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Guest Editorial

Green Criminological Dialogues: Voices from Oceania

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Introduction

In an era where society seems trapped in an overarching, hegemonic way of being, doing, thinking, and relating to nature, searching for alternatives is vital. As Graeber and Wengrow (2022) document, humanity before the colonial era lived in a rich variety of ways that exemplified humans' significant social dexterity. Yet, colonialism expanded the notion of property as sacred and the associated system of "strict top-down hierarchies … where orders given are dutifully obeyed" (Graeber & Wengrow, 2022, p. 162). The sacred status of property has fuelled ecological devastation through the advancement of capitalism, and the enforcement of top-down hierarchies has augmented social injustices and solidified the racialisation of social groups. The treadmill of capitalist production (e.g., Gould et al., 2008) and the associated consumerist creed (Brisman & South, 2014; Miles, 1998) are in large part responsible for pushing the Earth to the edge of a series of ecological tipping points (Hessen, 2023). Even the apparent emergence of new powers in the world order, such as China and India, do not challenge the Western capitalist, consumerist approach to life, as these emergent nations have garnered power and influence by embracing capitalist and colonial logics (e.g., Mao & Zhong, 2023). Western ways are not challenged; they are reinforced, and with them, the furthering of social and ecological injustices on the planet.

As with previous special issues under the theme of *Green Criminological Dialogues* in the *International Journal of Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* (Goyes et al., 2019, 2022, 2024), we search for alternatives to the Western way of being by tapping into the power of engagement with intellectuals from diverse backgrounds around the world who represent different cultures (Beckerman & Lizarralde, 2013), and who can teach us different ways of seeing (Berger, 1973) and more importantly, different ways of living (Morizot, 2022). Diversity and "peripherality" have, for too long, been dismissed and discarded by the Western knowledge tradition (Grosfoguel, 2016), amounting to a waste of experience (Santos, 2002) and the reinforcement of northern-centric scientific dominance (Connell, 2006). When "diverse" and "peripheral" knowledges are considered in an ever more globalised research landscape, these tend to be engaged with as "data mines" (Grosfoguel, 2016) for the advancement of careers in Western universities (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010), and more for the service of the knowledge economy than for local social and ecological justice (Hanafi & Arvanitis, 2016). We need another way of relating to the diversity of cultures and knowledge traditions beyond the extractivist economistic mode, as these "alternative" ways of existing can provide useful social models that do not depend on the exploitation and suffering of others. These ways of being and knowing can inspire systems that could be scaled up and applied to larger communities, in what decolonial scholar Arturo Escobar (2011) named

"development ethnography." But not all forms of being and knowing need to be scaled up; they can remain in their original dimensions and serve as vehicles of local justice (Benjamin, 2022)—what matters is that these forms of being, seeing, and understanding are not erased or "silently silenced" (Mathiesen, 2004) when hegemonic forces expand, and superimpose new "approved" ways of living, thinking, and believing over colonised territories (García Hierro & Surrallés, 2005; Goyes et al., 2021b).

This collection intends to engage in a productive dialogue with a sample of ways of knowing and being in Oceania. Some of the articles illustrate localised understandings of the dynamics that generate injustice and erode distinctive cultures in the continent (Kingi-Thomas, Hata, & Deckert; Vachette & McKinley), while others present cosmologies of resistance (Arnt; Hamilton; Whitehead & Doornbos). All articles in the collection—as well as all knowledge produced in and about Oceania—must be read with the trajectory of colonialism in mind. Colonialism has altered most social dynamics in the region and largely reshaped its ecosystems. As called upon by diverse voices in decolonial, global, and Southern criminologies, conflict, crime, and resistance in the Global South must be linked to colonialism and coloniality (Agozino, 2003; Carrington et al., 2016; Cunneen et al., 2023; Cunneen & Tauri, 2016; Franko, 2019; Goyes, 2019).

The Colonial History of Oceania and its Consequences

As of 2025, approximately 50 million people live in the geographical region known as Oceania—sometimes described as a "liquid continent"—with the vast majority of them inhabiting the continent of Australia (27.6 million in 2025, ABS, 2025). Over 14 million people live in the Pacific Islands, a collection of islands in the Pacific Ocean grouped into three main regions: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The landscape is largely a waterscape, as vast bodies of water dominate the geography. Those living on the smaller islands, isolated from the rest of the world by a vast ocean, as well as those made a minority through waves of white-led genocide, face numerous ecological threats to their existence, stemming from a long history of northern colonialism (Ramírez, 2021). Climate change, to which nations in the Global North have contributed with 92% of excess emissions (Hickel, 2020), threatens their survival as their countries are being impacted by rising ocean levels. In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the easternmost country in Micronesia, a dome containing waste from the US nuclear program is threatening to collapse (Rust, 2019). Human and non-human inhabitants of the Cook Islands are threatened by pressure to mine seabed metallic nodules, rich in metals and minerals needed to make batteries (Readfearn, 2022). A large portion of Oceania faces ecological vulnerability due to the colonialism it has endured across almost three centuries.

