up completely disconnected from my Ngai Te Rangi roots. I believe tūrangawaewae, it's been quite a lifelong journey for me, I think it is for many of us, and it's certainly been an important one in terms of my own activism and the papa or the foundation from which I stand.

A couple of other things, I guess other things will weave into the conversation, but I'm actually trained as a social worker and community developer, and in public health. So a lot of my so-called formal education has been very much within the western systems, and it's been through other means that I've really come into my Ngai Te Rangitanga, and that's been quite a journey for me over at least 20 years. So that's a few things in terms of who I am, yeah. Kia ora.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora Lewis. And Emalani, no hea koe?

>>MS CASE: (Hawaiian). My name's Emalani Case, I'm from a place called Waimea in Hawai'i but I'm currently living here in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. You know, I thought a little bit about how best to introduce myself, and I think how best to introduce myself is to introduce you to where I come from. Because any conversation about activism in place, or activism for place, or motivated by place I think requires you to know a little bit about the places that have raised me and fed me.

So I come from a place called Waimea known for its vai, its wai, its water, that is mea, it's a reddish colour. But very importantly, and I mentioned it in my greeting to all of you, Waimea is quite famous for its rain. Hawaiians, we love to name everything, we name rains, we name winds, we name mountains, we name hills, we name rocks, clouds, everything. But the rain in Waimea is called the kipu'upu'u, and it's a rain that stings, it's a harsh rain. And one of our prominent chiefs Kamehameha would train warriors in Waimea,

and he called them the Kipu'upu'u and he named these warriors after the rain because it stings your skin and it conditions you for battle. And I'm not at all saying that I am a warrior, but what I am saying is that growing up in Waimea I think conditioned me for something. Any work that I do in my life is, I think was -- I was made ready for by growing up there.

To be indigenous means you're born into a kind of political reality as the dear, my dear friend Tina Ngata says in the beginning of her book, *Kia Mau*, it means that you are born into a kind of reality that often comes with a sting, a colonial sting, a kind of pain that you have to withstand, but you never want to get used to, you never want to grow numb to, but you always feel it. And I think that kind of sting is what motivates all the work that I do at home and here.

So yeah, I think introducing myself is to introduce you to where I come from, because it's everything that I am. I might have some little letters behind my name and I might have some credentials, but first and foremost I'm just a kupa o ka aina, I'm someone from Waimea from land from place and that's what feeds everything that I do.

And I think my greatest responsibility in life is to be an aloha aina, and that's something I can talk a little bit later, but "aloha" means love and "aina" is our word for land but it also is more generally about any place and source of sustenance that feeds and nourishes. And so today's talk I think I'll focus a lot on aloha aina, which is this fierce, protective, intimate kind of love for place that motivates not just activism that I do, but motivates a lot of the activism that so many of us of us do and are engaged in.

Yeah, so I might leave it there as an intro, and I'm really looking forward to the conversation today. Thanks everyone for joining in.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora kōrua. Emalani, you've talked a little bit about this already, but when we started having a conversation about anchoring ourselves in place, we talked about the importance of what is beneath our feet, knowing what is beneath our feet. My question to you both is, hei aha o whakaaro, what is your thought about, how have you discovered knowing what's beneath your feet, what does it mean to know your own tūrangawaewae, what does it mean to know what's beneath your feet perhaps elsewhere?

>>MS WILLIAMS: Well, I think it's -- I think it's everything. And I think of tūrangawaewae for me, like knowing what's beneath my feet, I think of it both in terms of the whenua, both in terms of the land, but I also think it's about knowing what's beneath my feet inside as well. I'm someone I've actually -- I've lived in many different places, and so in some ways I've had to create, recreate tūrangawaewae again and again and again in a sense.

