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Conceptualising historical privilege: the flip side of historical trauma, a brief examination

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Abstract

Historical trauma is an important and growing area of research that provides crucial insights into the antecedents of current-day inequities in health and social wellbeing experienced by Indigenous people in colonial settler societies. What is not so readily examined is the flip side of historical trauma experienced by settlers and their descendants, what might be termed "historical privilege". These historic acts of privilege for settlers, particularly those emigrating from Britain, provide the antecedents for the current-day realities for their descendants and the structural, institutional and interpersonal levels of advantage that are also a key feature of inequities between Indigenous and settler. This article theorises an explicit link between historical trauma and historical privilege and explores how the latter may be examined with particular reference to Aotearoa New Zealand. Three core elements of historical trauma are posited as a useful framework to apply to historical privilege.

Keywords

privilege, historical trauma, colonisation, inequity, racism, indigenous

Historical trauma is becoming established as an area of relevance to indigenous peoples (Brave Heart & De Bruyn, 1998; Crawford, 2014; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Gone, 2013; Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes, 2014; Prussing, 2014) and is also emerging as an area of pertinence in discussions of societal privilege experienced on the basis of ethnic group membership. While the idea was originally posited as a framework to understand the experience of Holocaust survivors, historical trauma is also being explored in a range of other contexts, including the experiences of indigenous people as a result of colonisation. In these broader applications, historical trauma has been defined as ". . . complex and collective trauma experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance" (Mohatt et al., 2014, p. 128). Historical trauma generally consists of three elements: an act(s) of trauma, the sharing of that trauma by a collective rather than an individual and where the effects of the trauma are experienced across multiple generations (Mohatt et al., 2014). Historical trauma is a valuable concept for indigenous people as it links past injustice to present-day contexts. Much of the literature has focused on health impacts of historical trauma, in particular for mental health (Duran, 2006; Evans-Campbell, Walters, Pearson, & Campbell, 2012; Gone, 2013; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012; Walters, Simoni, & Evans-Campbell, 2002).

Just as contemporary theories and frameworks of racism can articulate a structural analysis of privilege (Moewaka Barnes, Borell, & McCreanor, 2014), the concept of historical trauma offers a similar opportunity. In this article, we examine historical trauma and posit that an explicit connection can be made using an inverse framework as a way of conceptualising *historical privilege*. If we accept the internal logic of historical trauma, that historic acts (and contemporary discrimination that serve as reminders or symbolise renewal to the affected groups) have an important role in the current health and social wellbeing status of indigenous people, we can follow a similar internal logic in terms of historical privilege. The argument is that contemporary experiences of structural privilege that impact the health and wellbeing of collectives, in this case settlers, in current generations also have important historical links. While the theorising in disciplines such as settler colonial studies examines the trajectories of settlers within colonisation, this article explicitly links these experiences to the historical trauma experienced by indigenous people. For example, large-scale confiscations and theft of land and resources experienced by *hapū* and *iwi* (tribal collectives) Māori through the process of colonisation have resulted in

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not only the destruction of the economic foundations of future livelihood but are also manifest in current rates of poverty among Māori and in the disruption of socially and culturally based healing and resilience into current generations (O'Malley, 2016a). The Pākehā settlers who acquired the land and material resources taken from Māori have reaped individual, collective and intergenerational rewards from that procurement. The accumulated effects over generations have dramatically improved the economic, social and political wellbeing of current descendants, both materially and structurally. Pākehā worldviews and the institutionalisation of Pākehā cultural norms in our national, governmental and civic institutions have served to reaffirm and entrench models of mental and social wellbeing.

This is not to dismiss out of hand the individual and collective efforts of the settlers to make use of and improve those resources through generations, in what is sometimes referred to as social mobility. However, equally it behoves us to acknowledge the strength of indigenous people in surviving and being resilient in the face of such historic and contemporary adversity. Conceptually, it is necessary to provide a broader appraisal and acknowledgement that current disparities between indigenous and settlers have been affected by historical acts that were traumatic for one group and provided a collective windfall for the other. Gratuitously dismissing these historical dynamics with commonplace talk such as "the past is the past", "you can't turn back the clock" and "get over it", as is often used to refute Māori claims for the remedy of colonial wrongs, is to further injustice and prolong the detrimental effects this places on all affected groups and the nation as a whole. In parallel with our tendency to over-emphasise disadvantage and neglect privilege in analyses of the current social order, there is a propensity to fail to attend to the antecedents of contemporary manifestations of societal privilege.

