

Introduction BODIES IN CONTACT, BODIES IN QUESTION

Cross-cultural engagements have the power to initiate radical social change. Often fraught, rife with miscommunication, and marred by violence, encounters and entanglements between formerly unconnected peoples have frequently proven to be transformative moments in world history, occasions that have profound and often unexpected consequences, that are both material and cosmological. If we survey the last millennium of the global past, we see that such encounters have enabled the transfer of plants, animals, and germs, the diffusion of commodities and technologies, and the creation of a host of new trading relationships that created new forms of interdependence that linked previously disparate groups. These material exchanges have initiated far-reaching ecological modifications, as they have driven both tragic depopulation and sustained population growth, made fortunes and impoverished communities, and enabled the rise and fall of states and empires. Even though much historical work on cross-cultural encounters has documented their material consequences, both spectacular and horrific, we must not overlook the far-reaching but often elusive nature of the cosmological change that such meetings initiated. Meetings with newcomers, especially where those transitioned from brief encounters to lasting engagements, often undercut long-established pieties and created new spiritual orders. Encountering strangers has frequently called

into question the power of “old” gods and their earthly representatives (from shaman to priests). This doubt created space for new gods, for new religious authorities, and for new visions of both the natural and supernatural worlds. Gods and their powers were the subject of crucial cross-cultural battles over meaning and frequently these struggles gave rise to particularly significant forms of innovation, as translation, appropriation, and reinterpretation produced new and unexpected forms of practice and belief.

In this book I examine the cross-cultural debates and entanglements set in motion by the establishment of Protestant missions in New Zealand in 1814, especially those arguments and engagements that turned on the ways in which the human body was understood and organized. Missionary work, which raised pressing questions about the body and its meaning as it tried to transform both the material and cosmological order of “native” life, developed in the wake of British imperial intrusion deep in the southern Pacific. The arrival of Lieutenant James Cook’s *Endeavour* off Te Ika a Māui, New Zealand’s North Island, in October 1769, punctured the long isolation that had conditioned the development of the Polynesian culture in New Zealand. In 1769, approximately 100,000 people lived in the islands that we now call New Zealand, a population that descended from the migrants who sailed south from the central Pacific around 1250 C.E. While this population shared common ancestors, spoke dialects of a common language, and had a common cosmology, they had developed a set of profoundly localized identities which were defined by the landscape, competition over valuable resources, and, above all else, *whakapapa* (genealogy). This cultural world was transformed by the arrival of Europeans, who appeared so strange and marvelous that they were initially called *tupua* (goblins), *pakepakehā* (fairy folk), or *atua* (supernatural beings). It was through the encounter with the overwhelming difference of Europeans—their unusual boats, their strange clothing, their unfamiliar languages, their unusual foods—that these Polynesian peoples who had long settled in New Zealand discovered the fundamental cultural commonalities that united them.¹ The new sense of their common way of life encouraged these communities to begin to define themselves by contrasting themselves with the strange outsiders who visited their world. They began to call themselves *tāngata māori*, the ordinary people, and with time, “Māori” became the term commonly used by both native and stranger to designate the first people who had made their home in the islands of New Zealand.²

Cook’s arrival not only began to crystallize a new sense of “Māoriness,” but also ushered in a new world, full of wonder, risks, and opportunities. In

the wake of Cook, many European vessels visited New Zealand in search of timber and flax for shipbuilding or in search of seals and whales, which produced a range of commodities that were valued in industrializing Europe and that also might be used to pay for Europe's insatiable demand for Asian spices, tea, textiles, and porcelain. Through their engagements with these ships and their crews, most Māori communities learned about metal and the written word, and discovered a bewildering array of plants and animals (from potatoes to sheep, horses to cabbages). They also discovered the awesome power of European firearms and soon felt the terrible effects of the microbes, unseen and unknown, that were a largely uncontrollable part of the biological and cultural baggage that Europeans brought with them into the southern Pacific.

