

## ‘Pissed Off and Confused’/‘Grateful and (Re)Moved’: Affect, Privilege and National Commemoration in Aotearoa New Zealand

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*This article explores affect, colonial privilege, and the cultural politics of national commemoration in Aotearoa New Zealand. Based on focus-group interviews around two major national days, we examine means through which feelings and emotions are deployed in ways that enable the reproduction of social advantage. Situating affect within patterns of relationship, four interrelated affective-discursive practices are explored. In relation to Waitangi Day, agents tend to work under the rubric of anger and confusion. For Anzac Day, being grateful and moved shapes the interaction, although participants often indicate preferences towards “having a day off.” Given the colonial context in which these practices circulate, analysis observes the associated freedom and ease by which affective-discursive privilege is (re)produced. Often incongruent and rarely challenged, privilege allows associated actors to do what they want, when they want, however they want. This affective climate authorizes the ongoing reproduction of, and justification for, membership to a higher-status ethnic group of which unearned opportunities and entitlements remain its everyday, expected currency.*

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**KEY WORDS:** affect and emotion, white privilege, normative common sense, national commemoration, national identity, colonisation

“I actually reckon 90% of New Zealanders couldn’t give a shit. And, I’m sick of talking about it because I hate it that much.” (Jake, Waitangi Day, Pissed off)

“How is it supposed to be a national day? I just, it really confuses me. I just don’t understand Waitangi Day—I’m confused by it.” (Luke, Waitangi Day, Confused)

“I feel a great deal of gratitude. Servicemen and woman allowed us to live in such a plentiful, peaceful environment. So I really enjoy reading about the stories and experiences. It’s a great opportunity to merge past, present, and get a sense of continuity. I do like Anzac Day.” (Leah, Anzac Day, Grateful)

“I did actually ask Rick if he wanted to go to a service on Sunday purely because it was the hundred year anniversary, otherwise I probably wouldn’t have bothered.” (Anne, Anzac Day, Removed)

In this article, we advance existing knowledge in political psychology by examining national commemoration in Aotearoa New Zealand from the positional gaze of *affective-discursive privilege*. We analyze the dominant articulations of feeling in focus-group data as Pākehā (descendants of British nationals) discuss their engagements with Waitangi Day and Anzac Day, the two principal national days in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our aim is to explicitly anchor these accounts of emotion in social practice (Wetherell, 2012, 2013) and within their colonial context (Moewaka Barnes, Borell, & McCreanor, 2014). We suggest that the affective-discursive practices commonly evoked around Waitangi Day and Anzac Day legitimate Pākehā privilege, promoting and protecting Pākehā interests. Analyses of the ideological force of everyday sense making are well-established in political psychology. We add to these an exploration of the emotional dimensions of privilege and the social uses of affect.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, colonization continues to shape social relationships, cultural norms, and systemic practices, (re)producing a nation by and for the colonizer (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2014). Through the dispossession of land, marginalization, and attempted destruction of Māori economic, spiritual, and cultural society, Pākehā colonizers aggressively annexed power, developing a cultural hegemony that allows for the ongoing occupation of a range of intergenerational, heritable advantages across numerous areas of national life (Borell, 2014; Borell, Moewaka Barnes, & McCreanor, 2017; Durie, 1999; Gregory, 2002; Mulvey et al., 2000). Such privileges are at once ubiquitous yet simultaneously rendered invisible through entrenched cultural practices that both proliferate and protect Pākehā power (Leonardo, 2004). Indeed, having greater access to land, jobs, housing, education and other resources and having their interests promoted and protected are clearly advantages yet are rarely used when explaining Pākehā health and wellbeing statistics (Borell, Gregory, McCreanor, Jensen, & Barnes, 2009).

National days of commemoration and celebration are rich in meaning and emotion for all citizens and comprise a range of experiences from determined indifference, to proud patriotism, to overt displays of anger and irritation. National days build and divide, recognize and refute, remember and forget, and include and ignore (Neufeld, 2002). They highlight certain community values, promote and protect particular interests and identities, and perform selected versions of the past, reworked and reimagined to service the purposes of the present (Cinar, 2001; Said, 1978). They are prominent in national life, but these ‘high’ moments are closely related to everyday experiences of banal nationalism and inequitable distributions of power (Billig, 1995).

We begin by providing an overview of the politics of commemoration in Aotearoa New Zealand. Second, we explore ethnic privilege and common sense within this context. Third, we note some of the affective-discursive dimensions of privilege. Following this, we report on four key ways in which affect/discourse is put to work in practice at different points around national days of commemoration. We conclude by reiterating the emotional power of normative common sense and some of the associated implications for national life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### The Politics of Commemoration in New Zealand

The two major national days of commemoration—Waitangi Day and Anzac Day—have different origins. Waitangi Day commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi on February 6, 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and some Māori chiefs. While the Treaty was, in part, intended to establish bicultural equity around the building of a nation state (Orange, 2015), Māori were swiftly set aside by the rapid growth of Pākehā society and the cultural politics, laws, education systems and economic imperatives they implemented (Ballara, 1986; Belgrave, Kawharu, & Williams, 2004). As such, the privileging of Pākehā ways of life, and marginalizing of Māori, has meant that Waitangi celebrations have been marked by a long history of debate, protest, activism, and resistance, where historic injustices and Treaty breaches are highlighted (Yensen, Hague, & McCreanor, 1989), often in ways that reproduce Pākehā power (Abel, 1997; McConville, Wetherell, McCreanor, & Moeweka Barnes, 2014).