So how might we develop a social theory or framework that helps articulate historical privilege in ways that explicitly link to historical trauma? Returning to the three elements of historical trauma outlined earlier, we can examine their presence in the literature to assist in the development of a similar framework to understand historical privilege. These three elements centre on (a) an act(s) of trauma (b) experienced by a collective and (c) affecting multiple generations.

Historical privilege—definition

How might we define a concept such as historical privilege, mirroring that given for historical trauma, within the context of colonisation? A working definition might be "The complex and collective **structural advantages** experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance." These structured advantages may include financial and economic rewards, as well as legal, social and cultural freedoms that were denied to others. As we work through some of the other core elements of historical trauma, a useful framework emerges (see Table 1 for summary).

Historical acts of trauma and contemporary renewal of trauma

This is perhaps the most straightforward in terms of theorising an equivalent in terms of structural advantage for non-indigenous people. As outlined in the example above, colonisation is a process whose primary purpose is the forced transfer of power, resources and status from one group to another (Billig, 1995; Smith, 1999). At its heart it involves historical acts of dispossession for indigenous people: dispossession of their lives through acts of war and violent destruction of people and property, and the dispossession of lands and other material resources often resulting in starvation and material poverty. Indigenous people were also often expressly prohibited from practising their own cultural traditions (Voyce, 1989), resulting in the dispossession of long-held models of collective healing and the social and cultural structures that maintained social order.

Current expressions of racial discrimination in all aspects of the social world, from discrimination in employment and housing (Harris et al., 2012; Statistics New Zealand, 2012; Wilson, Gahlout, Liu, & Mouly, 2005), to the general disparaging of Māori language and culture in contemporary New Zealand society (Ballara, 1986; Baxter, 2012; Cook, 2015; Nairn, Pega, McCreanor, Rankine, & Barnes, 2006; New Zealand Herald, 2004; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) act as everyday reminders to all New Zealanders of the second-class status of Māori people and renew the view that Māori people, language and culture are inferior. These current experiences of discrimination perpetuate the historic trauma of colonisation and give effect to what Wolfe (1994) argues as the "cultural logic of elimination", the institutional supplanting of indigenous people. Colonisation then is better understood as the imposition of "structure not an event" (Kauanui, 2016; Wolfe, 1994).

Historic windfalls and dramatic increases in fortune

The historic acquisition of land and resources through outward aggression, force of war and disease and the justification of dispossession by dubious legal means created unprecedented boons of wealth and power for Pākehā settlers, particularly those involved in the military forces in the first instance (Belich, 1986; Dalton, 1967; King, 2003; Wells, 1878). British commanders, military officers and local militia were at the forefront of acquiring the wealth dispossessed from the natives, some of them later holding extraordinary powers in the new social order as governors, land court judges, local government officials, businessmen and traders of property. Indeed, these acts of reward in wealth, power and opportunity were offered as the key motivational factor in securing their services to start with. For some who had come from an environment where upward mobility of any sort was severely limited by class and social position, the power of these enticements cannot be overstated (King, 2003, p. 174; New Zealand Waitangi Tribunal, 1996; Parker, 2003). These handouts of power, prestige and material wealth result in important dividends

that these men were able to pass on to their families and future descendants.

In addition, the enticement of cheap land, much of which was obtained through dubious legal transactions and later through large-scale confiscations of land from Māori deemed to be in "rebellion", was an underlying premise to attract and increase non-military immigration from Britain. The sale of confiscated and other Māori lands, the individualising of title through the Māori Land Court and the enormous profits gained through the on-selling of Māori land by the Crown and other parties provided a fundamental economic benefit to settlers from the dispossession of Māori.