Before the transformations brought about by the colonisers, the people of the Pacific Islands, as inhabitants of Oceania are widely known, lived in a sacred bond with the water and the ocean. They relied on it for food and transportation, and developed their spirituality around it (Jetñil-Kijiner et al., 2022; and see its review by Hornum, 2025, in this special issue). Ancient Polynesians were skilled seafarers and expanded to distant islands. As Dacks et al. (2025, p. 3) summarise:

> Across Oceania, people's cultural and historical connections to ocean and coastal environments extend from deep time to the present and influence contemporary behaviors and responses to changing environmental and sociopolitical contexts. Complex relationships between communities and their marine environments in this region are also notable because of their persistence despite significant colonial impositions and sociocultural transformations over the 19th and 20th centuries and, today, in communities' continuing commitment to decolonizing projects and sustainable futures.

This commitment was articulated by Pacific leaders in the foreword to the 2050 *Blue Pacific Strategy*, stating, "We place great value on our ocean and land, and celebrate a deep connection to our community, natural environment, resources, livelihoods, faiths, cultural values and traditional knowledge" (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2022). The history of Pacific settlement illuminates this close connection to ocean and land. Oceania was explored and settled in two waves. During the ancient hunter-gatherer period (50,000–25,000 BCE), people of mainland Asia set off on simple rafts and settled the large South East Asian islands, Australia, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands (Near Oceania). The second wave of exploration and settlement of the remote parts of the Pacific started around 1200 BCE, after the people of Near Oceania had, over generations, honed their boat-building and open-water navigation skills, using stars, planets, birds, whales, clouds, land sell and the sea itself (its colours, whirls, and currents) to sail forth and back through the Pacific (Taonui, 2006). Around 1000 CE, they went as far as South America, from where they brought home the kūmara (sweet potato), which is a staple of the Pacific diet. Aotearoa New Zealand was the last substantial land mass to be reached by Polynesian seafarers around 1300 CE (Irwin, 2006). So, Oceania encompasses a vast region with a large diversity of peoples and cultures, and any effort to describe them all would be vacuous. What is important, however, is to reassert the rich intellectual and spiritual traditions they had long before the arrival of the Western colonisers. For example, in Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori cosmology presents a relational, genealogical account of the universe's emergence from a primal void into an ordered world: from Te Kore (the realm of potential) to Te Pō (the realm of darkness) and into Te Ao Mārama (the world of light), with the separation of Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth

Mother) by their children—most notably Tāne, Tāwhirimātea, Tangaroa, Rongomātāne and Tūmatauenga—who become the atua (ancestral powers) shaping forests, winds, seas, food and human social order (Royal, 2006). This cosmology is not mere myth but provides a framework for living. It is expressed through whakapapa, which are the genealogical relations that link each individual to their whānau (family), hapū (subtribe), iwi (tribe), and all the way back to the named canoe with which their ancestors arrived in Aotearoa. Māori ways of doing are seasonal and linked to star knowledge and kaitiakitanga (guardianship). For example, Matariki, the Māori New Year, which is marked by the heliacal rising of the Matariki star cluster (the Pleiades) in late June or early July, signals a seasonal time for remembrance, reflection, celebration, and planning for the year ahead. Māori cosmology also provides for tikanga, which varies by iwi and hapū. While tikanga is often translated as "custom," it is much more than that. Beyond its practical aspects, tikanga provides a value system—ethics to live by—as can be gleaned from the definition offered by Hirini Moko Mead (2003, p. 12):

> Tikanga are tools of thought and understanding. They are packages of ideas which help to organise behaviour and provide some predictability in how certain activities are carried out. They provide templates and frameworks to guide our actions and help steer us through some huge gatherings of people and some tense moments in our ceremonial life. They help us to differentiate between right and wrong in everything we do and in all of the activities we engage in. There is a right and proper way to conduct oneself.