And for me, the activism, if I think about when I was -- I was not born in place, I was -- for me I was born displaced, and that has been a lifelong journey. And so I remember that when I was wanting to get to know the Ngai Te Rangi part of myself, Aunty Maria Ngatai, who was one of our kuia in Tauranga Moana, and she was the kuia who opened the gates for me, because I was just longing to be of place, I was longing to be in place. And one of the things that Aunty Maria said to me was "well to know who you are and to know who Ngai Te Rangi are, you have to know who Mauao is, our sacred maunga.

And so for me, it was -- and I was living in Canada, Turtle Island by that time and it's been many, many years of weaving back and forth. At that time I spent a lot of time with the kuia and koro getting to know who Mauao was, and Mauao is a really rongo to me. And so I take Mauao wherever I am, but also where I am is -- I engage in practices that help me to be of place and create that papa, that foundation from which to be me and to do the work I do. And it's all about relationships, yeah. So that's a little bit, yeah, from me on that.

>>MS CASE: Yeah, just picking up on that, it's definitely about relationships. And for me, I was taught at a very early age to grow relationships with place through story. And I'm just looking behind me, this is my cousin Pua who's my hula teacher, I've been dancing hula with her and chanting and learning my entire life. Just the other week we had a Zoom hula practice so I could get my body back into moving again telling stories.

But hula taught me at a very early age, I started dancing hula before I went to school, was that everything has a story, every single thing has a story, and so what is beneath my feet is literally aina, it's whenua, it's land, but it's story and it's history. And wherever I am in the region, whether I'm home, whether I'm here, I feel like I'm always in search of story so that I can build a relationship with place that is beyond just what I can see. You know that what's beneath our feet, we started talking about that because when we met the other week I had just come out of my Paci 101, my Pacific studies 101 class where the theme of the week is what's beneath our feet. And that phrase comes from a poem by a Hawaiian poet named Imaikalani Kalahela where he says "the source of my origins lie beneath my feet." And in my Paci 101 class, which I think is really important particularly for non-Māori Pacific students, I try to encourage them to really think about place and where we are. Drawing inspiration from the incredible Dr Terisia Teaiwa who's courses I'm now teaching at Victoria University of Wellington, she said that any love of the Pacific,

any understanding of the Pacific, any grasping of the 20,000 islands out there must begin with where we are.

So when I talk with my Pacific students about loving place and being an active protection of place, we start with where we are and I ask them where are you? And we sit in the classroom and they look at me like that's the dumbest question ever, they're like duh we're in the classroom, we're at uni, we're on Kelburn Parade, we're, you know, at the Kelburn campus. And I dig a little bit further and I tell them the story of when Alice Te Punga Somerville was teaching at Vic Uni, the incredible Alice Te Punga Somerville, if you haven't read her work, highly recommend everything she's written. But she tells a story about setting up her office at the Kelburn campus and an elder coming with her to the office and pointing to the street below her office and saying that's Kumutoto. Kumutoto stream runs under this street so when you're here you need to remember that. And she writes in one of her pieces called "Culvert she says there are still eels swimming in these big culverts, these big tunnels that the stream still runs through. And she says they still swim because nobody told them to stop being eels. And it's dark but they still do what they're supposed to do.

So we go on this examination of streams, we talk about streams in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, all of the streams that are literally underneath the city we call Wellington. And I don't know all of them but I'm learning and I'm on a journey to learn the stories of them. So I try to take the students on this learning journey with me. So that by the end of the class when I ask that question where are you, it's not just taking Wellington and Kelburn for granted, but saying actually we're walking on water, we're walking on Kumutoto and I want them to know those stories.

And I might not be able to teach them how to love a place, but I do believe that growing relationships with place and growing connections with place, that then feeds our activism for place starts with those stories, starts with knowing the eels, starts with knowing the fact that even though we can't see them that they're there, and that those streams are still live-giving and they're still flowing and they were here before us, they're older than us.