The Europeans who traveled to New Zealand before 1814 typically made only fleeting visits to a few regions: the far south of Te Wai Pounamu ("the Greenstone Waters," New Zealand's South Island); Cook's Strait between Te Ika a Māui and Te Wai Pounamu; the Thames area on the east coast of Te Ika a Māui; and the Bay of Islands in the far north of Te Ika a Māui (see map 1). Sailors and sealers had no intention of settling in New Zealand, and those who did briefly sojourn among Māori had no choice but to accept the power of Māori leaders and the authority of local lore and law. Conversely, the missionaries who arrived in the mid-1810s intended to remain in New Zealand, and their very motivation was the desire to effect cultural and religious change. They hoped that God would eventually allow them to "root out" those aspects of Māori life that did not fit with the injunctions of the Bible; they wanted to use the power of God's word to ultimately remake all Māori, to convert them into pious and God-fearing Christians. They understood that this was to be a difficult task, a great battle against both the weaknesses of the "heathen" and the power of Satan. In 1824, the wife of one leading missionary in New Zealand described this project as "Christian warfare with the great enemy of souls [Satan]!"³ While they were confident that they would ultimately transform Māori society, as they entered the field missionaries expected to be tested, to be challenged by the "heathen," by immoral Europeans, by themselves, and by Satan himself.⁴

Progress was indeed slow for the missionaries, but even before large numbers of Māori began to convert in the 1830s, the missionary project began to effect significant change. Although Māori were initially wary about Christian teaching, they recognized that the presence of missionaries stimulated trade and made it possible for them to access valuable new technology. Metal tools were greatly valued as they allowed many traditional tasks to be completed

more quickly and enabled land to be brought into cultivation with greater ease. But Māori also quickly realized that axes and hoes had further utility, that they could be deployed as potent weapons in hand-to-hand combat. Although the cross-cultural musket trade was a central point of contention in the mission, from the outset Māori associated these weapons with missionaries as Marsden had given the *rangatira* (chiefs) Korokoro, Ruatara, and Hongi Hika pistols and muskets, which quickly became key markers of the *rangatira's mana* (charisma, authority, power).⁵ By establishing close relationships with missionaries, some chiefs, especially Hongi Hika, rapidly accumulated significant numbers of firearms, which they deployed in campaigns against local rivals and in a wave of long-distance raids to the south.

Most important, however, Māori were drawn to the missionaries because of their awareness of the power of literacy. Through their encounters with Samuel Marsden, at mission schools, through missionary itineration, and through the auspices of “native teachers,” Māori learned how to read and write in their own language. The missionaries, of course, believed that these skills were essential for conversion and were the foundation for the construction of a “native church.” For Māori, however, these skills not only allowed them to access the Bible, but also made possible an array of new forms of economic, social, and political activity. Some Māori used these skills to fashion their own understandings of scripture and developed distinct cosmologies and ritual practices: by the 1830s, the narratives of both the vernacular Old and New Testament had become an important store of metaphor, symbolism, and argument. Thus, even within the context of the increasing disparities of power that characterized frontier society, literacy and the Bible provided successive generations of Māori leaders with new skills and knowledge that could be turned against colonization. The radical potential of the Bible, particularly when wrenched free of missionary control, was clear; as one Māori bluntly stated in 1843, “This is my weapon, the white man’s book.”⁶

But vectors of cultural transformation did not flow only one way. Anglican and Methodist missionaries who lived with and among Māori while they worked on the frontier were also transformed by the experience. No matter how much they hoped to recreate British models of Christian faith, the Christian family, or civilized sociability, they made their new home in a land that would never be Britain. On the furthest frontier of the empire, the great bulk of their congregationalists and fellow Christians were Māori, not Britons. The missionaries initially lived in houses built on Māori models and constructed with local materials, and even after they were able to con-

struct “civilized” British houses, their domestic arrangements never simply replicated British models. Māori were omnipresent in the mission station and in mission houses. Māori “girls” provided essential domestic labor for the mission, preparing food, cleaning and washing, and acting as nannies. Māori men accompanied missionaries on their expeditions, guiding them, providing physical labor, and teaching them about the history of the land, how they understood the workings of nature and the supernatural, and how indigenous social life was organized. On the mission stations, Māori men worked closely with missionaries as “native teachers,” as increasingly skilled workers (sawyers, carpenters, and farmers), and as laborers, and were frequent visitors to mission houses. So even though propagandists imagined missionary stations as little models of England, the great weight of historical evidence suggests that Māori frequently dictated the rhythms of missionary life and were quite successful in indigenizing the mission station as a space.⁷