As such, tikanga informs law, identity, environmental stewardship, and cultural renewal today. Many of these systems of beliefs were, however, marginalised and threatened upon colonisation.

Western invaders developed subjugation technologies during the colonisation of the Americas (Goyes, 2025a; and see the special issue on the Americas, Goyes et al., 2019), which they later applied in parts of Asia in the 16th century (LePoer, 1987; Zaffaroni, 2022; and see the special issue on Asia, Goyes et al., 2022), in Africa with full intensity from the mid-17th century onwards (Arowolo, 2022, and for the special issue on Africa, see Goyes et al., 2024), and in Oceania starting at the end of the 18th century (Faaniu & Laracy, 1983). These waves of colonisation that have broadly affected most of the Global South took shape differently across the continents. Settler colonialism in North America and parts of Oceania meant the invaders claimed the colonised locations as their new homes; plantation colonialism turned Latin America, most of Africa, and parts of Asia into adjunct gardens from which the invaders extracted their plenty to enhance their lives in Europe (Crosby, 2004; Mejías & Couldry, 2024). Plantation colonisers transformed the environments of the colonies to such an extent that Malcolm Ferdinand (2021) has called the era the "Plantationocene." In Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, the trajectory of colonialism has mainly been one of settler colonialism and of plantation colonialism in many of the other Islands.

In 1642, Abel Tasman arrived in the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Given a hostile reception that saw four of his men killed, he left "the country with an unfavourable impression" (Walker, 2004, p. 78). In 1787, the British Government decided to colonise Oceania. The decision was prompted by the arrival of what some people believed was the first white man in Oceania, Captain James Cook, in 1770 (Hughes, 1986). While local Indigenous historians dispute whether Cook was the first white person to visit Oceania and document many others who preceded him, and perhaps most importantly that Oceanic people had already been in contact with white people when Oceanic voyagers had taken to "discovering" remote lands (Silva, 2004), what is accurate is that Cook's voyages across Oceania and the accompanying diaries brought attention to the region, spurred imperial competition for it, and started a period of rapid change across the continent (Igler, 2013). The plans of the British Government were to establish a penal colony in Australia to offload overcrowded prisoners. On 26 January 1788, the first thousand convicts—of a total of approximately 160,000—were transported. By the end of the 18th-century, not only one but many imperial powers were competing to colonise the region. The newly liberated United States of America started its colonial campaigns in Oceania in 1788 (Igler, 2013). Although the United States of America was now an independent nation, its rulers—transposed descendants of the British colonisers—gave continuity to the colonial mindset of their ancestors. The North American colonisers sought routes for commerce, engaged in whaling, and expanded their control. Other European powers, including England, France, Portugal, Russia, and Spain, also competed for control of Oceania.

When northern countries started their colonial campaigns in Oceania, capitalism had already established itself as the dominant mode of production. This economic system began consolidating through the colonisation of the Americas (Quijano, 1992), and the subsequent colonial expansion to Asia and Africa enabled a truly global seizure of assets for the expansion in production. By the time colonialism reached Oceania, a large-scale transference of raw materials from the Global South to the Global North was already underway, and the colonial routes had opened up transnational commerce with commodities traded throughout the world (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Oceania and the Pacific Islands were thus linked to worldwide markets, primarily as a source of ocean products (Iger, 2013). Otters, seals, and whales were significantly diminished in *the great hunt* and human populations were also reduced through the spread of Western diseases. Western scientists sponsored by colonial governments inundated the continent to understand its ecologies and human societies. Just as the British Crown wished for Australia to be a penal colony,

the same imperial power and others later decided to make the whole of Oceania a site for social science testing. As Howe (2000) explains, "ideas and questions about human 'civilization,' the relationships between nature and culture, racial classifications and culture contact, cultural and biological survival and destiny have all been extensively tested and examined using Pacific case studies." The extensive Western exploration, studying, and testing, makes the continent "intellectually occupied and conceptually shaped by the West" (p. 2).