Anzac Day, held on April 25 each year, commemorates the Gallipoli landings of New Zealand and Australian soldiers in the World War I, and has since been extended to commemorate those that have lost their lives in all wars (Davis, 2009; Sharpe, 1981). While the day has traversed periods of ontological unease, such as in the 1960s and 1970s era of resistance to the Vietnam war, currently Anzac Day enjoys widespread appeal, staking its claim as a day that honors the moment where New Zealand developed a unique sense of identity and associated sense of nationhood as distinct from Britain (Davis, 2009).

Waitangi Day and Anzac Day are frequently placed in opposition as *competing national days* (McCrone & McPherson, 2009). Regularly pitted against each other in media discourse and associated research polls (e.g., APNZ, 2013; Holmes, 2012), each day offers distinct formulations around the idea of nation and involves complex processes of forgetting and remembering, predicated upon assumed similarities and differences between ingroup and outgroup membership (Huddy, 2001; Monroe, Hankins, & Van Vechten, 2000). Both days, for instance, mark moments and places, *different* moments and places, where a particular kind of nation was born. For Pākehā, it is certainly advantageous to draw attention to Anzac Day as an uncomplicated moment signifying ‘the birth of the nation’ as opposed to Waitangi Day, where colonization and the politics of biculturalism remain in the foreground (Orange, 2015).

Each national day surfaces us-and-them binaries recurrently reproduced through highly ethnized representations. Waitangi Day is frequently designated as ‘their’ (Māori) day (e.g., McConville et al. 2014), while Anzac Day becomes ‘our’ (Pākehā) day (e.g., McConville, McCreanor, Wetherell, & Moewaka Barnes, 2017). Indeed, nationalism becomes particularly intensified when an ethnicity or nation’s interests are perceived as being placed under threats both real and imagined (Hastings, 1997). If Waitangi Day raises questions around Pākehā hegemony, then it will be of little surprise that Anzac Day as a seemingly untroubled day of national unity attracts such a strong degree of support in contemporary national life.

### Privilege as Common Sense

Nations, at least in the global north, are increasingly adopting postracial, color-blind discourses, politics, and practices (Foldy & Buckley, 2014; Goldberg, 2009; Squires, 2014; Wise, 2013). In Aotearoa New Zealand, racism is regularly argued to be all but eradicated. Former Prime Minister Bill English, for example, was recently quoted as stating that protest on Waitangi Day is “no longer nationally relevant,” that its time “has past” given that “so much progress” has been made on relations with Māori (Jones, 2017). Political discourse such as this is routine and unsurprising: New Zealand has a long history of priding itself as having ‘the best race relations in the world’—the normative account of racial relations or what Nairn and McCreanor (1990, 1991) term the *standard story*.

Racialized common sense is primarily marked by the dismissal of race as a legitimate topic of concern in contemporary postracial life. Without an understanding of colonial history and group position, discourses of equal opportunity and meritocracy inform and legitimate actors' psychological orientations to social and cultural issues such as inequality. In Aotearoa New Zealand, for instance, when there are protests around breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, or when affirmative policies are enacted, the rhetoric of 'Māori Privilege' is often deployed (Nairn & McCreanor, 1990, 1991). It becomes difficult for citizens who take these orientations for granted to comprehend why programs initiated to ameliorate the effects of colonization such as affirmative action and group-based social services are required as it is assumed that all structural impediments to an equitable society have been addressed (Barber, 2008). This is primarily where distinctions between antiracism and anti-racialism become important to make. While the politics of colonial history involve "moving on," "getting over," and "forgetting" the past, antiracist politics "requires historical memory, recalling the conditions of racial degradation and relating contemporary to historical and local to global conditions" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 21).

One of the key accomplishments of Pākehā hegemony relates to the entrenched idea that success is associated with superior attitudes, talents, and a strong work ethic, rather than a historical context of racism and theft that has dispossessed and debased indigenous peoples. Hegemonic common sense relegates colonization to 'the' past; a single moment of relative insignificance. As such, in a society built upon foundations of racism and exclusion (Kearns, Moewaka-Barnes, & McCreanor, 2009), the resultant advantages gained for the dominant ethnic group tend to remain concealed. From invasion to hegemony, colonizing discourse eschews links between Pākehā cultural status, comfort, profit, and power with the suffering and dispossession of the colonized (Memmi, 1965). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the intergenerational effects of colonization continue to unfold. Pākehā, for instance, are more likely to be employed, their families more likely to economically prosper, and their children more likely to live free from poverty (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2014).

