Vanderfeen (, Jacinta. "Black panopticon: who wins with lateral violence?." *Indigenous Women's Voices: 20 Years on from Linda Tuhiwai Smith's* . By Linda Tuhiwai Smith. London: Zed Books, 2022. 53–68. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350237506.ch-003>>.

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Black panopticon: who wins with lateral violence?

Jacinta Vanderfeen (*trawlulwuy*)

We have a history of being put under the microscope, in the same way a scientist looks at any insect. The ones doing the looking are giving themselves the power to define.

Mita 1989, p. 30

Introduction

Colonization brought with it real consequences and impacts for my people, the *trawlulwuy* people of *tebrakunna* country. Our people were subject to great sorrows; our colonization was of the worst order and in the aftermath of our genocide the injury to us continued, as our status was declared extinct across the world. *lutruwita* (Tasmania, Australia) was inhabited by our people for more than 40,000 years prior to British invasion in 1803 (Ryan 2012). As a *trawlulwuy* woman from *tebrakunna* country, from the north-east coast of *lutruwita*, I position myself as an insider, as a proud *pakana*¹ woman whose past, present and future situates me. As an Aboriginal early career researcher, I honor with deep respect our people, and our culture. While I cannot speak on any of my peoples' behalf, I can speak for my own.

I know that our people were dispossessed and murdered as we resisted colonization (Ryan 2012). Violence and bloodshed were extensive and brutal, as was the loss of our lands and the impacts on our traditional economies. The colonizers encroached on our hunting lands, cleared native bush and dramatically

¹ *pakana* and *palawa* are terms used to describe Tasmanian Aboriginal people as a collective, I identify as a *pakana* woman and will use this term throughout this essay.

altered our traditional landscape and Country (Cameron & Miller 2011). The deliberate and systematic disempowerment of *pakana* conceded almost every part of our lives, leading to our dependency on the colonizers for food, clothing and shelter (Reynolds 2012; Ryan 2012). Within a short period of less than 50 years, only 47 of our people were recognized as survivors of our obliteration from point of first contact (Reynolds 2012). Our ancestors were held on Wybalenna, an offshore prison located on Flinders Island (part of the group of northern Tasmanian off-shore islands known as the Furneaux Group), specifically built by the colonial government to house our families as the remnants of war (Cameron & Miller 2011; Ryan 2012).

At the same time as the physical assaults on our bodies are occurring, there are assaults within our minds that reflect the invisible colonizing structures that reinforce our lack of humanity and amplify violence in its space (Marks 2013). These colonizing structures are buttressed in our minds and recognized in our social interactions, where we take on the perspectives of the others (the colonizers). It is in this prison of our minds that we anticipate the actions of the colonizer and thus adjust ours accordingly – this is our oppression. Yet these structures do not hold our values of moral and ethical worth – these are owned and dispensed by the colonizers.

By removing us from our homelands, taking our families and isolating us from our cultural practices, our colonizers inserted surveillance into the devastation they had already caused. As they built their fortress infrastructure to underpin their superiority, through making and keeping records of us, we became the objects of enquiry, intrigue, monitoring, scrutiny and observation, and not sovereigns in our own lands. Surveillance brings to mind Jeremy Bentham's prison architecture of the *panopticon* in the late eighteenth century, with the structure described as an "all-seeing place" (Jespersen, cited in Mungwini 2013, p. 344). This all-seeing place, the panopticon, has been used by philosopher Michel Foucault (1979) to illustrate the power relationships between discipline, control, space and surveillance. Wybalenna, then, became a matter of the panopticon principles of surveillance and power intersecting with the structures of colonization to further the control over *pakana* lives. However, the panopticon is not generally thought of as a tool with a specific edge honed especially for Indigenous Peoples. There is a gap in the literature as to knowing the localized effects of surveillance and power on colonized people under the panopticon gaze. I want to raise in this essay a case study of my people – the people of *lutruwita* – regarding the impacts and outcomes of a *black panopticon*.