As Iger (2013) describes, "by the late 1840s, the expansion of global trade, consequent decades of indigenous depopulation, and the effects of US territorial conquest had radically transformed the eastern portions of the Pacific" (p. 8). The continent was intensively exploited economically and cognitively for a century, while genocidal and ecocidal processes were underway. Still, original inhabitants resisted from the start (Silva, 2004), but that resistance was never monolithic. Indigenous peoples across the Pacific mounted sustained and varied resistance to European and later settler-colonial incursions—combining armed struggle, declarations of independence, diplomatic negotiation, the signing of treaties, legal challenge, flight to remote areas, cultural revival, and international advocacy—to defend and protect land, sovereignty, and culture. These responses ranged from 19th-century armed confrontations and expulsions of missionaries to 20th- and 21st -century movements for legal recognition, regional and international coordination of Indigenous rights, and cultural-political revitalisation that continue to shape contemporary politics and claims for justice (Walker, 2004). Today, as for the past two centuries, Indigenous intellectuals in Oceania are highly active in the decolonisation of knowledge, justice, and society (e.g., Cunneen et al., 2025; Cunneen & Tauri, 2016; Elkington et al., 2020; Tauri, 1999).

Green Criminology in Oceania

Just as Western Europe and the United States of America have a magnetic power over the global criminological imagination, representing their production as the ultimate knowledge (Aas, 2012), Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand attract the most criminological (and green criminological) attention in Oceania. As White (p. 2) says in his essay included in this special issue:

> While there are undoubted crime and criminal justice issues throughout Oceania, most of the distinctly *criminological* work has taken place in the regional metropoles of Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. In a similar vein, while environmental and climate-related issues loom large for the Pacific Islands, there has been little research and scholarly activity specifically identified as 'green criminology' in the region.

Much criminological work does exist beyond these two states, and the special issue guest-edited by Faleolo and Forsyth (2024) is a valuable collection of papers reflecting "an emerging awareness that there is something very exciting and potentially transformative in approaching the traditional concerns of criminology—crime, violence, punishment, and healing —through a Pacific sensibility." Importantly, the editors (2024. p. iii) argue that:

> Pacific criminology is criminology imbued with Pacific values' including 'love, respect, reciprocity, spirituality, family, community, collectiveness, cultural obligations, kinship, and protocols' and these values find examples throughout the Pacific Islands region as a whole, including 'the Sāmoan practices of fa'a Sāmoa, the Fijian practice of i-tovo vaka Viti (Fijian way of life); Tonga's Faa'i Kaveikoula; Kiribati's te mwaneaba system, Vanuatu's kastom system, and so forth.

The ten contributions to *The Emergence of a Pacific Criminology* from Faleolo and Forsyth (2024) are impressive, diverse and connect to several strands within criminological work, but a green or environmental strand is not one of these.

In an essay reflecting on receiving an award and on his career, John Braithwaite (2013) looks back at developments in Pacific and Australian criminology and recalls how many scholars, who pioneered work that might now fall within the wide catchment of "green criminology" moved "from a more criminological frame for studying occupational health and safety… and environmental protection to a more pluralised regulatory framework in which criminal enforcement was just one of a number of arrows in a regulator's quiver" (p. 8). Among the named pioneers is **Rob White**, whose intervention here provides a detailed account of the slow but ultimately very influential growth of green criminology in Australia. White notes that the history of green criminology in Australasia is simultaneously local and global, and its development partly "rests on appreciation of the impact of the European colonial experience, and the ongoing political struggles of Indigenous peoples across the region" (p. 7). White provides a valuable personal and "insider" recollection of the development of green criminology in Australasia but importantly also notes the links that have been made "across cognate areas (such as rural criminology, law, media studies, and environmental regulation)" and how this is also being reflected in "postcolonial work around environmental and species justice issues (e.g., rights of Nature and legal personhood for rivers)" (p. 6).

We have already referred to several of these points and connections above—and the contributors to this collection elaborate on some of these—but in the context of a continental region where urbanisation and industrialisation have been very concentrated in some areas and the rest of the landscape and waterscape could be said to be "rural," it is worth noting how the related "sub-field" of rural criminology has formulated a view of Oceanic criminology (Harkness et al., 2025).