Contemporary renewal of historical privilege

Contemporary markers also exist to remind the affected groups of historic privilege. The supplanting of indigenous language names and the colonial "re-naming" of landmarks, lakes, rivers, mountains, coastlines, seascapes, forests and other important sites serve as everyday reminders of the colonial project (Hendry, 2005; Kearns & Berg, 2009). The naming of sites, institutions and even residential streets after these early colonists, many of whom held abhorrent views about non-Whites and women, remains to this day (Belshaw, 2005; Karaitiana, 2016; Kightley, 2016; King, 2003, p. 172; Phillip, 2014; Tuckey, 2016). The practice of examining the colonial foundations of significant sites and "re-claiming" the original names (and the resistance from some to those efforts) is a growing area of interest all over the globe (Acosta, 2015; Belshaw, 2005; Brattland & Nilsen, 2011; Chauke, 2015; Coughlan, 2015; Sparrow, 2015; Television New Zealand, 2015).

As we have argued elsewhere (Abel, McCreanor, & Moewaka Barnes, 2012; Borell, Gregory, McCreanor, Jensen, & Moewaka Barnes, 2009; Moewaka Barnes et al., 2012, 2014), acts of explicit ethnic discrimination and denigration often serve as implicit privilege for Whites. Accordingly, never having to be concerned about what opportunities may be denied to you because of your Anglo-sounding name marks a contemporary manifestation of the "normal" social order based on the historical imposition of Pākehā governance, institutions, language and culture.

Historical trauma is an experience shared by a collective rather than an individual

The importance of the trauma being a shared experience of a collective is fundamental to the concept and differentiates it from the more common approaches to addressing trauma in individuals, such as PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). This not only alters the pathology of the trauma but also broadens its application and invites innovative multi-level approaches at redress and healing because it places the shared identity at its heart. For instance, strengthening positive markers of the shared identity (i.e. an identity as resilient, survivors) can be understood by the collective efforts of indigenous people to revive their language and cultural traditions. The appropriateness of historical trauma as a concept also aligns well with indigenous epistemologies of collective ownership/guardianship of land and resources and collective engagement with law/lore and order. The place of an individual within wider kin groups of whānau, hapū and iwi is fundamental to a Māori worldview (Durie, 1994). Indeed, the words "tribe", "clan" and "band" are inherently collective, and historical trauma reflects this, often in homogenising ways, that is, "Māori" and "natives" rather than tribal identities.

Historic privilege is an experience shared by a collective

This becomes a little more problematic to mirror as the acts of historical privilege often functioned within a capitalist, patriarchal paradigm that saw British men as primary beneficiaries. The colonial division of power put whānau hapū and iwi as representatives of collective Māori on one side and "The Crown" as the representative of the non-native settlers and their individual and collective interests on the other. So while we might argue that the material wealth of land transfer from Māori to Pākehā was felt most initially at an individual or familial level, the Crown provided the "collective" support for individualism and acted in establishing the structural, legal, economic, social and cultural systems that necessitated and then justified the dispossession of Māori people. It reinforced in all citizens that not only was Māori dispossession a required process for the future of the colony and therefore White settlers, but also argued it was fundamentally beneficial to Māori to be assimilated by a superior civilisation (Belich, 1986; Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). The continuing colonial rhetoric that Captain James Cook "discovered" Aotearoa, or that settler ownership of Te Wai Pounamu, the South Island of New Zealand could be justified under the notion that the island was "terra nullius", speaks directly to such structural negotiation of dispossession and the negation of indigenous history.

Historical trauma is shared across multiple generations

The final core element in construction of historical trauma frameworks involves the effects of trauma across many generations. This multi-generational aspect of historical trauma is essential in the conceptual differentiation between historical trauma and other terms such as collective or group trauma. It also differentiates from intergenerational trauma, which is most directly related to trauma experienced and transferred among generations of the same family rather than necessarily including broader collectives of shared identity. In some instances, the trauma can affect descendants long after the original acts of trauma have taken place. This would seem particularly pertinent to the early understanding of historical trauma as experienced by Holocaust survivors, their children and families (Evans-Campbell, 2008, p. 323). However, as the literature clearly points out, with regard to indigenous people, the acts of historical trauma enacted through the process of colonisation exceed the term "historic":

> Settler nation-states did not establish themselves for temporary economic gains to be left behind when profits evaporated; conversely, settlers occupied Indigenous lands in order to claim ownership over them. From this perspective, it can be recognised that settler occupation was, and continues to be, an ongoing process. The incursion of white settlers into Indigenous territories can thereby be more accurately viewed as iterative and evolving courses of action that have never ceased, rather than isolated events that happened as different points along a fictive linear timeline that gets called "history". (Gahman, 2016, p. 316)

This notion of colonisation as an ongoing process, as structure not an event (Kauanui, 2016; Wolfe, 1994), does not negate the significance of historical acts of trauma but rather broadens and deepens the application of historical trauma to the ongoing experiences of indigenous people. This recasting of "history" also aptly applies to historical privilege.