As beneficiaries of colonization, Pākehā have gained not only material wealth through large-scale land confiscations and theft of property, but also symbolic and cultural power through the Crown's institution of legal, economic, and other systems. Borell et al. (2017), draw on literature around historical trauma to explore its flip side—*historical privilege*. Akin to the ways in which historical trauma affects descendants long after the traumatic acts have taken place, historical privilege surfaces ways in which benefits are shared across generations and the accumulations they generate such as intergenerational transfer of wealth and social position. Borell and her colleagues identify upward mobility and inheritance as two particularly significant areas of note through which historical privilege amasses. These provide opportunities and greater possibilities for building the 'right' social networks within which culturally valuable forms of affective, social, and symbolic capitals circulate. Here, inheritance moves beyond being viewed as the transfer of wealth from parents to children within families and into broader, intergenerational transfers of wealth in its various forms that trace back to the arrival of the original British colonists.

### Affective-Discursive Privilege

To understand how emotion and feeling become drawn into these circuits of privilege, we draw on affective-discursive psychology where feelings, emotions, and affect are grounded in social practice and human meaning-making (Wetherell, 2012, 2013, 2015). This approach takes issue with some key trends in the recent 'turn to affect' in social research, where ideology, culture, conscious knowing, and representation are eschewed in favor of nonverbal, prepersonal, posthuman, and visceral approaches that move 'beyond representation' (Clough & Halley, 2007; Thrift, 2004). In contrast to the view that affect is unmediated by discourse or meaning-making, we contend that both are intertwined, and any separation is unsustainable, particularly around the sites and scenes within

which social research is situated. We recognize the ongoing need for political psychology to examine the rhetorical nature of talk (Weltman & Billig, 2001), but simultaneously to engage in a sustained analysis of the felt dimensions around the politics of national commemoration within their discursive framings (see also McConville, 2017).

Diane Reay's (2000, 2004) reflections on the notion of emotional capital are useful to inform the concept of affective-discursive privilege. Expanding on Bourdieu's concept of capital and drawing on Burkitt's (1997) approach to emotion as constituted through ongoing relational practices, Reay (2000) uses emotional capital to explore mothers' affect laden interactions with their children. Emotional capital refers to "the emotional resources passed on from mother to child through processes of parental involvement" (p. 569). In colonial contexts, affective-discursive capital can be conceptualized through a similar logic, referring to the extent in which affective and discursive resources available to Pākehā, remain highly accessible across familial, societal, and cultural life and the patterns of advantage that accrue from use of these resources.

Affective-discursive privilege as a social practice incorporates feelings of entitlement, comfort, and belonging (Gaztambide-Fernández, Cairns, & Desai, 2013). Spaces and places ought to feel as if they are 'ours' to enjoy as 'we' (Pākehā) see fit. 'We' should feel accepted and welcome, able to come and go as we please. Here, 'nation' becomes akin to the ontologically secure, normative feeling of home; "the place where the door will always be open for you, where a fire will be lit upon arrival and where you will receive the warmth of your mother's care" (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 761). Similarly, in terms of national commemoration, a national day ought to be a day where 'we' feel most comfortable; one in which we can celebrate if we wish, commemorate if we so desire, or for those in full-time employment—simply 'enjoy a day off.'

As Wetherell (2012) argues, affect is *practical situated activity*. Action is organized temporally, spatially, episodically, and sequentially. Affect tends to follow familiar rhythmic patterns and becomes constrained and enabled in various ways dependent upon culturally available practices, contested historical positionings, forms of embodied meaning-making, group identity and other sociocultural factors. In the context of the current study, which observes the (re)production of colonial affective-discursive privilege, when a topic of discussion is provided such as "why do you celebrate this specific national day?" we assume normative sequences of affect typically surge into action, drawing in recognizable mannerisms, gestures, body routines, and, in terms of our focus—discursive habits. Here, we are reminded that discourse always involves felt experience; the visceral emerging through the social. Wetherell (2012) argues that affective meaning is layered through "words, movements, turn-taking, intonation patterns and so on" (p. 83) in ways that mark difference and exclusion while concurrently signalling and justifying ingroup status. In a context of colonization and associated ethnic advantage, Pākehā social actors are likely to engage in joint intersubjective normative sequences that reiterate and reproduce a familiar Māori/Pākehā relational history.

Similarly, Burkitt (1997, 2002, 2014) argues that investigations of affect and emotion must concern *patterns of relationship*. While dominant approaches to affect in psychology position emotions as particular qualities or substances privately contained and hidden within the individual, Burkitt (1997) argues for emotions as *complexes* which are at once corporeal, embodied, and socioculturally assembled—multidimensional in their constitution and learned through a social habitus. He points out that emotions are meaningful only in relation to others—I become angry, for instance, because of a particular object, human or otherwise, behaving in a way I do not like (see also, Ahmed, 2004, on the *aboutness* of emotions). And, as Ahmed (2004) emphasizes, a reaction like anger also continues to construe the object as deserving of this anger. Emotions become formulated in expected ways depending on the particular relational context while concurrently organizing the context. Within this frame, opportunities for dissent or subversion in an interactional climate of affective-discursive privilege will be limited.