There are various (and obvious) ways in which green criminology and rural criminology overlap (e.g., Brisman et al., 2014, 2016) and, as in Southern green criminology (Goyes, 2019), some work in rural criminology recognises the importance of "the impact of colonialism on the way that Indigenous peoples throughout Oceania view themselves: 'particularly on their ways of knowing, their views of who and what they are, and what they consider worthwhile to teach and to learn' " (Harkness et al., 2025, p. 134, quoting Thaman, 2003), although this recognition may be more limited than it should be (Goyes & South, 2020). As a part of Oceanic criminology, however, rural criminology seems to have had an uneven development and impact and "For work both theorising criminology and with an empirical research focus, literature from Australia dominates" (Harkness et al., 2025, p. 130). A familiar picture then—and yet there is no shortage of items (harms, crimes, abuses, and so on) that should feature on a green and rural or (Southern) green criminological research agenda sensitive to the intertwining of the rights and experiences of humans, other species, and places of nature. Such an agenda could include "dispossession of traditional owners and removal of rights over land, timber and fisheries by colonial settlers" (Harkness et al., 2025) and the impacts of wars and nuclear testing on the islands and populations of the region (p. 136). In addition, popular and commodified perceptions of the South Pacific "as a region replete with reefs and lagoons, surf beaches, forests and volcanos' (Harkness et al., 2025, p. 136) could present research topics for a green cultural criminology critical of eco-tourism and "last-chance-to-see" cruises and tours (Goyes, 2025b; Lam et al., 2022) as well as contributions to the developing area of (Southern) "blue criminology" (Garcia Ruiz et al., 2022; Hübschle & Berg, 2024) based on concerns about marine ecology, illicit, unreported and unregulated fishing, the limits of conservation efforts and demands for approval of ocean bed mining. Finally, as also noted by Harkness et al (2025), biodiversity loss and rising sea levels related to global warming signal the major environmental crisis facing the planet, but perhaps particularly the peoples and places of the South Pacific.

Voices from Oceania on Green Crime, Harm, Violence, and Resistance

All the patterns of colonialism in Oceania play out in the contributions to this collection. The trajectories of economic and epistemological exploitation, genocides, and Indigenous resistance have continuity today, and the authors of the collection explore how the reverberations of colonialism play out in current instances of conflict, crime, and Indigenous claims for autonomy. As such, the collection is an exercise of temporal and spatial linking (Haug et al., 2021), as is proper for a Southern green criminology (Goyes, 2019), connecting the events of the colonisation of Oceania in the late 18th-century with current affairs, and the conflicts and violence in Oceania with the policies and campaigns deployed by the Global North, and as transposed by colonial settlers.

In *Considering Climate Migration in Kiribati and Tuvalu Through a Victimological Lens,* **Astrid Vachette and Amber McKinley** study the sources of ecological vulnerability for these two Pacific Island nations and the consequences in terms of climate migration. The authors also underscore the difficulties in responding to climate migration and propose measures to heighten the empowerment and flourishing of migrants. Like other small island states, Kiribati and Tuvalu are remotely located, have low-income, and self-provide through direct use of their natural resources. The Islands contribute little to climate change but face its worst consequences. Rising ocean levels and acidification, added to extreme weather events, threaten islanders' livelihoods. Lands flood, marine life disappears, and with limited territory, inhabitants have few options to relocate. Most must migrate, becoming people on the move driven by the impacts of climate change (e.g., Brisman et al., 2018). Vachette and McKinley argue that Routine Activity Theory, with its triad of concepts of a motivated offender, a suitable target, and an absent guardian, is useful to explain climate migration in Kiribati and Tuvalu. Adapting the theory to the harms of climate change would mean that the motivated offenders are the CO2 emitters, the suitable targets are the local inhabitants who become climate migrants, and the absent guardians are the passive and defective climate adaptation institutions. The prospect of profit and material standards motivates high-income nations to emit greenhouse gases; limited lands and funds hinder islanders from protecting themselves from climate change transformations; and evidence shows that if guardians exist, they have not been capable of protecting the inhabitants, now turned into migrants. In the case of Kiribati and Tuvalu, offenders and guardians are one and the same (northern, colonising nations), so the schemes implemented in the name of guardianship may actually be ruses to facilitate continuous offending.

Beyond its specific insights, the article encourages some criminological reflection on how even orthodox rational choice theories, such as Routine Activity Theory, can have a critical and even emancipatory potential when applied from a different vantage point (for other examples of the critical use of orthodox theories on ecological violence, see Agnew, 1998, and Brisman & South, 2015). Routine Activity Theory is usually applied to cases of direct violence, street crime, and burglary, but often

fails at explaining more deeply why an offender is motivated, why a victim is suitable, and why the guardian is either not capable or absent. The theory, if reshaped, however, can put structures in the spotlight and expose the structural sources of motivation, vulnerability, and absence. Climate change offenders are motivated by the global underpinnings of capitalism and developmentalism; victims are suitable and vulnerable as a result of a historical trajectory of plunder and marginalisation; guardians are incapable because they serve the interests of the offenders. Using a critical version of Routine Activity Theory for climate change, thus predicts that more harm and suffering will come unless social arrangements change.