Colonization maintains a hierarchical model of power that allows the dominant society to impose upon minorities a series of networks that invests itself in every aspect of people's lives (Foucault 1979; Marwick 2012). This form of oppression, creating inequality and marginalization (Acker 2006), manifests itself as a loss and abuse of – and re-distribution of power relations against – *pakana* people. This iteration of power has enabled lateral violence to surface as a direct result of colonization, which is a form of violence exercised internally between colonized Indigenous Peoples (Bennett 2014; Clark, Augoustinos & Malin 2017). Lateral violence is characterized as silent and unassuming, public and private (Fforde et al 2013), overt and covert (Langton 2008), debilitating and toxic (Koch 2011). In *lutruwita* lateral violence is present, yet its underlying mechanisms are yet to be investigated. Cameron and Miller (2011) allude to *lutruwita* lateral violence, by sketching out the effects of power imbalances portrayed in familial inter-relational conflict.

However, I wish to go further and characterize lateral violence in *lutruwita* by defining the concept of the black panopticon and how it has operated in communities to reinforce the structures of colonization among ourselves. I do this by first describing the concept of lateral violence and how this is viewed from the lens of a black panopticon using a decolonizing framework, setting out to illustrate how the black panopticon is a Western construct, embodying white colonial power and control relations. I then define the black panopticon by applying decolonizing theory to reveal its colonizing impacts and lift the veil on lateral violence between *pakana*. Once defined, I then characterize the experience of lateral violence in *lutruwita* and describe the exclusion and oppression within the spaces of the black panopticon. Next, I proceed to expose the impacts of lateral violence on Aboriginal identity validation and the role that colonization plays in identity politics and its ongoing processes. Finally, I suggest Indigenous methodologies to decolonize lateral violence and its habitation in the black panopticon by embracing the axiology of Whiteness Theory and Indigenous Standpoint Theory.

As I work through peeling back the complex layers of lateral violence, to expose its colonizing effects, I am also centering and defining the term “black panopticon” to reflect power dynamics that occur between Indigenous Peoples as we confront our dispossession and inequity. I do this to differentiate the subtle power relations unique to the black panopticon, compared with the familiar Western (white) panopticon (Manokha 2018). I believe that the black panopticon houses unpredictable power and deficit discourses that are exercised between Indigenous Peoples. This is distinct from the stable power of white surveillance

in the white panopticon (Galič, Timan & Koops 2016). My purpose here is to characterize lateral violence and how it is shaped, disseminated and sustained under the black panopticon in order to identify methods to decolonize it.

Defining the black panopticon

In the eighteenth century, the English philosopher, jurist and reformer Jeremy Bentham worked for many years designing the physical prison structure of the panopticon and refining its architectural and psychological intent (Semple 1993). In his sketches the prison is a circular building composed of cells on the outer walls and an observation tower in the center of the building, designed to facilitate eternal surveillance of those placed in the outer rooms (Bozovic 1995). The occupants in the outer wall cells were also invisible to each other, which inferred that inmates self-regulated their behaviors, as they were constantly unaware of when or who was watching them (Semple 1993).

For Foucault (1979), the occupants located in the outer wall cells were the object of surveillance and information, meaning that those in the cells never really knew who was exercising the central power from the observation space. This notion of never knowing by whom and when one is being surveilled is designed to be oppressive (Garland 1995). This form of visibility was described “as a trap” (Foucault 1977, p. 200), whereby the “all-seeing power” is organized for the dominant, overseeing gaze (Foucault 1980, p. 152).

Decolonizing the panopticon is a way to understand how colonization has given lateral violence a platform in Tasmanian Aboriginal communities. The curved walls of Bentham's physical prison are replicated in the spherical gaze generated from within the black panopticon. In decolonizing the panopticon, I describe the inner sanctum of *lutruwita* communities. Power is programmed in the asymmetry of the panoptical gaze, encasing *pakana* people in the outer wall cells, as well as in the central control tower. The central tower can be monitored by us, and equally it can be controlled by us. The dual function of power demonstrates that both those in the outer cells and those in the central tower are watched, and Foucault describes the genius of its design as a “mechanism of power that is reduced to its ideal form” (Foucault 1979, p. 205).