As per any relational practice, and particularly pronounced from a standpoint of ethnic advantage, power will play a key role. Burkitt (2002) draws on Foucault (1979, 1982) to develop his account of power in relation to affect. Here, power is a force through which social relations are affected in ways that “incite, induce, or seduce” (Burkitt, 2002, p. 165) possibilities for particular actions. In an affective climate of privilege, power energizes actors akin to “a warm tailwind that propels the advantaged through life” (Kimmel & Ferber, 2003, as cited in Moewaka Barnes et al., 2014, p. 4). As such, to study the affective-discursive dimensions of privilege requires moving beyond a simple explication of its felt processes and into a critical narration of the ways in which these are held in place, the histories of power distributions, and their implications (Wetherell, 2012).

## Method

### *Design*

The analysis below is based on qualitative data obtained through focus-group discussions on the topic of national days in Aotearoa New Zealand. The focus-group convenor (the first author) initiated a range of questions about how participants engaged emotionally with national days, primarily Waitangi Day and Anzac Day. Each set of questions were asked once for Waitangi Day and once for Anzac Day, and the order in which each day was discussed alternated from group to group. The focus groups were semistructured with additional probes depending on how the discussions proceeded in order to thoroughly explore the links for participants between emotion, identity, nation, culture, and community.

### *Participants*

A total of 34 volunteer participants spread across eight focus groups were recruited based on personal networks of the first author and snowballing methods. Of these, 25 identified as female (73.5%) and nine as male (26.5%). Ethnically, 73.5% of the participants identified as Pākehā/New Zealand European/Kiwi, 8.9% as Samoan, 5.8% as Korean, 8.9% as Māori, and 2.9% as European. Focus groups took place in two regions in the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand: greater Auckland (61.7%), and the Waikato regions (38.3%). Ages ranged from 21 to 76 years with most being over 30. The sample included participants from a range of socioeconomic groups, from working class (e.g., factory workers), to middle class (e.g., farmers) and the corporate elite (e.g., company directors). Educational level spanned from high school to postgraduate tertiary. Participants each received a \$30 supermarket voucher upon completion of the focus group. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym.

The following analysis draws upon a subset of this data, *focusing on Pākehā engagement specifically*. We do not assume that Pākehā people as a group are homogeneous, but the affective-discursive practices of those identifying as Pākehā in this study often strongly resembled each other across differences in age, gender, education, and class. Our aim is to convey the most pervasive shared patterns in this subgroup.

## Data Analysis

The focus groups were transcribed verbatim, and the interpretative phase of analysis initially involved organizing data into dominant themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Beyond this, data were inductively analyzed in ways broadly informed by critical discursive psychology (Wetherell, 1998) whereby a concern with the action orientation of talk is blended with wider poststructuralist approaches to

discourse analysis. Within this frame, we examine affect and discourse as a mutually entangled and cocreated process (Wetherell, 2012, 2013) and put to work through patterns of relationship (Burkitt, 2014). Here, participant talk is understood as drawing on rhetorically effective strategies available in a particular culture at a particular time and place and organized in ways to *do* or *achieve* particular things. Data extracts are employed below to both illustrate participant affective-discursive practices and to analyze some of the more regularly deployed dimensions of emotion in interaction. The data analysis was primarily carried out by the first author, Alex McConville (AM), who is Pākehā, with critiques, suggestions, and modifications from the wider team comprised of both Māori (Belinda Borell, Helen Moewaka Barnes) and Pākehā (Margaret Wetherell, Tim McCreanor).

## Findings

### *Waitangi Day: Pissed Off and Confused*

**Rob:** I think people are pissed off with it [Waitangi Day/the Treaty of Waitangi], they're probably pissed off, and probably confused. That's a New Zealander's attitude I think

**AM:** Pissed off and confused

(Group laughter)

**Rob:** Absolutely

For Waitangi Day, Pākehā participants frequently expressed feelings of irritation, frustration, or, as the above participant suggests, engaged in affective-discursive practices of *anger*, alongside being muddled, conflicted, lost, or quite simply *confused*. Participants tended to position themselves at a distance, viewing Waitangi Day as a spectacle to be observed from afar. As one participant, Linda, reflected, "I think it's really a *stage* for probably the more um—what's the word I am looking for, well not belligerent." The mere mention of Waitangi Day sent affective-discursive practice into an us/them, Pākehā/Māori feeling dichotomy where pejorative affective value swiftly accrues. From the positional gaze of the Pākehā actor, anger and confusion regularly intertwine. The following analytical sections are divided into two. First we deal with anger as affective-discursive privilege in this context, and the second follows the practical application of confusion.