In *Whakapapa, Tikanga, and Māori Epistemic Resistance through News Media: The Battle for Environmental Justice at Ihumātao,* **Maia Kingi-Thomas, Alexandra Hata (Sandy), and Antje Deckert** examine how Māori resistance to environmental harm is portrayed by the Māori-led online newspaper *Te Ao Māori News*, compared to Aotearoa New Zealand's largest mainstream online newspaper, the *New Zealand Herald*. While the findings of their study may appear somewhat predictable, i.e., contrasting depictions that express Indigenous as opposed to European values, the authors expose the fundamental rift between Māori relational worldviews and individualistic logics of colonial-capitalist systems, recognising journalism as an active site of power, cultural (re)production, and resistance to environmental harm. They call out the epistemic colonial violence that is perpetuated through journalism by repressing and distorting Māori ways of knowing and doing, despite media ethics guidelines that mandate fairness and balance in reporting and avoidance of discriminatory emphasis, i.e., content that highlights attributes, behaviours, or incidents of a particular group in ways that reinforce negative stereotypes, stigma, or unequal treatment. Examples include selective use of language, over-representation of certain groups in negative headlines, and omission of context that would explain broader structural causes (Arendt, 2023).

The presentation of the research article itself is designed to challenge ongoing colonial forces. The original text on the left-hand side of the pages contains Māori terminology wherever the authors deem it necessary to provide the appropriate cultural context. It provides an effortless read for those familiar with the first language of the land. The text on the right-hand side of the pages contains the annotated version. The original text is offered, with the Māori terminology replaced by English translations. Additionally, Māori terminology is explained in the form of annotations to demonstrate how the English translation is insufficient to capture the essence of the Māori words in accordance with the Māori worldview. In doing so, the authors highlight and reflect on the ongoing struggles that have arisen from the Treaty of Waitangi, that is, the English translation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The two versions contain important differences that have produced enduring disagreement. For example, the English version speaks of ceding "sovereignty" to the Crown, while the Māori text uses terms such as kāwanatanga and tino rangatiratanga that convey a sharing of authority and the retention of the right for Māori to govern themselves. These rights were only recently defended, as a large protest movement prevented the Treaty Principles Bill from becoming law in 2024 (Hartendorp, 2025). However, the Regulatory Standards Bill, which passed its final reading in the New Zealand Parliament on November 13, 2025, and received Royal Assent on November 17, 2025, may equally serve to undermine Māori rights because its new regulatory principles do not mention the Treaty. The Bill establishes a statutory set of "principles of responsible regulation" and creates a Regulatory Standards Board to assess how proposed and existing laws measure up against those principles; its stated aim is to improve the quality of regulation, increase transparency about why regulation is needed, and reduce unnecessary or poor-quality rules. Critics argue that the legislation prioritises individual property, market-based principles, and corporate interests, restricting the government's ability to uphold its Treaty obligations, particularly regarding targeted support for Māori and the collective well-being of the environment (Salmond, 2025). These latest developments demonstrate the ongoing struggles of Māori to not only preserve their own rights but also their right to guard the environment from corporate harm.

In *Rangatiratanga and Kaitiakitanga in Response to Climate Change: The Case of Ngāi Tahu in Aotearoa New Zealand,* **Taylor Arnt** addresses the daunting question of how Indigenous people can remain faithful to their sacred bond with nature amid capitalist market pressures. Arnt's analysis is based on a juxtaposition of the settler-colonial concept of "environmental sustainability" with Mātauranga Māori—a holistic system of knowledge to understand the world, which is similar to the notion of a sacred whole found in other Indigenous communities across the globe (for an example from Latin America, see Apaza Huanca, 2019; in general, see Goyes et al., 2021a; Goyes & South, 2021). Arnt explains that Mātauranga Māori encompasses the concept of rangatiratanga (Indigenous sovereignty) and the ethos of kaitiakitanga (guardianship). Together, these two models of collective responsibility relate to environmental protection. This Māori worldview invites a more harmonious relationship with nature and is, therefore, more aligned with contemporary demands for urgent climate change action than the Western sustainability paradigm. Yet, it faces the constraints of the capitalist economic system imposed by settler-colonialists, who pressure Māori to produce "more and cheaper" to create profits and survive.