At the same time as the physical presence of Māori was an inescapable part of the missionary world, missionaries were also drawn into the mental world of Māori. In order to Christianize Māori society, missionaries first had to grasp the operation of essential social laws, develop a basic understanding of local politics and kin-group rivalries, and gain linguistic competence in spoken Māori. Te reo Māori (the Māori language) was the functional language of the mission. It was the language of native service, the language of educational and social instruction, and the primary idiom of cross-cultural communication. Most important, it was the language of scripture. Missionaries labored long and hard, individually and collectively, on the massive project of translating the Bible into te reo Māori with the aspiration of creating a clear and idiomatic rendering of God’s word into the local vernacular. This vast undertaking, which took decades, not only reshaped the linguistic underpinnings of Māori mentalities and transformed Māori political idioms, but also changed the missionaries themselves. Listening, speaking, and writing te reo Māori modified the linguistic and mental worlds of the missionaries. Not only did many missionaries come to write a moderately creolized form of English that made routine use of Māori words and phrases, but the study of Māori language also suggested to some missionaries that deep affinities connected Britons and Māori, despite the manifold differences in the patterns of their everyday lives. Some leading missionaries even became convinced that the British and Māori peoples were long-lost cousins, members of an expansive racial family that was diffused across the face of the globe but who were ultimately connected by their common Indo-European or Aryan linguistic and racial heritage.⁸

Many advocates of colonization were critical of these missionary beliefs and argued that this immersion in the Māori world undercut the national and imperial allegiance of missionaries. They argued that missionaries, especially those who openly opposed the plans for the large-scale settlement of New Zealand formulated by the New Zealand Company, had become “philo-Māoris” (“Māori lovers”) who were intent on preventing the extension of colonial authority and the effective “amalgamation” of settlers and Māori.⁹ Even though British Protestant missionaries played a key role in the intensification of cross-cultural contact on the New Zealand frontier, boosters of imperialism saw the missionaries’ commitment to the creation of a “native church” grounded in the Māori Bible as indicative of their betrayal of true British interests.

Bodies in Contact, Bodies in Question

My particular concern in this book is the place of the body in the exchanges between Protestant missionaries and Māori. At a fundamental level, this focus reflects the ubiquity of the body in the archival records of these encounters. The body is a recurrent concern in the early letters of Māori Christians, as well as in missionary journals, letters, travel narratives, and pamphlets. In this large and diverse archive, the body was mobile and polysemic. Early converts to Christianity blended indigenous metaphors with biblical imagery to explain their struggle to embrace Christianity. In a letter written in the early 1830s, a man named Wariki wove together the *ngārara*, the evil lizard of Māori mythology, with the New Testament’s identification of the heart as the seat of the conscience and the core of an individual’s character to explain that despite his best efforts, he had not yet been able to accept Christianity.¹⁰ “My heart is all rock, all rock, and no good thing will grow upon it. The lizard and the snail run over the rocks, and all evil runs over my heart.”¹¹

For their part, missionaries constantly worried over the body. They believed that remaking Māori bodies was an essential part of the missionary project. Māori had to set aside practices, such as slavery, tattooing, and cannibalism, that some missionaries saw as evidence of Satan’s continued power in New Zealand. Yet bitter experience taught the missionaries that effecting such changes would be very difficult, and they were forced to make a range of accommodations to these practices. In many ways, it was the less spectacular and more routine struggle to reshape Māori social arrangements that was at the center of the missionaries’ drive to remake Māori culture. They worked very hard to encourage Māori to give up polygamy and to embrace Christian

marriage as the basis for the sexual, social, and economic order. Missionaries also hoped to inculcate new models of work, hygiene, and comportment through mission schools and the exemplary model of the missionary family. In short, the reform of the indigenous body was an indicator of the spiritual advance of the mission. Missionaries were also concerned about the extent to which their calling imperiled their own bodies; they routinely reflected on the physical consequences of the heavy labor, constant walking, and poor diet that accompanied missionary work. Many dwelled at great length on the threat of illness and the dangers of childbirth, for even though the early missionaries in New Zealand ultimately produced large families, it seemed that death was never far from their door. Others worried about their ability to resist the physical temptations posed by the isolation of missionary life and the power of the culture that surrounded them.

Tā moko, or tattooing, demonstrates the ways in which cross-cultural engagements raised questions about the meaning and management of bodies. Missionary texts, especially those from the early years of the mission, dwelt on this custom and frequently suggest that tattooing had to be set aside if Māori were to truly embrace Christianity and if they were to progress toward “Civilization.”¹² For example, Samuel Marsden in 1819 told the young but well-traveled rangatira Tuai that tā moko “was a very foolish and ridiculous custom; and, as he [Tuai] had seen so much of civilized life, he should now lay aside the barbarous customs of his country, and adopt those of civilized nations. Tooi [Tuai] replied, that he wished to do so himself; but his Brother urged him to be tattooed, as otherwise he could not support his rank and character as a gentleman among his countrymen, and they would consider him timid and effeminate.”¹³ Tuai’s argument that tā moko was a crucial element of the projection of his chiefly authority confirmed the links between status and tattooing that many European observers had drawn by this time. Other rangatira went further than asserting the importance of the practice in representing rank and power, turning the mirror of cultural reflection to question British bodily practices. John Liddard Nicholas, a supporter of the foundation of the New Zealand mission, reported that when the rangatira Te Pahi was challenged about tā moko during a visit to New South Wales,