In *lutruwita*, *pakana* are the entirety of the population within the black panopticon. Just as in Bentham's original design, we are both prisoners and keepers, the seeing and the surveilled all housed together. However, the difference between a Western and a black panopticon is that the formulative control is still

with the colonizers and outside of us. Power still lies with the colonizer. The purpose of the Western panopticon was to manage self-abnormality, or deviance, among its own population (Monaghan 2013). Thus, the black panopticon provides another layer of control from its ability to reinforce colonizing structures. By this, *pakana* populations are policing ourselves, not to correct or manage deviance, but rather to aid and perpetuate white control over us. The black panopticon thus works as a promise to favor some Indigenous Peoples – the observer guards – while exposing that lie through colonizing gains of total control of both the *pakana* observer and the observed.

The process of colonization inflicts new violence: people in unequal societies trust each other less and increased identity violence becomes common as people's sensitivities and requirement for safety are unmet through the trauma of colonization processes (Wilkinson 2005). Oppression thrives under the rule of colonization, amplifying the power of the panopticon, in the centrality of its surveillance in which it is housed (Galič et al 2016). Surveillance-as-oppression is given a fresh dais when *pakana* mimic colonial forms of control over each other. Colonization has created mistrust between *pakana* peoples, while furthering cultural disruption that dislodge our traditional cultural ways of being, knowing and doing. Under the colonizing gaze, the panoptic purview allows the controller to “see everything, everyone, all the time” (Foucault 2006, p. 52). Everyone can and will be watched; this is how lateral violence can be perpetrated in black communities.

The Western panopticon is the governing and roving eye, the constant stare at marginalized people that pushes us to the periphery of Australian society. In the black panopticon, surveillance is turned upon us by ourselves to inflict oppression against each other. As *pakana*, it seems our only choices are to act collectively or individually to subject other *pakana* to a form of disciplinary power and its constant use of control, surveillance and supervision (Foucault 1979). The black panopticon is powerful, extending into the whole social body, and exercising a range of extensive networks catching and entangling many, consistent with Foucault's (1972) understanding of surveillance power. Surveillance power, as discipline, is perpetrated through denial, exclusion and marginalization (Foucault 1972). In other words, lateral violence is a result of internal black surveillance that gives power to the colonizers by producing the illusion that we are governing our own norms and behaviors rather than embedding white ones. Monaghan (2013, p. 492) would refer to this as “racializing surveillance” that “fulfils prefabricated stereotypes and prejudice by colonial authorities and produces a social hierarchy defined by normative standards and signifiers of whiteness”.

The black panopticon becomes a vehicle for power relations that manifest into lateral violence. Lateral violence is then best described as the action of Indigenous Peoples expressing their anger to those who also are the victims of unequal power relations. The outcome of lateral violence is oppressed people turning on themselves and violating each other with overt physical and emotional violence and/or covert, inward deflection (“black gaslighting”) (Bailey 2020; Clark et al 2017; Langton 2008). The matrix of the panopticon pushes the panoptic eye to become embedded within communities. This pervaded community gaze is conditioned from the wider sets of power and knowledge used by colonizers to shift the gaze to self-surveillance, as individuals and communities begin to subject themselves and others to scrutiny.

Living inside the black panopticon . . . lateral violence

Lateral violence is a core means of discipline under the black panopticon. It is important for us to understand the foundations of lateral violence as part of the suite of colonizing tactics against us. It is equally important that this understanding be found by us, not for us. Lateral violence has been defined to describe the violence and disruptive practices that occur within oppressed groups and is directed towards each other (see Clark et al 2017; Fforde et al 2013; Roberts, Demarco & Griffin 2009). Colonizing spaces carve out the power and control that creates exclusion and oppression of *pakana*, where Koch (2011) argues that governments have created an environment for the conception of lateral violence through their lack of recognition of Indigenous rights and turning marginal groups against each other. Lateral violence has emerged as a subject of academic interest (Clark & Augoustinos 2015; Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett 2000; Langton 2008), as its prevalence, drivers and impacts within and between communities are yet to be fully defined. Although, evidence has revealed that lateral violence impacts the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people (Clark et al 2017; Memmott et al 2001).