And again I think this is really important for our Pacific students especially, it's good for all students, yes, but I teach -- the majority of my students are of Pacific heritage, not Maori, some of them mixed, but for them to find their place in this country and to see why their activism matters here and in the region, we have to start with examining what's beneath our feet. And that starts with stories.

So yeah, sorry to bridge off of what you were saying, Lewis, about relationships, I think relationships are deeply storied. It's the stories that then motivate us to keep acting.

>>MS WILLIAMS: I can really connect to that actually in terms of the ground beneath your feet. So I've actually been here in the Deshkan Ziibi rohe for eight months now, so I'm like learning myself, right? And I'm just thinking one of the courses I teach is contemporary issues for indigenous peoples in Canada.

And I -- no affront to people here, but I feel at the moment like I'm -- probably in terms of what's been done to Papatūānuku, it must have been one of the most colonised places in the world. And what I find -- so I'm teaching both indigenous and not indigenous students and indigenous students who were disconnected from their place. And the whole question is what's beneath your feet, you know. So you know, what is the cultural fabric, what is the nature of this earth, this river, what's beneath the colonial scape?

And one of the things that we have here in Canada is a land acknowledgment, right. And so the land acknowledgment gets prattled off, or rattled off, and I'm in a process of saying no, see if you can make the land acknowledgment your own, right. And so that's all about like finding out what is beneath your feet, what's the ground beneath your feet, what -- yeah, and what's the tikanga, what's happened here, you know? And it's not just yes it's glaciers, but it's also, yeah, you know, aeons of people coming, migrations, and that really, that being of place.

So I think that's so important in a time when many are so disconnected from Papatūānuku. It's really to get people to make a land acknowledgment their own, from their own voice. I think it's a really important thing.

So yeah, and in that sense, you know, the river here actually Deshkan Ziibi actually means deer antler. And here there's -- the presence of indigenous people visibly is actually quite small, so it's very different from home, it's very different from Aotearoa. And it really, in terms of that activism from place, it also takes a lot of building the relationships with the local and that trust and the relationality with the Anishinabek, the Haudensosaunee, the local indigenous people here.

So it's an interesting journey, it's a good one.

>>MS CASE: Yeah.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Yeah. And one of my most -- in terms of getting to know place, so before I left home I was doing ngā rongoā Māori in Tauranga Moana and so studying it, and I was going with the ngahere and I was having lovely time. And when I came here as a way, as a practise of trying to connect to here, and of course I was on the Zoom with my kaiako,

I started to undertake some very small practises of harvesting, right as my way of getting to know the whenua here.

And one of the things that, when I just think about being of place and activism of place and reciprocity, one of my real aha moments came when I wanted to -- this relates to the Deshkan Ziibi here, the river here, I wanted to harvest some willow, which is actually not an indigenous tree to here. And I realised actually that I could not, because the Deshkan Ziibi, this water being, Nibi is so mistreated that when she floods that she interacts with all the storm water and sewerage, so I realised I could not harvest the willow.

And so for me it was a real coming into relationship with the reality of not only the power, but also the woundedness that is of place as well, you know, and that I'm currently teaching and being in, and being with the students in. Really interesting stuff when we think about both the healing capacities and the trauma and the wounds of place and activism, and how we are with that.

>>MS CASE: Yeah, relationships with place, it's about -- they're beautiful but they're painful at the same time, and it's about loving place in and out of pain, which I think is a reality for indigenous people. And, you know, going back to the stinging rain of Waimea, it's this kind of conditioning. I think growing up as indigenous and having experienced constant displacement, desecration, being locked out of places that at one day you're at home in and the next day you're labelled a trespasser, that kind of gut-wrenching pain that comes with being disconnected from your relationship with place, I think that's, yeah, I just wanted to acknowledge what you said about pain.