he immediately censured some of our own [practices] as far more ridiculous, and many of his arguments were both rational and convincing. Like most of the New Zealand chiefs, he was highly tattooed, a mode of disfiguring the face which is generally practised by all the savage tribes in the Pacific

Ocean. The barbarous process consists in pricking on the face with a sharp instrument, a variety of semi-circular and other figures, and rubbing into the punctures a kind of blue paint, or sometimes charcoal, which gives the countenance a most disgusting appearance, and makes it truly hideous to the eye of an European. On being laughed at one day by a gentleman for having disfigured his face in so unnatural a manner, the sagacious chief immediately retorted with pointed sarcasm; telling him he was quite as much an object of derision himself for having put powder and grease in his hair, a practice which he thought was much more absurd than the tattooing.¹⁴

For Nicholas, this exchange confirmed Te Pahi's "shrewdness of remark" and "nicety of discrimination" and was suggestive of the abilities of Māori in general.¹⁵ Nicholas's ambiguous response to tā moko, which suggested that it was simultaneously an uncivilized practice and incontrovertible proof of the dexterity and great skill of Māori, was echoed in the Church Missionary Society's *Missionary Papers* issued in September 1816. In its discussion of the rangatira Hongi Hika and Te Uri o Kanae, *Missionary Papers* recognized that tā moko was a key marker of chiefly status and went on to argue that its complexity and precision established that Māori were an "intelligent and skilful race of men."¹⁶ Some later missionaries suggested to British audiences in the 1830s that the mission had "forbidden" the practice, but in reality missionaries generally had to accommodate themselves to the importance of tā moko: their school pupils and congregants would travel to be tattooed by tohunga tā moko (tattooing experts), and the practice continued to be strongly connected to rank and status in the 1830s.¹⁷

As these exchanges suggest, missionary sources from early New Zealand are punctuated by a deep and recurrent concern with the body, its meanings, and its regulation, and these reflections were frequently contradictory, ambivalent or ambiguous. Although the image of the repressive missionary is well established in New Zealand historiography and is firmly embedded in the nation's popular imagination, missionary archives themselves bear out the limitations of what Michel Foucault termed the "repressive hypothesis."¹⁸ Foucault argued that contrary to popular stereotypes that imagine the nineteenth century as being characterized by a powerful impulse to repress everything to do with the body and sex, sexuality was in fact increasingly dwelt upon, spoken about "ad infinitum," albeit in terms that were carefully circumscribed and encoded.¹⁹ There was, Foucault contends, a powerful new "institutional incitement" to discuss the body and sex, a desire to record and analyze behavior through "endlessly accumulated detail."²⁰

Foucault's insistence on the ways in which power produced increasingly detailed forms of knowledge and new debates over the body is an important starting point for this study. In this work, however, my discussion is not restricted to the history of sexuality, a line of inquiry that is profoundly indebted to Foucault's pioneering work. Frequently the history of sexuality is seen as a rough equivalent of history of the body, a formulation that both reflects the flourishing historiography on the history of sexual practices and regimes and constrains the possibilities offered by historical readings of the body.²¹ The body, of course, is the most fundamental and fluid of signifiers; the body can evoke birth and death, work and play, illness and health, as well as being mobilized as a metaphor of the abstract conceptualization of political relationships, national communities, and religious institutions.²² And, of course, in addition to functioning as a potent signifier, the body is the most material of all "realities," providing communities with productive labor, reproductive capacity, and the ability to make war.

Kathleen Canning has observed that historical research has tended to focus on the body's operation as a signifier in processes of nation building and its operation as an "inscriptive surface" for the promulgation of morality, hygienic reform, and state power.²³ While this study remains alive to the symbolic power of the body, it is also framed against this tendency to dematerialize the body. At the heart of this book is a set of struggles over the materiality of the body, over its physicality, over its most basic operations in time and space, and its centrality to the experience of new models of work, faith, and cosmology. Rather than offering a narrow examination of the construction of sexuality on the New Zealand frontier or a deconstructive reading of European representations of the indigenous body, *Entanglements of Empire* examines a diverse array of *practices* surrounding the body as well as the many and variable ways that the body was *represented* and incorporated into discourse. This opens up the possibilities of writing a more mobile and flexible history of the body: in thinking through the body I pay close attention to the development of new commercial connections and work patterns, the spatial organization of mission stations, and the impact of "new" diseases on Māori, as well as reconstructing debates over the consequences of cross-cultural sexual relationships, the meaning of death, and the effects of empire on the native body.