Historical privilege is shared across multiple generations

The intergenerational transfer of wealth, power, social position and status may also help deepen the understanding of historical privilege as affecting descendants long after the historic acts of acquisition have taken place. There are two areas of literature that do make important contributions to this in terms of understanding historical privilege—upward (social) mobility and inheritance.

Upward mobility. The relationship between the income of parents and the future prosperity of their children is a complex phenomenon that incorporates many areas of academic enquiry. Terms like *social mobility, intergenerational mobility, economic mobility* and *social and cultural capital*, all speak to the notion that where one starts in life is important to where one ends up. While many areas of social life will have an influence on upward mobility, such as access to social networks, social status, patterns of parenting, race, gender and physical ability, much of the upward mobility work has focused on income and financial resources. As the income received by parents to invest in their children's future becomes less fairly divided among rich and poor, the outcomes for those children across the life course and into subsequent generations increasingly reflect that inequality. Too often "merit" may not be the cause of class and racial distinctions but rather the result (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Ermisch, Jantti, Smeeding, & Wilson, 2012; McNamee, 2009), framing a self-perpetuating cycle of privilege, social and cultural capital and inheritance. This cycle of meritocracy is fundamental to understanding a concept like "The American Dream": the idea that any individual made of the "right stuff" (McNamee, 2009, p. 25), talent, right attitude, strong work ethic and high moral character can achieve almost unlimited success.

In the New Zealand context, commentaries on the power of meritocracy as explanation for current disparities in wealth, opportunity and wellbeing are abundant (Baxter, 2012; Fleras & Spoonley, 1999; Vocational Training Council NZ Polynesian Advisory Committee, 1978; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Obscuring the importance of non-merit factors (like the structural privilege attained by Pākehā as a result of Māori dispossession) is far from being a benign state, but rather it is a structured act resulting in even greater emphasis on having and inheriting "the right stuff". The life stories of successful individuals from meagre beginnings (like former Prime Minister, John Key) also serve to reinforce the perception of merit as primary to success.

Yet upward mobility does not encapsulate historical privilege as laid out in this article because (a) it is largely concerned with the wealth and social movement of individual or family units, rather than large groups that share an identity or circumstance, and (b) most literature looks across two generations of mobility from parents to children, not across multiple generations as later articulations of historic trauma posit. So let us turn some attention to the concept of inheritance more generally.

Inheritance. Again, it is appropriate to think of inheritance as the privilege equivalent to the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma stressors among indigenous people because, by definition, it is about the intergenerational transfer of wealth and power. Sleeter (2014) describes White settler inheritance as encompassing "footholds and cushions", footholds to provide access to opportunity, cushions to protect from misfortune (p. 11). Bowles and Gintis' (2002) ground-breaking research into the area of inheritance found that intergenerational transfer of wealth was not only important, but rather the *most significant factor* in the current socio-economic position of descendants. They argue that the correlation between inheritance and current economic status was on average three times greater than originally posited when inheritance was studied in the 1960s. In addition to economic wealth, other factors of inheritance include cognitive skills, non-cognitive personality traits valued by employers, income-enhancing group memberships, superior education and health status. They conclude that cognitive skills and educational achievement have been over-studied in the intergenerational transfer of wealth, while income-enhancing group memberships like race, gender, geographical location, height, physical appearance and other non-cognitive behavioural traits have been underexplored.