And I saw someone in the chat said solastalgia. I learned that word a few years ago and solastalgia is the experience of homesickness that you feel when you're still at home. And it's the kind of homesickness that is so painful because you watch home transform, you watch the beaches become white for the visitor, you watch the forest become blocked off because they don't want you accessing it to pick your plants, or to gather resources for your medicines, or you watch a mountain become off-limits because they want to build a telescope on its summit, it's that kind of pain that you can experience from anywhere in the world, but it's the kind of watching of your home transform.

So yeah, relationships with place come with experiences of pain. But I think what motivates my activism and what motivates the activism that so many of us do, is the hope that generations from now they won't have to experience that same kind of pain. What we do is we try to make what was ours home, always, for the next generation.

When I go back to what's beneath our feet, I think what's beneath our feet is the future. And thinking about water in the streams that I talked about earlier, and I can connect this back to Hawai'i; last year one of our aquifers on the island of Oahu, one of our freshwater sources was contaminated by the US military, which is a major polluter in Hawai'i and current occupier of Hawaii.

And I really started to think about aquifers and these collections of water beneath the surface. It can take decades for a single raindrop to filter through layers of earth to get to the aquifer. And when I really started to think about these precious water sources beneath our feet, that is water that was made ready for us generations ago, decades ago. The water in the aquifers are a reflection of the way people lived decades ago. And I'm in fear of what that aquifer's going to look like decades from now based on the way we're living our lives.

So what's beneath our feet? The future that is going to feed generations from now. If anything, it's that kind of intimate knowing of place that is going to motivate us to do better, no matter where we are. I have to be obligated to being better at home and I have to be even better here on land that isn't mine.

So I think what's beneath our feet, it's all of our sources of sustenance for now and for the future, and that's why developing those relationships with place, as painful as they can be, is so necessary.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Whoa.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Lewis, do you have anything to say on this kōrero? Kāo.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Sorry, say that again Kassie, what did you say?

>>RINGA HĀPAI: I was just saying did you have anything to respond, I think there's a lot -- you've covered a lot of literal ground, but is there anything that's jumping out to you right now?

>>MS WILLIAMS: Yeah, no actually what does jump out to me -- so okay, so there's -- and I'm thinking of -- there's a Māori scholar, he's Tūwharetoa, and that Hauiti Hakopa I think. He talks about that to really know who you are, right, it's one thing to look at a place on a map, but to really know -- and he's talking about going back to your ancestral lands, and he's saying to really know who you are you have to go and stand in that place and to know that place. And I'm actually thinking about, because I think we've had quite different journeys in terms of finding the ground beneath our feet and the land beneath our feet in terms of feeding our activism.

But I was actually just -- so I was thinking about, because I think to know who I was in terms of my activism, right, I had to go back to Tauranga Moana and to both someone who is of, I think, quite complex dual lineage, right, both colonised and coloniser lineage, and someone who had this longing for place, to be fed by place, that I actually had to -- but who hadn't lived in -- whose ancestors had not lived -- the fires had almost gone cold, mātao, had almost gone cold. And I went back, right, and rekindled those fires.

But I also had to learn about the traumas that had happened to my own people, right, and the generations that had passed because I had been, you know, growing up in Tāmaki Makaurau. But in thinking about how the land and the future is beneath our feet, I actually went back to -- I took my mother there where a battle happened in the Tauranga Moana called the battle of Te Ranga. And it was the battle that then the land confiscations followed. And then the disruption of -- the disruption of the whakapapa followed that because people were displaced from the land. My great grandfather left shortly after that.

Going back to Te Ranga, I learned that after that battle that the bodies of the warriors lay there for many, many years. And I took my mother back to that place, because she didn't know that place, and in that place was both the grief of the place, right, but also, also the wonderful -- the healing of that place as well, right? And the whenua can give you dreams, and the whenua gave my mother a dream that night that was really healing.