### Pissed Off

All participants were asked about *the range of feelings they went through on Waitangi Day*. The following excerpt is exemplary of ways in which canonical forms of affect and emotion were rehearsed and patterns of relationship established. In line with color-blind politics, bolstered by the assumption of equal opportunity and colonization as a thing of the past, participants put affective-discursive privilege to work:

**Susan:** I think "there they go again"

**Olive:** And what kind of trouble are they going (Susan: Yes) (Jane: Yes) to stir up this year

**Linda:** Yes that right, yeah. Is it going to be quiet or is it going to be a political platform again or something

**Jane:** I always remember how our current Prime Minister at the time, I think must have been Helen Clark was spat at

- Susan:* Yeah but she also wanted to speak, didn't she? But they [Māori] didn't let her and she cried
- Jane:* Oh, somebody spat at one the ah (Linda: Somebody spat somewhere) at one of the Prime Ministers. Um I think, I think of the trouble that often happens up there on the day
- Olive:* Yes
- Susan:* Why?
- Jane:* Because
- Susan:* Because they don't agree—is it because they don't like the way the country... (pauses) See it makes me realise how ignorant I am and in a sense I will now pay my—more—more attention to Waitangi Day because there is always trouble, someone's throwing mud at someone or—or something or Prime Minister, remember he was tackled or something by a couple of Māori people (Linda: yes he was) a couple of years ago. Yeah

In the above extract, dimensions of privilege are being “*normatively organised* as part of socially recognised routines or affective practices” (Wetherell, 2012, p. 81). Drawing on familiar scripts and tropes prescribed for Waitangi Day which recurrently position Māori as threatening and intimidating, participants collaboratively (re)assemble the canonical affective and emotional forms that circulate extensively in this context (McCreanor, 1997; Wetherell, McCreanor, McConville, Moewaka Barnes, & le Grice, 2015). The freedom and ease in which participants both draw on and exchange variants of dominant affective-discursive resources swiftly sets the scene. Here, Māori and Pākehā are positioned in their respective emotion spaces, in a way that is easily accomplished and affirmed between people sharing a cultural and historical setting (Burkitt, 1997).

Affective-discursive practices are arranged such that Māori are foregrounded as disruptive and hostile (throwing mud/spitting/causing trouble) and Pākehā rendered helpless victims (crying/being tackled/not being allowed to speak). This formulation (e.g., “I think there *they* go again”) enacts the repeated deployment of disgruntlement in ways that come to ‘land’ (Ahmed, 2004) solely on Māori figures (“and what kind of trouble are *they* going to stir up this year”). Drawing on the classic *stirrers* repertoire (Nairn & McCreanor, 1991), these practices work to form the effect of surfaces or boundaries, sticking pejorative affects to figures and marking Māori as mischief-makers (“Yeah but she also wanted to speak, didn't she? But they didn't let her and she cried”). Here, Waitangi Day becomes an inherent site of trouble (“is it going to be a political platform again or something”).

With regards to the affective positioning of Pākehā, we should reiterate that ‘trouble’ does not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, trouble is troubling precisely because it troubles ‘us’. One way in which the extract can be read then is exemplifying patterns of affect that in illuminating ‘them’ as troublemakers, simultaneously brings ‘us’ closer together (Ahmed, 2004). The figure of ‘The Māori’ is positioned akin to actors on a stage engaging in mere fiasco—one that is clearly performed, inauthentic. Māori become *affect aliens*, they covert ‘our’ good feelings into bad; kill ‘our’ joy (Ahmed, 2008 p. 12). ‘We’ then become affectively positioned as bemused spectators, innocent bystanders—taking in a spectacle which makes little sense, but evokes strong emotions:

- Rick:* Why does it [Waitangi Day] make you annoyed?
- Jake:* It just fucking does
- Luke:* There must be something that annoys you about it?
- Jake:* Oh it just divides us! It's when 10% of the fucking population hang a big stick over us

Returning to the first extract, Susan opens the dialogue by noting “I think, here they go again.” At the end of the extract, however, as she seeks to go beyond the usual repertoires and into some detail, the affective thrust is lost: “Because they don’t agree—is it because they don’t like the way the country’s, see it makes me realise how ignorant I am.” And while she does, however, note she “will now pay more attention to Waitangi Day,” she swiftly moves back to the certainty that “there is always trouble.” Indeed, when participants ventured beyond familiar tropes that facilitated episodes of anger, they often ended by retreating to confusion. Privilege as common sense, then, not only makes particular feelings and talk easy to communicate and access, it simultaneously sustains a climate that lacks the necessary scaffolding required for the development of legitimate alternatives.

### Confused

In the following excerpt, participants collectively negotiate and rehearse proper feeling in response to the question “What are you supposed to feel on Waitangi Day?”

- Rick:* That’s a good question  
*Anne:* The proper day, probably like you think of national pride for your country  
*Rick:* You reckon?  
*Luke:* Nah  
*Anne:* I don’t know  
*Rick:* What are we, what are we supposed to feel?  
*Luke:* Guilt? Is it supposed to be a celebration or are we supposed to feel guilty?  
*Anne:* About what?  
*Luke:* Guilty about...  
*Jake:* It’s fuckin’...

[All start talking over each other]

- Rick:* They’re nah, nah it’s supposed to be a celebration  
*Anne:* Yeah  
*Luke:* See I don’t even, that’s how confusing it is to me

Patterns of confusion are often triggered in settings where white privilege is challenged (DiAngelo, 2011). Even here, where no overt challenge is made, the mere mention of “Waitangi Day” is enough to evoke such affective-discursive dilemmas. The circulation of affect observed in the above extract is, however, unsurprising given it is situated in a bicultural context where to not be confused would require, among other things, a reasonable understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, colonization, and the role of media and institutional practices within it. To acquire an appreciation of these areas is challenging, however, in an educational climate that lacks critical engagement with New Zealand history and often involves public opposition around the possibility of including such engagement in the curriculum (e.g., O’Malley & Kidman, 2017).