The article adds to the growing body of literature that seeks to decolonise criminology in general (Cunneen et al., 2023; Davanna et al., 2025) and green criminology in particular, by evaluating and valuing Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies and the contributions they continue to make to environmental protection and tackling climate change (Goyes, 2018, 2023). The question

remains, however, about how far such efforts to decolonise criminology and knowledge production can progress within a capitalist framework that perpetuates forms of neo-colonialism. Arnt's insights echo Emmy Rākete's (2023) Marxist analysis of the pre-colonial Māori economic system as being "organized in a communist manner" (p. 138). Rākete diagnosed that for capitalism to take hold in Aotearoa New Zealand, "Māori society had to die" (p. 139). The Māori had to be dispossessed of their lands—the foundational means of production—otherwise the key social relationship between the bourgeoisie and workers could not manifest. While Rākete ties this capitalist logic to colonial policing, which was put in place to guarantee Māori dispossession, applying the same logic to decolonised environmental protection means that Māori knowledges and epistemologies can never be fully actualised within a capitalist economy, but require a (re)turn to original modes of production. Arnt's overall argument, which starts from an interest in decolonising and Indigenous epistemologies, can be linked to abolition ecology and its insistence that care for the land and the achievement of environmental justice cannot be separated from the dismantling of other systems of oppression, including racial capitalism (Stephens-Griffin, 2023).

In *Indigenous Transitional Justice and Environmental Justice: The Case of Aotearoa,* **John Whitehead and Elliot Doornbos** discuss Indigenous international treaties aimed at protecting cetaceans. The authors explain that Pacific Indigenous peoples have a deep spiritual and historic relationship with cetaceans, particularly whales, extending to identifying as related kin. These cetaceans, nonetheless, are at risk of extinction due to human activity, including fishing, deep-sea mining, noise pollution, and more overarching human-created problems such as climate change. The decline in cetacean numbers affects not only the species and individual animals but also the Indigenous communities that have a cultural and spiritual relationship with them. As nature disappears, so too does the culture attached to it. Even when Indigenous peoples have for centuries protected and interacted with cetaceans, their official management has been, since colonisation, in the hands of central governments and their institutions. This arrangement not only further colonises Indigenous people but also is focused on economic growth and environmental exploitation. Unsurprisingly, interstate treaties have failed at protecting cetaceans in the region and in response, Indigenous nations across modern Pacific states have organised and signed the He Whakaputanga Moana*,* an Indigenous treaty that acknowledges the personhood of cetaceans and grants them legal recognition. This article recognises the many challenges to the effectiveness of the He Whakaputanga Moana*,* ranging from its vagueness in defining which animals it covers to its geographical limitations (a significant problem considering that many cetaceans are migratory species), to the difficulties in enforcing it when anthropocentric priorities continue to dominate, through to the significant planetary stressors and burdens which threaten not only cetaceans but all life on the planet. (These challenges are also often faced by Western international environmental law [Dupuy & Viñuales, 2019; Gillespie, 2014]). Nevertheless, Whitehead and Doornbos emphasise the significance of the Indigenous treaty as a subversive act of reclaiming sovereignty by Indigenous peoples, this time through wildlife management, with potential positive effects for both cetaceans and Indigenous nations. The He Whakaputanga Moana is an international treaty negotiated among Indigenous nations beyond and without nation-states, thereby subverting the colonial order. The treaty reasserts Indigenous customary power in the region and promotes unity among the different Pacific Indigenous peoples.

The article, beyond its central contribution, also raises a series of fundamental debates that green criminologists worldwide should consider. For instance, Whitehead and Doornbos describe how Pacific Indigenous communities consume cetaceans for food and clothing, but they also have a cultural and spiritual relationship of veneration with them, leading to more respectful interactions with these animals than those observed in Western industrial practices. Cetaceans are respected but also consumed—a seeming paradox that challenges the logic of some animal rights movements. The basis of further debate is whether, seen from the position of utilitarian and consequentialist moral philosophies—on which most vegans rely (e.g., Singer, 1975)—, the Indigenous belief system that leads them to consume animals *but* in a respectful way is not superior to Western veganism that calls for fully refraining from consuming animal parts or products. When Indigenous peoples use more-than-human animals, they do so from within a cosmological understanding of the interconnection and interdependence of all living beings on Earth; animal rights movements might embrace a position based on "purity" ethics that may result in furthering the disconnection. In other words, by acknowledging connection and interdependence, Indigenous communities have a lived philosophy that teaches us we are all part of a network of life, in which we all have to give to others for them to survive and thrive (Torres et al., 2020). A good illustration is the He Whakaputanga Moana treaty: while it enables Indigenous peoples to consume cetaceans, it also promotes a broader cultural shift by recognising the sentience of these living beings and challenging their perception as property—and it is hoped that the treaty may even inspire settler governments to incorporate it as state law. The cultural and legal recognition of animal sentience can increase the well-being of the protected species and lower the threshold of activating animal rights protection in the courts (Zaffaroni, 2012). Furthermore, the effects of the treaty might ripple globally if other Indigenous nations are inspired to follow suit and codify the personhood of nature.