And so there's something that's coming to me about -- one of the things I practice in terms of -- my two forms of spirituality, is my Ngai Te Rangi but it's also my Theravada Buddhism. And there's something about having the equanimity, right, the equanimity where one -- as an activist, one's being is able to hold, right, is able to hold all those experiences, all the experiences that place is giving one, right? And all the experiences, whatever the activism that one is involved, to be able to really meet that in a good way, and so in a full way and in a solid way. Yeah, so they're just a few reflections from the whole thing about the whenua and tūrangawaewae.

>>MS CASE: Beautiful, beautiful.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: You both asked me to prompt you to talk a bit about positionality. Yeah, what do you think about that? How does that connect with activism, land, to place?

>>MS CASE: I think positionality's critical. And I think that I've become more conscious of it since moving here. Anyone who's heard me speak before will know that I often talk about being an indigenous woman living on land I'm not indigenous too, and that comes with certainly responsibilities and obligations. But I've never really -- I wouldn't have to ask those kinds of questions if I never came here to Aotearoa. So I'm really thankful for the

way that this being here and being on this land has nourished me in so many ways and actually pushed me to become more critical of my positionality.

Positionality is really just about thinking very critically about your positioning, who are you, who am I in relation to this place, in relation to the whenua, in relation to mana whenua, in relation to people here, in relation to history, in relation to story? Who am I in my multiple intersecting identities in this place?

You know, my Samoan and Tongan friends who talk about the vā, I think the vā's quite helpful in thinking about the space between. There's also a vā, there's always a space between me and other things and other people, and it's about nurturing that space, and really thinking critically about the ruptures and the disconnects so that we can nurture relationships and grow healthier relationships.

So positionality is key, and to bring it, you know, to the theme of Te Tiriti-based Futures and Anti-racism, being here as a Pacific person who's not of the dominant Pacific populations in Aotearoa, it raises a lot of questions for people; who are you, what are you doing here, why are you here? And I maintain that I'm here because when people know how much I love home, how I am home, how home is me, they always ask Emalani, why are you so far away from home? And apologies, I might get a little emotional, because it's been a while since I've been home so I'm incredibly homesick, but I'm here because I truly do believe in a larger regional identity, and I believe in activism that is dedicated to the region. I believe in my Pacific links. I believe in whakapapa connections and responsibilities.

And I know that coming here to this country has helped me to grow as an activist and extend my love of place that was nurtured in Waimea to every single place that I'm in. But with that love, again, I have to always be conscious of my positionality and who I am and who I am not very importantly. I'm not indigenous to here, I'll never pretend to be, which means I am very happy to always take the back seat or grab the tea towel to tangata whenua, you know? It means that I need to honour Te Tiriti, not because some document tells me to, but because I have whakapapa connections to the people who are indigenous here and our genealogical obligations predate the establishment of this settler colony, predate even the signing of that Treaty.

My obligations to my tangata whenua kin come from an understanding that we're all related. And that's just part of what positionality is. So when I walk into classrooms with mostly Pacific students we talk about that. What does it mean to honour Te Tiriti? What does it mean to honour your links with tangata whenua? How can we enact that, how can

we do that? It's all about positionality and asking those really critical, sometimes sticky icky questions, about who we are, how we came to be here and what our being here means.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Whoo. Well, while you were talking, Emalani, I was reminded that something -- one of my kuia said to me, Auntie Ngaroimata Cavill, she said "I'm always careful where I put my feet when I'm not in Tauranga Moana", right, so when she's elsewhere. And I have a feeling that she was saying that, it was sort of intended for me, right. And that was a time when I was actually coming and going from home and to Canada. And so when I think of positionality, yeah, it's incredibly critical. When I think of positionality, just the language here, I mean here there are many, many treaties, right, and, you know, here the foundational one was a Two Row Wampum.

But when I think about -- I think about it in terms of decolonisation and indigenous resurgence and how can the voice and the knowledge of Papatūānuku re-emerge fully. And to me I work -- I like to kind of -- one, it's being aware of my own positionality, right, and that's, you know, that kind of goes on all the time. And I see on a personal level, it's my responsibility to use my position, my pa here to actually bring in the traditional knowledge holders, right, who are at the margins of the academy, at the margins of local government, etc.