The former Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda (2011a) has called out lateral violence as a difficult conversation (even for himself), but necessary for communities to increase wellbeing and understand the effects of colonization. Such conversations can and should be occurring within our communities, allowing the experiences of our people to be illuminated to understand the debilitating effects of lateral violence and how it is conceptualized and dramatized in everyday life. Part of the exercise of responsibility towards sharing these

experiences compels me to share mine: as an insider, a *pakana* community member, I have witnessed lateral violence.

There are three main ways in which lateral violence is created, used and leveraged through identity by *pakana* that distinguish the black panopticon. The first is the *questioning, governing and undermining of identity*; the second is the *guarding of identity by an Indigenous elite*, while the last is *denial of identity* (see Harris, Carlson & Poata-Smith 2013). Lateral violence in Tasmania is grounded in the effects of colonization, particularly the physical dispossession from Country from 1803 onwards – the wholesale removal of Indigenous People by white people from mainland Tasmania onto off-shore islands, such as the settlement at Wybalenna on Flinders Island (Ryan 2012). Colonial policies incurred further movements of *pakana* back to mainland Tasmania in the mid-1800s, although some families stayed behind on Flinders (Ryan 2012). Families, since colonization began, have been divided by geography, policy and physical restraint.

Questioning, governing and undermining identity

The fractured nature of physical dislocation and genocide often inhibits the ability to conduct accurate genealogy to show proof of identity or demonstrate cultural practices or even retain the knowledge of *pakana* ancestry, such that *pakana*'s colonization experience was so horrific as to be falsely declared extinct as peoples in 1876 (Lee 2019). Into this picture, *pakana* suffer the questioning of identity from both black and white. From the white, the question of whether *pakana* could exist, given that schools all over the world taught of our false extinction (Reynolds 2006), has been a double burden as it asks to prove existence and identity at the same time. From the black, whether we have the right to our fullest lives in all their diversity.

Aboriginal contemporary identity is a construct of the black panopticon, because of its multi-faceted, complex interactions with social and historical constructs (Paradies 2006). The very question of identity and the politics of authenticity have “deep roots within colonial racism” (Sissons 2005, p. 43). Aboriginal identity has been used by governments to help guide and direct policies and actions for *pakana* people. Identity thus continues to be a political and legal platform, whereby implicit social approval is then given to the right to question it (Assante 2005). Monaghan (2013) goes further and suggests that the way governments govern identity is to achieve a “logic of elimination” (Wolfe

2006, p. 387), whereby colonization requires the removal of all traces of Indigenous People and culture in favor of colonizing narratives of dominance.

The Tasmanian example highlights what Monaghan (2013) sees as an endless process of Indigenous People either subject to or voluntarily engaging in Western societal rules, where the winner is always the colonizer. By this he explains that the purpose of a black panopticon and associated surveillance tools is to separate out blacks as either “good” or “bad”, where the “good” can become enculturated as whites, while the “bad” are deemed to be unworthy of humanity: “Sorting between good and bad conduct based on racial distinction between whiteness and others, racializing surveillance simultaneously confirms notions of indigeneity as abnormal and illiberal, while disaggregating within Indigenous populations between worthy and unworthy life; those who can be transformed and those who can be killed” (Monaghan 2013, p. 492).

On this basis, lateral violence is a mechanism used by ourselves and learned through colonizing behaviors to sort ourselves into “good” or “bad” blacks. Those who are “bad” further suffer through the governing of identity, as it is the *pakana* responsibility within the black panopticon’s central tower to now wield the power of conferring identity and acceptance – or taking it away. There is a link here between non-identity, or denial of it, and death noted by Monaghan (2013), where lateral violence is the weapon of both black and white to extinguish and sever a person’s connection to family, place and community. This is the isolation of the outer walls – while we are all together within the arena of discipline, power and oppression (Foucault 1977), the effect of questioning and governing an identity enforces a separation of ourselves from each other and to our own identities.