But this book is not only trying to treat the material and discursive body with equal care; it is underpinned by a commitment to reconstructing the collision between two very different sets of understandings and practices relating to the body. Even though Foucault's arguments about the relationship

between power and the body in *The History of Sexuality* are a starting point for this study, I am not offering a reading of imperial history through Foucault or formulating a rereading of Foucault through the prism of empire. Laura Ann Stoler's *Race and the Education of Desire* has both recovered the centrality of race in Foucault's late work and used Foucault's writings on sexuality to explicate the politics of intimacy at the margins of empire. Stoler's history of empire and sexuality, however, ultimately operates as an essentially European story of the production of the bourgeois self, where the production of eroticized Others in the colonies is refracted back to the metropole and plays a crucial role in the constitution of "internal frontiers" of European nations.²⁴

My aim is quite different: rather than using the colony to illuminate European history, my central aim is to reconstruct the collision between two cultural regimes that were grounded in radically different understandings of the body, its social organization, and its cosmological significance. Thinking about "bodies in contact" requires the historian to explore how these engagements between radically different cultural orders raised fundamental questions about bodies, their management, and meaning.²⁵ Throughout this volume, I consistently emphasize the particularity of both Māori and British bodily systems, while remaining committed to tracking the uneven but very real transformation of both bodily systems on the New Zealand frontier. A more conventionally post-Foucauldian reading of the engagements between missionaries and Māori would struggle to deal with the profound cultural difference and social transformations that were the governing fact of life on early mission stations. The complex and mixed history of these sites—a central concern of this book—cannot be reconstructed by solely placing the mission within a genealogy of European religious history or by framing mission stations within a narrative that reconstructs the transformation of European epistemes. Such a project might have been viable had mission stations been institutions where British modes of life were largely re-created and where missionaries exercised hegemony over "native Christians." But despite the wishes of the missionaries themselves, mission stations in New Zealand were never sites where Europeans enjoyed unquestioned authority: missionary religious teaching, the mission's program of social reform, and the daily regimes of work and prayer were all open to contest and negotiation. Until at least the late 1830s, missionaries operated within a world where chiefly authority still held sway, where most Māori customs and laws were upheld, and where te reo Māori was the lingua franca.

Most important, missionaries largely worked within a Māori world defined by the workings of *atua* and the power of *tapu*. It is important to discuss these terms here not only because they are central to my analysis, but also because even a brief sketch of these concepts suggests the profound epistemic gap that initially divided Māori and Europeans. The term *atua* is frequently translated as “god”—it was applied to major deities like Tāne (god of the forests), Tū-mata-uenga (god of war), and Tāngaroa (god of the sea)—but its meaning was more expansive than this. *Atua* could take on many forms, ranging from deified ancestors to malevolent spirits. Unusual phenomena in the natural world (geysers, lightning, comets, rainbows, even unusually shaped or colored rocks and trees) were understood as *atua* or manifestations of the power of *atua*. The German traveler Ernst Dieffenbach pithily communicated the broad nature and function of these supernatural agents: “*Atuas* are the secret powers of the universe.”²⁶ *Atua* were not distant entities sequestered in the supernatural realm, but rather were in constant contact with people and landscapes of *te ao mārama* (the world of light) across the thin and permeable boundary that separated the natural from the supernatural world.

Tapu describes the influence of *atua* over people, the natural world, and inanimate objects. This term, the root of the English concept of “taboo,” is commonly translated as “sacred,” and it designates those things that are set apart from daily life. Within the Polynesian world, *tapu* was one key physical manifestation of the work of *atua* in physical world. Many of the realities of human physicality—from the growth of hair and fingernails to headaches, the physical sensations accompanying fear to the male erection—were explained as the work of *atua*. The power and status of high-ranking chiefs was both a result of the constant influence of *atua* on their persons and a reflection of their *tapu* status.²⁷ This *tapu* was not simply restricted to the body of an individual, but rather “leaked” into their surrounding social world and was transferable. The dwellings, sleeping places, and clothes of the chiefs were highly *tapu*. The possessions of a *rangatira*—pendants, combs, treasured feathers—were very *tapu* and were frequently stored in *waka huia* (treasure boxes) that were hung off the rafters in a highly *tapu* position within the *rangatira*’s *whare* (dwelling). *Tapu* could also be transferred through bodily fluids (especially blood) and contact with hair.²⁸ The superabundance of the *tapu* state of powerful *rangatira* and *tohunga* (ritual experts) meant that their shadows could wither trees or render food inedible.²⁹