When I'm working with my students, I think it's incredibly important that everyone can see themselves in the picture. So just the other day, so we were working with -- we've been working for two or three weeks with the issue of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and two-spirited -- gender diverse people. And of course that's very -- it's intimately connected to the way that Papatūānuku is treated, to the fossil fuel industry, right, to environmental degradation. All these issues are really interconnected.

And also in my class, I have, you know, there's women, young women and men who were also racialised, right, so they're recent immigrants. I have people who -- students who may not be indigenous to here but they're two-spirited. And so, you know, the way that I also try and work with this in terms of thinking about Aki or Papatūānuku and creation, is that I also try and draw some parallels in terms of say if we take -- thinking about decolonisation and indigenous resurgence. So here in Canada, two-spirited people had special roles, responsibilities and obligations within their societies, right? And I have found that even as takatāpui myself, I have found -- and, you know, we know how colonised, right, our, you know, our identities have also become, right. And so I try and I also try and say, so can you see, you know, the benefits of decolonisation, right, not only in terms of Papatūānuku, right, and indigenous resurgence and indigenous rights, but how

you also think of yourselves as part of creation, right, instead of just as part of the interconnected whakapapa.

So I find it incredibly important to try and work with these different positionalities in ways where people can see -- everyone can see themselves as part of that picture and benefitting from decolonisation and the resurgence of indigenous life ways.

Yeah, so positionality, you know, it's such a tricky but critical thing, you know, and I think I've had -- I've had one or two lessons around it myself I think, where I've put my feet, like trodden in a place I shouldn't. And I'm always like so carefully -- now one of the things I always try to remember in when I'm trying to do some work or activism, is reciprocity, you're always trying to keep -- keeping things in balance, you know, and meeting those different obligations or responsibilities, but keeping things -- those relationships in balance.

Yeah, I don't know, I think I'm going off into a slightly different tack, but it's been very heavy duty in class the last two or three weeks, and so finding ways to work with positionality, and to develop the relationships between the indigenous students but those who are not indigenous to place is really critical. Yeah.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora kōrua. The other thing we wanted to make sure we had time for was to talk about the places that hold meaning for our hearts and also the practises of how we nurture wairua. So bringing it down to whakatinana, how do we practice the nurturing of wairua?

>>MS CASE: You know the places where our hearts find meaning was a theme that we talked about. And that little phrase, again, comes from another brilliant person, not me. That comes from Albert Wendt, and his amazing ground-breaking essay called "Towards a New Oceania", and there's a small line in there where he talks about our search for that heaven, or that Hawaiki, he says, or that place where our hearts find meaning, we're always kind of in search of that place.

And I do a lot of work, or a lot of my research is focused on Kahiki and that's where Hawaiians say we came from before arriving in Hawai'i. It's not a place on a map it's the knowing of connection, it's the ancestral memory of people and places in other parts of the Pacific that we are connected to. And Kahiki is for me where my heart finds meaning and purpose. Waimea trained me to do that work, to find it, to continually search for it. Kahiki is a spiritual, ideological space that I return to constantly to find inspiration to act upon my connections to the region; which includes the place that I'm currently living, but it's also the place I go to when I need to put myself in check.

Kahiki's kind of like a sanctuary for me. And I mean sanctuary in the sense that it's this beautiful place where I find relief, but it's also in the Hawaiian sense we used to have Pu'uhonua, a Pu'uhonua was a sanctuary; if you broke a law you better get to the Pu'uhonua for safety. But while you're there, you need to do the work to be able to then re-integrate back into society. So you don't live in a Pu'uhonua, but you go there to do the work.

So Kahiki is that place for me, it's this deeply spiritual place that I continually go to that motivates what I do. It helps me to act upon my connections to the Pacific but not lean too comfortably on them. So while I live here it's very easy for me to say I'm indigenous to the region. But that does not allow me to stake any kind of claim to the whenua that I'm on. Instead it's I'm indigenous to the region, I'm connected to you, how can I help, what can I do?