In *Hearing the Voices of Environmental Harm from Oceania: The Potential of Restorative Justice*, **Mark Hamilton** explores whether restorative justice can be a tool for hearing the voices of environmental victims (human and more-than-human) and particularly, of Indigenous peoples (the most affected by the planetary breakdowns). The answer might be obvious, but

Hamilton problematises it with two considerations: first, if applied to environmental conflicts, restorative justice might cease to be restorative justice and become something else. Restorative justice, traditionally understood as a face-to-face dialectical exchange in which people are heard, their views valued, and the repair of harm is central, seeks to heal the wounds in the social-relational tissue created by crime and conflict. However, its use on environmental matters requires, first, going beyond addressing crime and conflict to deal with legal actions and ongoing situations; second, expanding its interest beyond human communities; third, broadening its reach to national and global scales; and fourth, using it preventively rather than reactively. Hamilton thus asks whether restorative justice is still restorative justice when adapted to address the dimensions and complexity of environmental problems? In addressing this question, Hamilton argues that restorative justice is not a form of Indigenous justice but rather a product of colonial appropriation and imposition. Tauri (2023) describes this as an outcome of "strategies of indigenization and co-option, whereby 'acceptable' components of Indigenous cultural beliefs and practices are retrofitted onto … policies and interventions" (p. 44). Through the marketing of restorative justice as a lesson learnt from the Indigenous peoples, the invaders gave the impression of living in a society with multicultural institutions, thus hiding that, in actuality, no real dialogue and multiculturalism exist. While Hamilton observes that not only might the trajectory of restorative justice dissuade Indigenous people from engaging with it regarding environmental crime, but the definitional boundaries of restorative justice also make it difficult to apply it to environmental issues. Yet it is acknowledged that this model of justice still has important and valid communicative functions. Restorative justice is about *listening* and *valuing* and can lead to acknowledging the interrelatedness between humanity and nature, facilitating inclusive participation in environmental matters, and reminding people of their agency and capacity for transformation.

Importantly, and in contrast to a growing body of literature (e.g., Pali & Aertsen, 2021), Hamilton does not believe restorative justice is *the* way to solve environmental issues, but *a tool* for listening to its victims. In this respect, it can be, as Di Ronco and South (2025) suggest, a "necessary prerequisite to actions aimed at repairing present and preventing future harms" (p. 197). Indeed, broad recognition exists today that something larger than restorative justice, such as transitional justice, is required to address the planetary crises (de Nardín Budó et al., 2023; Killean & Dempster, 2025). The search for quick fixes might result in the fetishisation of restorative justice and present it as the (or a) solution to current planetary breakdowns while bypassing the need for a deep transformation of structures and life views. Restorative justice, nonetheless, remains an important tool to enable transition when pursued in the spirit of its deep meaning: as an ethos or a way of life of reciprocity and connection, and the pursuit of harmonious interactions. Restorative justice, in its deep understanding, is a lived philosophy, which means, in the words of Hamilton (p. 84):

> taking relationships seriously, being aware of the impact of one's actions on others and the environment, taking responsibility for one's negative impacts on others, treating everyone respectfully, making decision-making inclusive, viewing conflicts and harms as opportunities, listening, deeply and compassionately to others, engaging in dialogue, being cautious about imposing one's 'truths', and confronting everyday injustices sensitively.

And with that, we come full circle to the importance of Indigenous connection with life—variously denominated Mātauranga in Māori, Pachamama in Aymara, and restorative justice in more Western formations. What matters is not the denomination but the understanding that, instead of quick fixes and ritualistic modes of justice, we need a deep change to reroute society and our interaction with nature.

This special issue also contains a review, by **Caroline Hornum Martinussen**, of the book *Indigenous Islander Eco-Literatures*, which examines how Indigenous people, through art, preserve their environmental ontologies and resist colonisation. The book and review echo recent interest in the power of narratives and stories as enablers of awareness, inheritance, resistance and movements for justice (e.g., Lobo et al., 2024; South, 2024). As mentioned before, we also include an intervention by Rob White on the development of green criminology in Oceania.

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