There is also some applicability to collective forgetting in terms of the intergenerational transfer of wealth and socio-economic conditions. The financial and social position of descendants resulting from the handing down of wealth and power strikes many as inherently unfair, so while there is a tendency to be proud of one's heritage ("I come from four generations of farmers," etc.), there is also a kind of constitutive forgetting (Connerton, 2008) about where that intergenerational wealth began. This obscures the role of historical privilege in material inheritance, in favour of master narratives about the accumulation over generations of a particular value base, work ethic and a sense of "playing by the rules". Indeed the notion of getting ahead through hard work is a primary trait of the Pākehā

ethnic group (Vocational Training Council (NZ) Polynesian Advisory Committee, 1978). Individuals who believe success in life is related to "hard work" and "taking risks" are more likely to oppose more equitable redistribution of economic resources, while those who believe success is more likely due to "money inherited from family" and "connections and knowing the right people" tend to support redistributive measures (Fong, 2001). Recent survey findings into New Zealand attitudes and values have shown dramatic differences in the number of non-Māori New Zealanders who support more equitable redistribution of resources compared to Māori (Grimes, MacCulloch, & McKay, 2015). The re-emergence and intensification of the "upward mobility through hard work" master narrative are a direct result of intergenerational privilege that has been exacerbated through the implementation of a neo-liberal agenda which began in the 1980s (Kelsey, 1995). As with the social mobility literature, however, much of the understandings illuminated from inheritance studies relate to the intergenerational transfer of social goods and privilege within individuals and families and do not take significant account of the effects of historic, structural and institutional advantages experienced at a broad population level that are as fundamental to the functioning of historical privilege as historical trauma is to indigenous people.

In this sense, the ongoing nature of the colonisation process, as outlined by Gahman (2016), is also important to acknowledge here in terms of these effects on collectives that share a broader identity than family. If we apply this to historical privilege, we see that rather than these windfalls and intergenerational accumulations of wealth, power and social positioning across multiple generations being understood as fundamentally a thing of the past, the ongoing nature of colonisation as a process of settler privilege can be seen in the current conceptualisations of what might be considered "normal" in New Zealand society, what constitutes "mainstream". In current generations, this contributes to the almost invisible nature (Borell, 2005) of what it means to be a Pākehā New Zealander in Aotearoa and the structural and institutional support that enables it.

Together, then, the supplanting of Māori people and the dispossession of their resources, the acquisition of those resources and the upward mobility of settler families, intergenerational inheritance of wealth and power, the institutional structuring of opportunity (Wynyard, 2017) and the assignment of value towards Pākehā and away from Māori provide the context for the current statistics that much of the Pākehā population experience. These differences in life outcomes are clear and consistent in health (Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, Tobias, & Bonne, 2003; Harris et al., 2006; Pomare et al., 1995; Statistics New Zealand, 2009), wealth and income (Curtis & Galic, 2017; Spoonley, Pearson, & Macpherson, 1991), housing (Howden-Chapman, 2004), education (Hattie, 2003; Smith & Simon, 2001), employment (Ministry of Social Development, 2016) and incarceration (McIntosh, 2014; McIntosh & Goldmann, 2017). Pākehā are also less likely to experience the health-detracting effects of social exclusion, poverty, hardship and discrimination (Harris et al., 2006; Human Rights Commission, 2012)

Remembering and forgetting

By definition, a fundamental function of the historical trauma concept involves an active sense of remembrance, commemoration and recognition of the historical acts of trauma and their current-day effects. This assists the affected groups to realise the importance of memory in the representational construction of historic trauma to generations who may not have been present for the original act(s) (Young, 2004). Remembrance is of fundamental importance to indigenous people on at least two fronts. As argued in the historical trauma literature, indigenous people are continuously representing their position in relation to past injustice while simultaneously resisting the master narrative of leaving historical traditions and cultural practices behind in order to integrate better into "mainstream" society that has been a major element in our social and policy environment over generations. Failure to conform to settler expectations in this way marks indigenous people as troublemakers, "haters and wreckers" (previous Prime Minister, Helen Clark in New Zealand Press Association, 2004) and as being "stuck in the past" and not fit for the modern world (Ballara, 1986; Moewaka Barnes et al., 2012).

There are acts of collective remembrance in historical privilege which also use memory as a representational construction to those in the present. That is to say, the construction of collective remembering shapes and reinforces collective identity (Murray, p. 31). Whereas historical trauma constructs memory of loss and oppression as well as healing, resilience and survival, historical privilege tends to use memory to construct representations of progress and nationhood, the hardworking pioneer, or of events that contribute to a collective "coming of age". In Aotearoa New Zealand, no other act of commemoration perhaps encompasses this use of memory as constructed representation better than recent commemorations of Anzac Day (McConville, McCreanor, Wetherell, & Moewaka Barnes, 2016; Mein Smith, 2016; Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2005; O'Malley & Kidman, 2017; Wetherell, McCreanor, McConville, Moewaka Barnes, & le Grice, 2015). Indeed, the populist catch phrases used in commemorations of the day lead with "Lest we forget" and mark the anniversary of the landing of New Zealand and Australian soldiers on the Gallipoli peninsula in modern-day Turkey in 1915 (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2005).