And I've made mistakes and so I have to go back to Kahiki sometimes and think how did you handle this incorrectly, Emalani, what can you learn from it so you don't do it again. So Kahiki is a place of deep critical reflection, but also a place of really, really honouring and nurturing my relationship, not just to my literal home in Hawai'i, but to my wider Pacific home.

And for me to get into nourishing wairua, I go back to the concept I brought up in the beginning of aloha aina. Aloha is love and it is an action that is fierce. Yes, it's beautiful, yes, we all want to experience love, but when aloha is put with aina, with place it's fierce because it has to be, but it's also deeply intimate. And so I try to, as I mentioned earlier, learn the stories of place, learn who I am in place, be fed from place and that's what nurturing wairua is for me. I recognise that I am aina, that aina is me and there is absolutely no disconnection. I am the ground that I'm walking on; generations back, generations forward.

And I feel like if we all lived in that way all the time, which is hard to always be in that kind of frame of mind, gosh we'd be in such a better place, our planet would be in a better place. But Kahiki is what takes me from just acting for home to acting better and doing better for my wider home and all of the places that I am connected to in memory, in aloha, in genealogy across the region.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Beautiful.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Beautiful. Yeah, it's beautiful. I'm just --

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Lewis, I know you have some practises for nurturing wairua rattling around in that big heart and big brain.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean many things for me. Because I've been in so many places and it's been circumstantial, I think everyone has their own path. And so for me it's that deep sense of wairua, that deep sense of place. It is knowing that I'm part of that greater whakapapa, right. Sometimes it might be going back to Mauao. I'm back on Mauao in Tauranga Moana. I'm getting in my -- here, in here, yeah. But it also, you know, for me it's regular practises, it's regular practises like, you know, as someone who came into Vipassana Theravada meditation before I really came more deeply into my Ngai Te Rangitanga, you know, there is that daily practice of both cultivating the equanimity and also the compassion.

And I find that aroha, you know, I don't necessarily wake up every day feeling aroha. You know, I don't. You know, as I say the other day sometimes I feel irritable. So it's starting each day for me intentionally, you know, and sitting quiet and stilling my being, connecting to Papatūānuku, right, connecting to myself, cultivating that the -- both the loving aroha also, you talked about the fez(?), yeah. But also that integrity of being, you know, and no-one can actually take your mana from you. And I believe for me mana comes from my actions. And so starting off with that foundation and that intention each day. And because I have been in so many places, finding places where I can do some ceremony, finding places, that's incredibly, you know, and I develop places I go to where I can be in ceremony.

You know, sometimes I'm not very good at -- I don't call upon my tūpuna as much as I should, you know. So calling upon all the whakapapa that I'm part of is really, really important. The simple thing in terms of cultivating reciprocity, doing my rongoā practice and learning who the plant beings are, learning who the, you know, the water beings are, spending time being still. So these are the things. And it's very easy in a busy kind of -- academia can be such a head space and every -- we so need spirituality and wairua in academia in every opportunity. Sometimes -- I start my classes always with a karakia that I've made my own and, you know, and even though sometimes there are times I can feel a little bit silly doing it in this kind of university place and there's no protocol for where I am at all. We can't even do like a smudge inside, we do our smudge -- the students do the smudges outside.

But I see it going into the students. I see the students going oh yes, it's okay to do this. So just even those practises, you know, and sometimes just getting myself to go against the grain, to swim that upstream. So all those little acts, all those little acts are nurturing wairua to me, yeah.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora kōrua. We've had some really beautiful questions within the chat, and aroha mai we won't have time for all of these. But there is a bit of a theme in there around disconnection, and I wondered whether or not -- we've heard you talk about your relationship to land and yourselves amid varying degrees of disconnection.