In Tasmania, the black panopticon is an outstanding success. The level of distortion and dysfunction within the government policies that govern identity – known in Tasmania as an “eligibility” policy to participate in government-funded and sponsored programs that directly apply to *pakana* (Tasmanian Government 2020) – was of such gross magnitude that even the white conservative government addressed the imbalance of the policy in a sweeping change to the direction of Aboriginal affairs in Tasmania. On 21 January 2016, the former Premier of Tasmania, Will Hodgman, declared that “(s)omething is very wrong here” (Hodgman 2016, n.p.) when he referred to the issue of identity and recognition among our people. His speech went on to state that the “most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics from 2014 reported 25,845 Indigenous people in Tasmania. Yet, under the current Tasmanian Government policy, it’s estimated that there are just 6,000 Indigenous Tasmanians” (Hodgman 2016, n.p.).

The governing of identity allows for a Western panopticon to set the vague rules as to what constitutes a *pakana* person to qualify as eligible (Tasmanian Government 2020). A veneer of Indigenous self-determination is then applied by allowing *pakana* organizations the right to choose and approve the individuals who want identity confirmed to participate in funded projects (Tasmanian Government 2020). The devolution of identity governance to *pakana* communities then becomes the tool and pathway to enable government-aided lateral violence or the bricks of the outer wall of the black panopticon that isolates *pakana*. This is achieved through black elitism.

Black elitism

The particular cruelty of lateral violence is that it is a colonizing tool that is un/consciously used by *pakana* to favor not any of us, but rather white privilege and control. The means of using ourselves to oppress our identities and rights also means that a *pakana* elite is created and maintained – those in the central tower who act to enforce a colonizing control through closely governing identity. In Tasmania, this control and power from the black panopticon's central tower has largely been exercised by an organization called the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC). The TAC is the oldest and best-known organization for *pakana* rights, being first engaged with rights advocacy in the 1970s (Flanagan 2002; Ryan 1996).

However, in recent years some Aboriginal people and community groups, known and affiliated with the TAC, prided themselves on knowing exactly how everyone fitted into its network of extended family groups, and started the narrative of identity judgement. As funds from the Tasmanian government started to flow into communities to establish Aboriginal programs and services, the TAC offered incentives for people to “identify” as Aboriginal, according to their invitation (Marks 2013). *pakana* who tried to do so, and who were not affiliated with the TAC-aligned families and groups at this time, began to feel the pinch of ostracism as “contested” Aboriginal people through denial of identity and corroborating documents. Elder Aunty Patsy Cameron confirms the oppression by stating that “many people had oral history but no documentary evidence of their Aboriginality. I just can't come to terms with the notion that people would want to claim Aboriginality when they are not” (Shine 2017, n.p.). Many people who come from familial lines that are contested by the TAC feel that they are “frozen out” and labeled as “paper blacks” (Marks 2013, p. 184).

Key activist and past leader of the TAC, Michael Mansell, has determined that in order to be recognized as a *pakana* person, they must: “show that . . . their families, from every generation back to tribal, have always maintained their connection with being Aboriginal. So that excludes people who undoubtedly have Aboriginal descent but who have been brought up as white people. . . . If there’s been a break in the generations, where someone lost contact, the Aboriginal community’s view is . . . you can’t revive it” (Mansell, cited in Marks 2013, p. 185).

This position of elitism to choose whose experience of colonization counts and whose does not has been contested by the *pakana* academic Dr Greg Lehman, who acknowledges that his family did not identify for many years. Lehman argues that TAC identity recognition may at times be based not so much on a person’s ancestry, or their family history of identification, or even their warrior credentials, but is rather based “on the opinions and interests of powerful people within the community” (Marks 2013, p. 185). Elder Aunty Patsy Cameron argues:

that even someone who hasn’t been active in their culture or in the politics of the day . . . it doesn’t make them any less Aboriginal. Anyone who can show their lineage, and their extended family, and acknowledges them as part of that family, we should be embracing them. We should be embracing our people who have been lost, rather than chasing them away and doing to them the exact thing that non-Aboriginal people have done to us in the past: denying us our rights, our identity.