These constructions of collective remembrance, for the dominant group, are relatively rare and carefully constructed to reinforce particular narratives about collective identity and ignore, mask or "forget" memories that might detract or challenge these representations. For instance, in Aotearoa New Zealand, public debate is ongoing with regard to the enormous discrepancy of allocated resources, media coverage, governmental commitment and general public regard between Anzac Day commemorations and those devoted to commemorating the New Zealand Wars, fought between indigenous and settlers over dominion of

the land itself, the later stages of which overlap the outbreak of World War I (WW1) (Godfery, 2015; Maori Television, 2016; McConville et al., 2016; McCulloch, 2014; O'Malley, 2016b). Anzac Day, with the routinely scripted narratives of pride and reverence, the extensive public recognition presented by both mainstream and Māori-controlled media, and the well-tended and maintained memorials and cenotaphs present in towns across the country, can be contrasted quite effectively with the general forgetting of those acts and dates of remembrance concerning the New Zealand Wars (for an excellent comparative analysis, see McCulloch, 2014). In addition, the general disrepair, disregard and compromised access to the physical memorials of those sacrificed in the New Zealand Wars are not lost on astute observers. Such was the concern, particularly from the young, about the way these disparate enactments of remembrance and forgetting were playing out in the standard story of race relations, that in 2015 students from Otorohanga College in the Waikato region, and with much local and national support, petitioned Parliament to commemorate the New Zealand Wars more respectfully (New Zealand Parliament, 2015; O'Malley & Kidman, 2017). The response from central government has been mixed. The Minister of Māori Affairs, after working closely with iwi (tribal) representatives, confirmed 28 October 28 "Raa Maumahara National Day of Commemoration" (Rotorua Daily Post, 2016) and was able to secure moderate funding for initiatives. However, National recognition of Raa Maumahara as a public holiday and the formal inclusion of the New Zealand Wars in the national education curriculum, both key elements of the petition, were rejected. Primary responsibility for these commemorations has been devolved to local governments and interested communities, so issues of equivalence with the national reverence accorded to Anzac Day remain.

The Anzac Day example demonstrates the great care needed in remembering, primarily to protect the "master narrative" (Haebich, 2011, p. 1035) from dilution or deviation and manage any shame or discomfort the dominant group might experience as a result. Again, master narratives about Anzac Day give some useful insights about the power of memory in identity construction. The men who served at Gallipoli in 1915 experienced a trauma directly and as the participants in a disastrous military campaign, their memories of the campaign likely included sorrow, guilt and even shame, as these are common psychological effects of defeat and abandonment (Noonan, Sharpe, Freddi, Márkus, & Heller, 2007, pp. 113–114). Yet acknowledgement of such despairing affects is almost at complete odds with interpretations held by the descendants of these servicemen and the nation more generally, who appear to embrace the trauma narrative because the memory has not been constructed as one of shame or regret, but rather of pride—a psychological state usually seen in victors. The master narrative of nation building, independence and citizenship through sacrifice is particularly present in recent observations of Anzac Day and only seems to intensify with each annual commemoration. In this way, Anzac Day is presented to those who never experienced the trauma themselves as honourable and reinforces identity as "real" New Zealanders.

This highlights the complexity of memory as an important representational construction of collective identity. Care is required in these constructions as remembrance, for both those who are remembering historical trauma and those remembering acts of privilege through sacrifice are not without risk. For the privileged, Murray (2013, p. x) argues, there is a risk of commemoration becoming "escapist nostalgia", and for those remembering historical trauma, there is a danger of the memory construction actually keeping the trauma alive in current generations (Young, 2004). This has impacts on the pathology of that stress on current members of the collective in that the remembrance of trauma in particular is carefully managed to centre on healing and resilience.