Do you have any advice, do you have any whakaaro, do you have any thoughts for people who might be struggling to find that connection, be they indigenous or be they Pākehā, and are finding it a bit difficult to be able to find that connection? Anything that you might offer to people who are struggling with that, because a lot of our people do.

>>MS WILLIAMS: Two things. I would actually say, whatever land you're in, so if you're at home, my home, Aotearoa, I would say go and do a rongoā Māori course, because that will connect you to the ngahere, that will connect you in a very practical tangible way.

The other thing I would say is that -- is to remind people that if they're not indigenous to place, that their ancestors were indigenous to place, that this ability to connect, to be of place, I think that Papatūānuku is loving to all her children, right, and even when we are not in place, we can be in place. Try and develop your peripheral vision, because society teaches us to be linear, but anything that comes to you from your peripheral vision will lead you back to place. That's what I would -- yeah, the dream life, the impressions that you pick up, that you think are gobbledegook. Anyway, over to you Emalani.

>>MS CASE: No, I was just going to take it back to some of the themes of our kōrero today; start with where you are, start with what's beneath your feet, and get beyond what you mentioned earlier, Lewis, the colonial state. There's a -- Wellington City transforms when you know what's under it and you stop seeing the city as this normalised space and you read beyond the street signs of Wakefield and Oriental and Cuba and Tory, and you read beyond the colonial narrative when you start to learn the names of the place. So if you are disconnected from where you come from, maybe you don't know where you come from, start with where you are.

I truly believe that growing and cultivating a relation with where you are, which may come from learning the stories, learning some of the names, because gosh, every name holds a story and sometimes holds a lesson, and sometimes holds an instruction. Start to cultivate a love of place, learn to love it, talk to it, talk to it. I walk in the ngahere, I touch them, I want to feel their energy.

And if you're disconnected but you know where you come from, continue to talk to your aina, to your whenua at home. I talk to my mountain all the time. Just before I came

on my mum said "think like the maunga, think of your mountain and you'll be grounded. And I do, I do that every single day. So you can continue to cultivate relationships no matter the physical distance. Physical distance is just -- never separates us actually. So cultivate the relationship, but if you're not practised in it and you don't know it, just start by looking right down beneath you and know that if it's concrete then there's something underneath that. Find it, learn it, love it, yeah.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Find it, learn it, love it, the place beneath our feet. You two, honestly, what an absolute joy and a gift it has been to listen to you. One hour is never enough. It's a bit of a something, and I think -- I've been trying to rapidly take notes, it feels like everything you both say is a quotable quote, and I know that our team at the -- who are running the hui will be doing the same as well.

I just want to thank you both, because what I do know to be true is that the knowledge and articulations, the wisdom, the āhua, the wairua that you both hold is what is so needed for our world right now, it is so needed. And what I also know to be true, is that when you talk about your politics and your activism, it is an embodied journey that comes from deeply knowing the ground beneath your feet, being willing to transform in yourselves, being willing to face the pain as well as the healing, as well as the power. So thank you both for walking in your own mana and walking your own journey, so that we may get to hear snippets of gems of wisdom today that will see us on our own journeys as well.

So thank you both for your generosity and what you have shared. And in our final 30 seconds I'm just going to do a karakia to send us on our way, to clear what has been said, to unite us and bind us. And thank you Stephen and Jacinta for holding space and making everything work in the background, thank you for the team at Te Tiriti-based Futures who made this happen, and thank you all for participating. Hope you have a great rest of your Sunday. So a karakia to send us on our way. Unuhia, unuhia, unuhia ki te uru tapu nui, kia wātea, kia mama, te ngākau, te tinana, te wairua i te ara takatā. Koia rā i rongu whakairia ake ki runga. Tūturu whakamaua kia tina, tina, haumi e, hui e, tāiki e. Ka kite ki a koutou, go well, be safe. Find it, learn it, love it.