Cameron, cited in Marks 2013, p. 191

Black elitism guards and protects lateral violence to diminish a person’s identity, and leaves them labeled as a “tick-a-box black” as portrayed in popular media (Berk 2017; Denholm 2015; Hunt 2016; Ratcliff 1997; Shine 2017; The Advocate 2017). The black panopticon works by leveraging the right of gaining an identity in exchange for following the norms and behaviors that black privilege (the surveillance class) dictates to suit the political climate (Marks 2013).

However, it is the power of the colonizer that manipulates both the perpetrator and the victim of the black power struggle for white gain. Identity politics and its laterally violent behaviors in *lutruwita* reached peak notice among the wider community in Tasmania in 2016 (ABC 2016). At this time, black elitism and the governance of identity were so distorted as to replicate the original extinction myths of colonial Tasmania of the mid-1800s – widespread denial of any *pakana*

identity outside a chosen few decided upon by the TAC. The emergence of new Aboriginal organizations in the late 1980s and beyond throughout *lutruwita* gave some *pakana* an alternative voice to the TAC, but this gave rise to compounding lateral violence from identity politics, as community organizations become the arbitrators of identity (Carlson 2016). Lateral violence then extended beyond individuals to community organizations and institutions as the spaces for internecine disputes of oppression.

Identity denial

Oppression is the purest form of power; it creates an “us” and “them” divide between black and white, and targets Indigenous People for restriction, ridicule and marginalization (Smith 1999). Lateral violence means that we do this to each other as a “black and black” divide. Returning to the Premier’s speech, he gave examples of what outright denial of identity looks like as a form of violence. In drawing attention to the statistical mismatch between those who self-identify as *pakana* on a census and those who are accepted for eligibility through *pakana* organizational legitimacy, Hodgman (2016) punctuated his speech by putting a focus on the cultural impact of denial.

Denial means the limiting of opportunities to pass on knowledge and practices: grandparents, who are recognized by the TAC, cannot share with their grandchildren, who are not, the rights to culture, as the Premier heard and recounted (Hodgman 2016). The Premier then segued from this experience to one where only two of three sons from the same parents are recognized, and the family is left to fight a bureaucratic battle on behalf of the other that should be common-sense (Hodgman 2016). Identity politics are often attributed to the misallocation and appropriation of federal and state government funding initiatives to *pakana* organizations, as some organizations are not considered “Aboriginal” by others (Lambie 2016). It is the institution, the people or the entity with the most dominant power that wins over as the recognized *pakana* organization most deserving of funding. These forms of identity denial prevent *pakana* gaining recognition of heritage and exclude some *pakana* from taking part in their cultural traditions. This oppression adds another layer to the haves and have nots in our community that is already too often marginalized.

Community lateral violence regarding identification and confirmation processes for the determination of Aboriginality are wreaking havoc in families, organizations and communities. Elder and author, Auntie Patsy Cameron,

suggests that historical Tasmanian colonization outcomes continue to shape our futures, particularly negative impacts such as lateral violence on our wellbeing (Cameron & Miller 2011). The exclusion of some people regarding their Aboriginality divides families, creates levels of disproportionate trust, has people doubt their own identity and the identity of others, and the power of self-determination is removed from families. This speaks to Foucault's (1980) analysis of power where everyone can be involved, touched by or caught up in by its effects – both the oppressors and the oppressed. Foucault (1980, p. 39) also describes how power affects the “grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives”. It is this immersion of mistrust, self-doubt and conflict, that the politics of identity play a pivotal role in the saturation of lateral violence in *pakana* communities.