Contemporary markers of historical privilege manifest not only in a small number of carefully constructed acts of overt recognition but more commonly as sustained collective "forgetting". Murray (2013, back cover) summarises this dichotomy in reference to contemporary South Africa:

> When the past is painful, as riddled with violence and injustice as it is in post-apartheid South Africa, remembrance presents a problem at once practical and ethical: how much of the past to preserve and recollect and how much to erase and forget if the new nation is to ever unify and move forward?

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the complexity of forgetting and remembrance is not dissimilar to Murray's description. Active forgetting helps the current-day recipients of historical privilege assuage contemporary feelings of guilt and shame and assists them to forego significant acts of collective responsibility that may be drawn forth from reminders (often by Māori activism) of the historic pain of colonisation and the contemporary suffering that continues for those impacted by historical trauma. In the current environment, this collective act of forgetting often manifests as very low levels of knowledge among Pākehā descendants of Māori histories, language, culture and people, in general, and also of their own colonial history and its impact on current understandings of nationhood (Turner, 1999). Indeed, Haebich (2011) suggests that collective forgetting, far from being a benign state, actually creates a climate where ignorance can flourish, accounting for a general lack of knowledge about particular phenomena, a gap readily filled with misinformation, hearsay and imaginings that given constant repetition (by government and the media for instance) come to be taken as fact. She argues that "an epistemology of ignorance" (p. 1035) is required to examine these practices and their connections to constructions of authority, representation and collective identity. Stanner (1969) argues that the disremembering by non-indigenous about the harm indigenous people have been subject to through the process of colonisation can be understood as

> . . . a structural matter, a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape. What may have begun as a simple matter of forgetting of other possible views turned under habit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale. (p. 25)

Table 1. Key elements of historical privilege.

Key elements	Historical trauma	Historical privilege
An act(s) of trauma	Acts of trauma experienced through process of colonisation	Acts of historic windfall and dramatic increases in wealth, power and social status
Ongoing renewal of historical acts	Recurring experiences of discrimination	Naturalisation of group superiority through structural, institutional and cultural favouritism
Experienced by a collective	Affected groups may share a particular identity, affiliation or circumstance	Individual and familial wealth acquisition supported by governmental action
Experienced across multiple generations	Trauma affecting multiple generations of descendants who may not have witnessed the original act(s) themselves	Historic boons in wealth, power and social status are passed to and added on by subsequent generations of settlers
Remembrance/Forgetting	Remembrance and commemoration are inherent with an underlying importance on healing, resilience and recompense	Collective forgetting is more common. Remembrance is carefully constructed

This negotiation between remembering and forgetting can be complex and, forgetting particularly, takes many shapes as described in depth by Connerton (2008). The fundamental purpose and key common denominator of this collective forgetting for the dominant group are to shape and maintain aspects of group identity (Turner, 1999; Wessel & Moulds, 2008), carefully selecting from the past and adapting and enhancing those into the future. This is fundamental in the maintenance of a master narrative. In Aotearoa New Zealand, McCreanor (2009) refers to this master narrative as the "standard story" of Māori/Pākehā relations. It is these active states of collective forgetting, what Connerton (2008) describes as repressive erasure, prescriptive forgetting and humiliated silence, that allowed Pākehā to believe for so long that Aotearoa New Zealand had the "best race relations in the world" (McCreanor, 2009; O'Malley & Kidman, 2017; Walker, 1990).

Conclusion

Our reading of the literature has not brought forth a concept that adequately mirrors historical trauma for the privileged by encompassing all the core elements present in the historical trauma literature. This article has begun to examine and frame how an understanding of privilege, that is equivalent to the decolonising power of the concept of historical trauma, may be described. The current social status and general wellbeing of Māori have been deeply affected by historic acts of trauma and ongoing experiences of dispossession, denigration and discrimination. Acceptance is needed that those dire consequences for Māori have produced levels of advantage and privilege for the descendants of all settlers to Aotearoa, only possible through the ongoing process of colonisation. These dual processes, that are influential in most domains of contemporary society, have produced and entrenched "social gradients" (Commission on Social Determinants of Health, 2008), with their attendant inequities, within and between Māori and Pākehā populations. If we are serious about addressing the ill effects of colonisation on one population, equitable acknowledgement of the privileging effects consequential to another must also be part of the conversation.

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