Viewed from an alternative position, however, perhaps to be confused is far from an innocent or harmless response. One could quite reasonably make an argument as to why it is not in the interest of an advantaged ethnic group to demystify or critique their own advantage. Indeed, in answer to the question, no Pākehā participants in any of the focus groups suggested that they were *supposed* to feel angry on Waitangi Day—such a move could prove troublesome. Rather, the associated anger is formulated as a natural reaction, perhaps an unintended, spontaneous, or maybe even critical or

subversive take on the day. Whatever the case may be, putting anger to work in the context of this day of commemoration gives leverage to affective-discursive practices of confusion. Often times, participants would then go on to suggest that a different national day altogether was required.

*Emma:* Well I don't think it's a celebratory day, do you? It's just a holiday

*Lizzy:* I don't think I know anybody who sees it as a celebratory day because what are we actually celebrating?

*Emma:* You know, all the speeches that are made about nationhood, no one that I know of, thinks that day is any description of nationhood at all. So I reckon that we should have a separate New Zealand Day, where we can celebrate, actually celebrate being New Zealanders because we're pretty unique in the world, we've got so many unique things here that we should be very, very proud of and we're a small country and our intellectual contribution to the world has been huge. You know, we've got New Zealanders working all over the world in really high ranking science jobs, medicine, we've got some of the best inventors, those are the things we should be celebrating... not...

*Lizzy:* Yeah see, to me, Waitangi Day is more of a protest day than anything

*Maria:* Which has its own place but should be, should not be used instead of yeah... a day of, of...

In the above extract, participants produce confusion based on the idea that national days ought to be days of celebration, and given Waitangi Day fails to qualify, it becomes "just a holiday." Emma builds on affective-discursive practices of anger and confusion by suggesting such emotional dilemmas around a failed nationhood calls for an alternative national day of celebration. As such, a new day could be a useful way of celebrating the "unique" nature of New Zealand. The Treaty of Waitangi, which exemplifies a unique relationship between Māori and the Crown is not considered here. Rather, Waitangi Day is positioned as a "protest day," and as a result, it has no place as a legitimate national day. This was echoed by numerous participants who were often irritated by the politics of Waitangi, typically suggesting this aspect ought to be discarded and replaced with unfettered celebration.

#### *Anzac Day: Grateful and (Re)moved*

*AM:* How do you feel about Anzac Day?

*Jake:* Oh I've got no personal feelings towards it. You see it on the news you sort of get that um, that, um, you know, in your ticker, where you're proud and you think fuck you know that makes me want to cry you know?

*Anne:* So you are feeling an emotion?

*Jake:* Oh very emotional, I mean, it's only yourself, but all of a sudden you think fuck I got to go feed my cows and go fix the fence [referring to his work as a Farmer]. You know that was 100 years ago, or blah blah blah

The above extract exemplifies some of the more recurrent dimensions of feeling for Pākehā participants around Anzac Day where one is *obviously* moved, yet often simultaneously materially absent from the formal commemorative aspects of the day. For Anzac Day, participants tend to position themselves in the foreground, embodying the day as a highly relatable experience. The mere mention of Anzac Day also offers accessible ways to become emotional—this time, however, in a positive

sense. As Jake exemplified, to be emotional, moved, grateful, and proud of New Zealand is typical of the day, even if one does not initially realize it. And yet, such feelings are effortlessly exchanged with the return to the realities of day-to-day life; business as usual. First, we deal with gratitude as a way into Anzac Day. We then explore how avoiding the ‘hard work’ of attending a commemorative event is navigated in this context.

### Grateful

In contrast to Waitangi Day where anger and confusion were readily put to work, when questioning participants around their feelings towards Anzac Day, a very different emotional horizon emerged. The most dominant feeling articulated was that of gratitude. The majority of participants deployed it as both the emotion they feel and the emotion they are expected to feel. Take, for instance, the excerpt below. While for Waitangi Day, the emotions participants were *supposed* to feel remained unresolved, for Anzac Day, the normative flow of affect was pieced together with cohesion and detail. Indeed, for Pākehā, Anzac Day occupies an aura of relatability:

- AM: So in terms of feeling and emotion, how do you think you’re supposed to feel on Anzac Day? How should you feel?
- Emma: Reflective I guess
- Maria: Definitely grateful
- Emma: Yeah
- Lizzy: What you [gesturing towards Maria] said was really good, between being sentimental and being philosophical, um yeah
- Emma: You have to go through the sentimental bit first
- Maria: Yeah
- Lizzy: Yeah, that’s what I’m like too, as soon as they play the Last Post it’s like
- Emma: “Oh the Last Post!” [laughs]
- Lizzy: It just sends hairs up your, you know, shivers up spine and um just that
- Maria: Well that’s important too because you’re almost feeling, feeling a part of it yourself
- Lizzy: Yeah, yeah and then afterwards, the philosophical part of you is saying “oh what, what a waste of life”
- Maria: [overlapping] and then you’ve got to look ahead as well...
- Lizzy: What a stupid waste, a stupid war