Tapu was balanced by its antonym, *noa*. *Noa* referred to things that were removed from supernatural influence, that were unrestricted, unclean, or

profane. These states of being organized everyday life. They determined who was able to prepare food and the ways in which it was prepared. The operation of tapu and noa governed sleeping arrangements within whare (houses), dictated the rituals associated with tattooing and hair-cutting, and governed the spatial organization of settlements. Not surprisingly, these concepts also underpinned the ways in which Māori dealt with illness, death, and human remains. When Cook arrived in New Zealand, tapu and noa were absolutely fundamental in shaping understandings of the body in all its states and these concepts were at the heart of most important social and ritual practices.

Tapu and noa were also profoundly important in defining gender within the Māori world. Women were generally understood to be noa, and this meant that a certain set of particular social and ritual roles were appropriate for them. They were best suited to handling food and to carrying out any sort of labor that might expose a tapu male to any agent that might defile him. Because of their noa status, women could strip men of their tapu and their power. At times, this ability was harnessed for ritual purposes: visitors who entered *whareniui* (meeting houses) passed under carved female figures upon the *pare* (lintels), the noa status of these female figures removing the tapu qualities that were transmitted to individuals who had been inside the tapu-charged space of the house. The oppositions between male (tapu) and female (noa) were complicated because particular women could be tapu or a woman might be tapu for a particular period of time. A high-ranking daughter, for example, might be designated as a *puhi*, a tapu young woman whose chastity was strictly policed until the time of her marriage to an approved partner.³⁰ Ultimately, however, as the Māori feminist Ngahua Te Awakotuku has argued, the operation of tapu meant that within precontact society typically “women were the negative and destructive element, the inferior, the passive.”³¹

Māori understandings of the body were highly particular and supported a set of bodily practices that were very different from those carried to New Zealand by British evangelicals in the service of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS). A range of cultural influences shaped early nineteenth-century missionary understandings of the body. Strict control of the body and sexual desire was an essential element of the “world-mastery” that evangelicalism promoted. Evangelical sermons and pamphlets frequently dwelt on the need to master the self, to curb one’s pride, and to reject (and repent for) sinful urges. Evangelicalism held that the individual must regulate worldly activity by disciplining the body through careful dress, the avoidance of excess alcohol, and hard work. The only legitimate outlet for sexual desire was within marriage, the structure

ordained by God for the legitimate expression of sexuality. Evangelicals saw the sacrament of marriage as a safeguard against the indolence and chaos implicit in the indulgence of erotic desire.³²

It has been commonplace to contrast the complex laws and strong regulation of sexuality that shaped missionary mentalities with the supposedly more “natural” place of sex within the Māori world, but it should be clear that Māori understandings of the body were just as highly enculturated as those of their missionary counterparts.³³ We must recognize that the Māori body does not belong only to the realm of culture, but is also amenable to historical analysis as well. Māori ways of organizing the body were not rigidly constrained by an unchanging culture, but rather were adaptable and dynamic. In this volume I offer an array of evidence that demonstrates that various Māori individuals and groups shaped and reshaped core practices and beliefs relating to the body as they actively engaged with missionaries, European traders, and early settlers. The outcomes of these engagements were manifold as a greater variety of bodily practices developed among Māori as contact progressed. Some *iwi* (tribes) remained largely isolated from contact and thus maintained old traditions, while other groups responded to the challenges of contact and missionization in a variety of ways. Some “went mihinare (missionary)” and reworked long-established bodily practices, especially those related to sexuality and death, as they embraced key elements of the Anglicanism, Wesleyanism, and, at a later stage, Catholicism. Other individuals and groups were drawn to the Bible, but rejected missionary authority and fashioned profoundly indigenized visions of Christian faith and practice. These new movements, which were a powerful force in *te ao Māori* (the Māori world) from the 1830s through to the early twentieth century, offered radical new interpretations of the place of the social and cosmological significance of body. These ranged from a distinctive brand of flagellant Christianity based on a very particular reading of 1 Corinthians 9:27 (“But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection”) to an attempt to order village life around a strict interpretation of Mosaic law (where various transgressions were punished by stoning).³⁴