Gooda (in Koch 2011) describes lateral violence as internalized colonization, where the anger and fear of oppression can only be vented to those who are closest to us. Those with power try to maximize the impacts of lateral violence and, in doing so, diminish the rights of others (Stilwell 2017). Identity politics are perpetrated through lateral violence in both overt and covert ways (Langton 2008), where the organizations and individuals can assert elitism to ill effect on our people. In *lutruwita*, the descendants of relations borne of colonial circumstance, means that “whiteness” is often inferred to those who do not “look black enough” (Frogley 2018, p. 38), a view also shared by colonizers past and present. Thus, the right to claim identity, and community and cultural belonging, is complex, as both *pakana* and colonizers have power in passing judgement. Levels of prejudice and racism experienced by Indigenous People working in higher education settings have been reported by the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). They found that a considerable component of prejudice relates to “being black” as much as it does to “not being black enough”, with both non-Indigenous and Indigenous People exercising prejudice towards those they perceive as the latter (Frogley 2011).

Identity is shaped and framed within the external (colonizers) and internal (*pakana*) constructs of the black panopticon. There is no equilibrium for how we as *pakana* negotiate identity; it is still framed within colonial power. We need to challenge the power construct and take formulative control of who we are. Distinguished Professor Maggie Walter in Carlson (2016, n.p.) summarizes the governance of power and how it continues to rule *pakana* through: “The continuity of the oppressive obsession of the colonisers and their twentieth century descendants with defining and containing Aboriginal identity to suit

their own racially infused purposed into the present, where Aboriginal people and organisations are sometimes co-opted into continuing this damaging task.” In *lutruwita* our communities have been co-opted, but also the perpetrators. In this manner, decolonizing work must occur for both black and white to rid our communities of this scourge of violence.

Decolonizing lateral violence and the black panopticon

The case study of *lutruwita* demonstrates the severe magnitude of lateral violence, where even a white premier rallies against its effects on our people. While this essay has gone some way to provide an example of how lateral violence functions, through the understanding of surveillance power as a black panopticon, I have yet to explore the methods of repairing the harms we have caused ourselves through being colonized. My contribution to decolonization studies, through characterizing lateral violence within *pakana* communities, is supported by an exploration of how and why we should decolonize our own spaces of identity.

I believe that healing is an essential component of decolonizing work. Decolonizing methodologies and practices, whether they are to break white privilege or black elitism, should be a force for good. Therefore, healing is both an outcome and impactful to the core processes of decolonization. For example, Canadian research has provided empirical insights into how lateral violence may be managed (Archibald 2006). Narratives of community healing, with education sessions to identify cultural interventions, therapeutic repair and reclaiming history, have been implemented in attempts to stamp out lateral violence for their First Nations populations (Archibald 2006). In this manner, Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) is right when she describes how decolonizing methodologies are an opportunity to re-claim, re-name and re-write our own narratives based on our lived and learned experiences.

Healing begins with recognition of the problem – what are the conditions that create lateral violence and racialized surveillance? We need to find strength and replace harms with cultural values that place our people central to their own stories of family and community through surviving colonization. Professor Smith’s (1999) work focuses on how Indigenous methodologies build a research practice to assist in our struggle for dignity and rights, away from the control and forces that the black panopticon pervades into our lives. In our attempt to decolonize we must engage with colonial policies and practices from the past,

which will create a pathway for us to have a “space” where we are able to express our unique identities, and our ways of knowing, being and doing (Strelein & Tran 2013). Through processes of resistance, we can challenge the phenomenon where non-Indigenous people assume authority and expertise to speak on our behalf through enabling lateral violence over identity (Kesseris 2006).

Indigenous methodologies allow me, as an Indigenous researcher, to confront the limitations of Western research, by challenging the exclusion and denial of us and our knowledges, instead privileging the experiences of *pakana* and validating our cultural practices and traditions (Nakata et al 2012). Indigenous methodologies are useful for framing the experience of lateral violence from an insider view (Clark et al 2017); I am able to center myself and my worldviews, applying this knowledge to critical thinking and the act of decolonizing the research as much as the lateral violence. Indigenous methodologies, therefore, allows me to assert my own cultural authority and identity to participate in repairing the harms of lateral violence and see outside the black panopticon.

Indigenous Standpoint Theory provides a platform that can allow my Indigenous epistemology to be privileged over Western ethnocentric norms (Ardill 2013; Bamblett 2013; Foley 2003; Nakata 2007). It aids me as an early career *pakana* researcher to consider lateral violence in *pakana* communities: *pakana* knowledge that is learnt, shared and retained becomes part of the body of knowledge for the *pakana* community. I, therefore, am able to speak from my own cultural position, assisting in the maintenance of cultural protocols by sharing my own epistemological “truth” and attempting to produce a more inclusive, holistic and culturally acceptable and respectful form of knowledge and ways of knowing, being and doing.