Patterns of affect and discourse interweave and overlap each other, with participants relationally piecing together cultural, emotional, and practical motifs for the day. Here, affect is ordered in sequential stages, as if one must pass through one feeling prior to moving to the next (“You have to go through the sentimental bit *first*”/ “Yeah, yeah and then *afterwards*, the philosophical part of you is saying “Oh what, what a waste of life”/ “and *then* you’ve got to look ahead as well...”). The playing of the Last Post is affirmed to generate distinctive somatic affects, with shivers up the spine and hairs standing on end. Maria notes its importance “because you’re almost feeling, feeling a part of it yourself,” which may indicate that the emotional intensity of the episode blurs lines between subjective experience and objective event, integrating spectatorship and performance through a particular kind of embodiment; one that is temporally located and historically embedded, drawing in considerations of past, present, and future. Here, Anzac Day is a day in which one is deeply immersed in the event—grateful, reflective, felt, philosophical; *affected* bodies experiencing the day without complication, and in line with hegemonic narratives.

The distribution of affective value allows Pākehā participants to feel very much at home on Anzac Day. Embodied affect is coordinated and relationally attuned, and positioned within wider commemorative practices and war narratives of freedom, sacrifice, and security. Through the affective-discursive practices of participants, Anzac Day becomes a culturally valuable occasion, and this value is expressed through a kind of unconditional positive regard—one where even the reflection that war is a “stupid waste” does not unsettle it. This is affective-discursive privilege in action. Participants speak in ways that suggest ontological certainty, they stake claim to the day and occupy it with confidence. Here Anzac Day is one that ‘we’ can both enter into *and* reflect on, look to the past, position ourselves in the present, and orient ourselves to the future. Such positions were reflected throughout the corpus:

- Luke:* We’re supposed to be Kiwi and celebrate, celebrate what they did  
*Rick:* Have pride in your country  
*Anne:* Think, think of the past. That we have our freedom because of the past  
*Rick:* Yeah

The affective-discursive practices put to work around Anzac Day echo the ethnically normative flows of emotion modeled by news-making practices of the mainstream media where Anzac Day is regularly positioned as a *sacred day of respectful remembrance* (McConville et al., 2017). Akin to these media representations, participants similarly experience the day as a tightly bound affective community where emotion is a positively shared uniform experience.

### (Re)Moved

The experience of feeling ‘moved’ was a typical affective-discursive resource participants drew upon to articulate the emotional valence of the day. Despite reporting feeling grateful and the confident assertion of being moved, participants also articulated some reluctance around in-person participation, however. Take the excerpt below, for example. Despite expressing a deep attachment to the day, when questioned on her in-person participation, Linda expresses some hesitancy.

- Linda:* Yeah, I could go up the road really and go to the dawn service at six the morning, just take the car I suppose, it would be quite moving, absolutely.

Linda asserts the day *would* be quite moving, and that she *could* go up the road. Formulations such as “I suppose” and “six in the morning” suggests that there is, however, some hesitancy around following through. Patterns like this were recurrent throughout the dataset. Indeed, while affective-discursive resources of appreciation were abundant, so too were descriptions of avoiding attending ceremonies, often held at dawn as the sun is rising. Here, privilege typically allows Pākehā to do as they wish, when they wish, however they wish, without major consequences to the group’s positioning because their ways of being in the word are so deeply embedded in the cultural infrastructure of the nation. One common affective-discursive practice, for instance, involved tongue-in-cheek responses such as “6am, are you kidding me?” followed by group laughter. The canonical nature of the affective-discursive practice of respect and reverence for Anzac Day led participants to deploy a range of justifications, however, as to why they chose *not* to attend events when the incongruity became evident.

- AM:* You attend these events on the day or in the past?  
*Rick:* I didn’t this time around, it’s just, it was so huge I just didn’t, yeah. We had a chat about it we said oh yeah, should we go? And I said, “oh nah,” we certainly weren’t not going to go for any oppositional type reason it’s just that ah, we felt that ah, you know, probably weeding the garden was a better idea

To not attend a dawn ceremony on Anzac Day within the context of pride, gratitude, and being emotionally moved—sometimes to tears—is potentially conflicting and could possibly be read as inconsistent. In the above excerpt, Rick uses two justifications as to why he chose not to attend. First, the event “was so huge.” As a justification in and of itself, this likely assumes a range of practical difficulties such as finding parking, missing out on seeing particular aspects of the event, and so on. Second, he makes it clear that not attending is unrelated to any form of resistance, ideological or otherwise, but simply expresses a preference for garden maintenance.