I therefore offer a reading of the struggles over the body that developed as missionaries sought to transform Māori culture. Even though the missionaries were driven by a deep commitment to effect social and religious change, these encounters must not be understood through a simple challenge-response model wherein missionaries are imagined as active agents, while Māori stand as objects of historical processes. In the end it was Māori desire for contact with Europeans, their interest in agriculture, literacy, and muskets, and the

support of powerful rangatira that enabled the foundation of the CMS mission in 1814. The early missionaries quickly found that they had at best a limited understanding of the communities they were ministering to and had even less ability to dictate the outcomes of their efforts to promote agriculture, to encourage commerce, and to foster the growth of Christianity. In fact, what emerges from early missionary texts is not a sense of mastery and confidence, but rather a persistent anxiety that conveys a very strong sense of what Ranajit Guha has termed the “rebel consciousness,” the desire and power of various Māori individuals and groups to shape their own fortunes and to protect their own interests even as they were increasingly drawn into connection with the missionaries and mission stations.³⁵

Archives and Historiography

Guha’s argument is also an important starting point for my approach to the archives. Guha suggested that colonial writing, particularly what he termed the “prose of counter-insurgency,” was imprinted by that “rebel consciousness” even if the aim of such texts was to justify imperial intervention or shore up colonial authority. In *Entanglements of Empire*, I take some cues from this approach, seeing missionary texts produced on the ground in the Bay of Islands as situated texts, inflected by their location and conditions of production. This means that missionary texts are not read as seamless projections of a coherent and self-contained ideology, but rather as products of the interaction between evangelical worldviews, the sensibility and experience of individual missionaries, and their particular engagements with specific places, individuals, collectives, and events. By being seriously committed to recovering the porousness of missionary texts and how they were molded by local developments, historians can explore both the nature of Māori social action—even if this is accessed through thoroughly highly mediated texts—and the ways in which such action imprinted missionary understandings of events and the nature of Māori society. Reading missionary sources at the edge of the empire in this way allows the historian to break free from a narrow focus on cross-cultural representation, where European or British texts come to read primarily as part of European ideological, intellectual, and textual systems, which are typically understood to be in a position of cultural dominance over indigenous populations. Most important, when historians read Māori as active shapers of both missionary texts and real social formations, they cannot write Māori themselves out of the history of these imperial entanglements or simply reduce them to being objects of Western discourse.

The value of such an approach has recently been demonstrated by Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins's popular history of early Māori writing, *He Kōrero: Words between Us*, which has reframed our understanding of the first texts written and printed in te reo Māori. Jones and Jenkins recover the early history of Māori as creators of texts, language teachers, and cross-cultural commentators. In *Entanglements of Empire*, I not only make use of the limited but significant corpus of early Māori writing, but also draw on Jones and Jenkins's reassessment of the authorship and meaning of some key "missionary-produced" texts. Most notably, they suggest that *A Korao no New Zealand: Or, the New Zealander's First Book* (1815) was not a work simply produced by the missionary Thomas Kendall, as commonly suggested, but that this volume was "a remarkable product of Māori teaching" and that it was at the very least a kind of co-production between missionary and Māori.³⁶ I do not, however, extend this perspective to all missionary printed texts in general; in fact, *A Korao no New Zealand* and the 1820 grammar produced by Kendall and his Māori patrons, teachers, and translators are very particular products of cross-cultural collaboration. While other missionary texts were shaped by such engagements, a great deal of popular missionary print culture was highly processed. Letters and journals hastily written at the edge of empire were condensed, edited, and substantially reworked, as metropolitan editors prepared texts with the expectations and sensibilities of their British evangelical readers in mind; not surprisingly, the routine trials and anxieties of missionary life or the uncertain self-reflections that stud evangelical journals rarely made it into British publications designed to educate, entertain, and solicit funds. And, as I show in chapter 4, missionaries in New Zealand were well aware of the nature of those expectations, and some missionaries, such as William Yate, produced narratives about the mission and Māori that accorded too closely to those metropolitan conventions—at the expense of the particularities and messiness of life in the Bay of Islands—for the comfort of their peers.