As I work through finding and sharing my voice from an Indigenous standpoint, I am aware of the negotiation of power needed to navigate the discursive practice within the black panopticon. This power can be used for good and bad, as can the discourse that we use to negotiate lateral violence. These power relations are complex and create unstable processes where the narrative of lateral violence can be both an instrument and an attractor of power. In the case of lateral violence, the negative discourse transmits and produces power as it permeates itself within and outside the black panopticon. Western power reinforces it but, in doing so, it also undermines and exposes lateral violence, and renders it fragile and unable to work effectively (Foucault 1998). The deficit discourse of lateral violence continues to keep us “colonized”, whilst undermining our model of identity.

Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies are buttressed by critical theory that concerns itself with race, racism and power (Writer 2008), occupying the spectrum from Whiteness Theory to Indigenous Standpoint Theory (Malagon, Huber & Velez 2009; McLaughlin & Whatman 2011; Yosso et al 2009). These schools of thought are invariably concerned with power relations and the discourses that drive those into dominance (Foucault 1979). We need to change the narrative, eliminate the negative discourse of lateral violence and bring useful power back to our communities. Through decolonizing the Western panopticon to reveal the characteristics of the black one, we see how lateral violence can be framed as the black elite trying “to feel powerful in a powerless situation” (Phillips 2009, n.p.).

Through the decolonizing process we can see the birth and maturation of lateral violence, how it is rooted in colonization, and the by-products such as disadvantage, discrimination and oppression that it brings. The social and economic inequity in preserving a black panopticon that serves Western ends of discipline (Roithmayr 1999) requires an honest and forthright acknowledgement of the underpinning power and control of the colonizers and enacted by their black envoys (Nakata 2007). When we can see *pakana* as lateral violence victims created by our own guardians and brick walls, we can then begin to target the remedy to the cause, rather than be torn between different competing discourses (Frankenberg 1993). But from here we need to focus on the dominance of white social constructs, to allow us to shift the attention away from us as the marginalized and disadvantaged group, to question and investigate the behaviors of the dominant colonizer (Bonilla-Silva 2009; Frankenberg 1993; Habibis & Walter 2009).

Conclusion

The black panopticon contributes scholarship to defining how lateral violence looks in communities. Using my Indigenous methodological lens, in my own community, I have seen what the structure of the black panopticon looks like. The black panopticon provides opportunity to explore the colonial fortress of power that continues to encase us in contemporary *lutruwita*. Challenging lateral violence requires a multi-disciplinary approach to provide insight, affect change and commence healing. We need to find a safe space within the panopticon, which will allow us as *pakana* to lead how we can change the narrative framing our communities and lateral violence. Through storytelling,

we can re-enact the wisdom of our Old People, bring together our collective and cultural knowledges to progress ourselves, our way, and not in the current form with oversight from the colonizer. Our ontological ways of being, and our epistemological ways of knowing, should be a force that brings good and allows our voice to the forefront. The intersection between Western and Indigenous methodologies can create a platform for discussions. We need to give voice to the myriad of daily negotiations we make in colonized contexts to free ourselves from the black panopticon. This way, we can create a path for understanding and explaining how our Indigenous subjectivities are continuing to be constituted within colonial relations of power (Nakata 2007). We need to enable the white lens of colonization to be deconstructed and analyze our own knowledge of what is lateral violence, and how is it affecting and informing our wellbeing as *pakana* people. An important step in challenging these colonial power relations is to expose lateral violence and its colonizing effects through educating *pakana* of the continuing unequal distribution of power that is perpetuated amongst our communities. I echo Smith (1999, p. 28), when she states, “we want to write our own stories, in our own way, to give testimony to our history”. It is the structure of the black panopticon, not the people, that needs changing, as identity is constructed and conformed by power.