This is a curious juxtaposition and the bathos of weeding the garden is hard to interpret. Rick’s comment was casually stated. It was not said in jest, or carried any sense of irony. Indeed, the discussion continued in the same nonchalant manner, suggesting his decision to be ordinary and acceptable. Despite the potential dilemmatic nature of these patterns, the fact they remained unquestioned demonstrates the freedom and ease in which Pākehā privilege moves. The conversation continues:

*Anne:* I probably went, last went to a service probably when I was a teenager and you’re doing things like Girls Brigade and that but you always did those things at that time, but yeah... being an adult, we haven’t at all. I’ve been preoccupied, my son was born on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April so Anzac’s always been the day after a family, birthdays and stuff...

*Rick:* In saying that, I think it was great, the turn outs for the parades and stuff

*Luke:* A bit more aye

*Jake:* Fucking huge

*Rick:* It was the young people that were going to it

Anne notes that the last time she attended a ceremony was as a teenager, but she has since been preoccupied. As someone in her 50s, Anne has been preoccupied now for most of her life. These discrepancies are bypassed, however, through the group accrual of affective-discursive resources reinforcing the power of the myth. The strength of the Anzac tradition is affirmed by pointing out the plentiful supplies of citizens in full attendance. Furthermore, to note that it was predominantly young people present suggests the day is in good stead for growth and sustainability, as well as perhaps justifying Anne’s lack of participation in later adult life.

Other participants, when questioned around what they do on Anzac Day, developed equally elaborate accounts as to why they do not attend commemorations. Our point is not that participants should be attending events in order to properly embody ‘The Anzac Spirit.’ As Rick emphatically observed “You don’t have to go to a parade, you feel it, people fucking died for our freedom!” What we want to note is that to actually attend a service is unnecessary in the Pākehā performance of national belonging. Pākehā already embody normative markers of identity (Bell, 1996), and so active participation is not required in order to further legitimate their power and place in the cultural order. As such, tending to the weeds becomes perfectly practicable.

### Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, former Prime Minister Bill English discussed ‘moving on from the past’ in relation to Waitangi Day. A similar logic for Anzac Day, however, would, in the contemporary affective climate, be severely scrutinized. Indeed, two months later, English praised “young people today” and their “superior education” around the history of Anzac Day as compared to his generation (NZHerald, 2017). Put together, this reflects the extensive ways common sense works as a useful tool to reproduce and legitimate privileged forms of feeling. Its rhetorical, and indeed *affective*, flexibility allows for differential dimensions of social practice to emerge as and when they are useful for actors to navigate each respective cultural terrain in ways that maximize ethnic advantage.

The differential accrual of affective capital for Pākehā and Māori becomes especially pronounced when group inequities remain positioned as natural and obvious expressions of *the way things are*. There can only be one reason for ‘our’ bad feelings: Māori themselves. The power to decide how ‘we’ feel is enabled in two key ways. First, through drawing on normative forms of affective capital, participants enact readily available emotional resources in ways that reinforce and justify privileged positions. Certainly, the affective-discursive practices put to work across the dataset show an uncanny resemblance to the recognized routines and mediated flows of mainstream news reports (Abel, 1997). The mainstream media, for instance, typically position Māori as “bitter, grumpy, ill-mannered and divisive” around Waitangi Day (Wetherell et al., 2015, p. 61). Similarly, reporting regularly plays out under a master narrative of the day being one of conflict: one in which protest is decontextualized and ahistorical and where activists are portrayed as “violent, hostile, irrational, and lacking control and consideration” (McConville et al., 2014, p. 9). ‘We’ would prefer it to be a day of unbridled celebration, free from burdensome politics.

Anzac Day, on the other hand, pulls together collectivist patterns of feeling and an appreciation for the role of history in the formation of Pākehā identities (McConville et al., 2017). As noted at the outset, Pākehā affective-discursive privilege is assembled in ways that allows actors to reproduce familiar emotional episodes and interactive sequences in ways that maintain ethnic supremacy. Ultimately, in the case for Waitangi Day, this allows actors to avoid confronting colonization and Treaty responsibilities, and for Anzac Day, reinforces the hegemony of untroubled, normative Pākehā identities. Earlier, we noted that national days in New Zealand could be read as competing. From the positional gaze of Pākehā affective-discursive privilege, however, national days in New Zealand could also be read as conveniently complementary. Indeed, *both days* make available a series of entrenched emotional resources that allow Pākehā actors to simply get on with the business of ‘having a day off’ with little hassle or complication, albeit in varying ways that keep power and privilege firmly intact.

This article has observed ways in which patterns of privilege surface the emotional dimensions around *who* benefits from the most accessible ways of *doing* nationalism, *which groups* are excluded in narratives of national life, *who* is celebrated, and *who* is marginalized as “*unsuitably national*” (Edensor, 2002, p. 4). It serves as an example of the degree to which patterns of affect and discourse deployed within a colonial context remain entrenched and pervasive. Indeed, participants often lacked affective vocabularies or emotional resources and repertoires that could tell another, more socially just and sustainable story. With this in mind, future scholarship should be directed towards tracking forms of affective-discursive resistance as part of a longer process of unlearning old habits and engaging in new ways of being. For Pākehā, it is this kind of grounded, everyday practice that will be a vital contribution in terms of working towards a *mutually* beneficial Treaty partnership with Māori.

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