In reading the mission archives, I have been committed to the value of Greg Denning's maxim that "both the native and the colonizing side of the encounter are owed both a history and an anthropology."³⁷ I have attempted to treat both evangelical missionaries and Māori equitably, imagining both of these collectives as complex agglomerations of individuals and interest groups whose actions and worldviews were conditioned by both culture and history. Following this strategy, I at times explore in detail particular aspects of both missionary and Māori cosmologies, offer lengthy readings of their different understandings of time, and reconstruct their very different attitudes toward

death and the afterlife. Throughout, however, I also stress the dynamic and contingent nature of these engagements. Because *Entanglements of Empire* is framed by an insistence that engagements on imperial frontiers were acts of negotiation and translation, I stress the fluid and often mercurial nature of power relations in early New Zealand. The struggles over resources, space, and cultural meaning set in train by the establishment of mission stations were not structured by a simple opposition between Māori and missionary, but rather power flowed in a multiplicity of directions between an array of social actors who grounded their allegiances in a variety of concerns and interests.

Over the last fifteen years, a rich vein of work by New Zealand scholars on these cross-cultural histories has emerged. Much of this scholarship has been framed by a more rigid understanding of “encounters” than Denning offered, reconstructing the meetings between Māori and Britons as moments when relatively fixed and stable cultures came together. Anne Salmond imagined the earliest of these meetings as the collision of “two worlds,” while she framed the 1773–1815 period as a set of exchanges “between worlds.”³⁸ Beyond their rich rematerialization of the archives of these “meetings,” these works by Salmond have been important because they have offered an elegantly crafted prehistory of the relationships between Māori and Pākehā that stand at the center of New Zealand’s state ideology of biculturalism and which shape so much recent cultural and intellectual production. Other important recent studies of cross-cultural history have also worked within this analytical frame. Most notably, Vincent O’Malley’s recent reassessment of early New Zealand’s history, in *The Meeting Place*, imagined a kind of national prehistory of Māori and Pākehā leading up to the Treaty of Waitangi, the nation’s “founding document.” This is an approach that nationalizes messy and quite divergent localized pasts by imagining New Zealand as a “place” and that underplays the transformative consequences of imperial entanglements. Salmond and O’Malley are important, however, because they have pushed against the rather simple mission-centered models of social change that structured the earlier historiographical debates over the timing, extent, and meaning of Māori “conversion.” Such interventions are important because a narrowly missionary-focused vision of social change continues to shape some recent work on the place of gender in the mission, which simultaneously suggests that missionary women were silent or invisible and yet were key agents in establishing a hegemonic European moral and gendered order.³⁹

This book is animated by a dissatisfaction with readings that stage the cross-cultural history of the Bay of Islands as a story of missionary cultural

hegemony or which flatten out the dynamics of social engagement and transformation into a story of “meetings” or “encounters,” analytical concepts which underplay the lasting consequences of being incorporated into empires. Throughout this volume, I suggest that imperial networks generated new entanglements, which wove previously disparate groups into new relationships of interdependence. As an analytical metaphor, “entanglement” alludes to my earlier work that has demonstrated that the British empire was a dynamic web-like formation, a complex and shifting assemblage of connections that ran directly between colonies.⁴⁰ “Entanglement” thus reminds us that empires were incorporationist regimes, which drew resources, land, skill, labor, and knowledge into expansive systems of extraction and exchange. Once communities were connected to these webs of interdependence, it was often hard for them to assert control over the direction and consequences of the cultural traffic that moved through these meshes of connection. And once incorporated into the reach of empire, however partially and fitfully, the consequences of cross-connection could not be erased: while thinking about empires through the metaphors of “meetings” and “encounters” allows us to imagine stable and discrete cultural formations existing *after* cross-cultural engagements, the metaphor of entanglement draws attention to the durable consequences that flowed from the integrative work of expansive imperial regimes. The image that adorns the cover of this volume was produced by the influential Māori artist and carver Cliff Whiting (Te Whānau-ā-Apanui) and it speaks directly to the ways in which imperial encounters and the formal colonization of New Zealand created new patterns of culture as *te ao Māori* (the Māori world) and the customs of the British were drawn together and interwoven in new and durable, if unpredictable, ways.⁴¹

Conceptualizing the operation of empires and the persistence of their cultural impact in such a manner echoes and parallels some significant South African work that has also mobilized metaphors of “entanglement.”⁴² Carolyn Hamilton’s important work on Shaka Zulu mobilized entanglement as a way of making sense of the colonial order: rather than seeing colonial institutions and practices as a transplantation and imposition of European norms, she argued that they were instead the outcome of the “complex historical entanglement of indigenous and colonial concepts.”⁴³ More recently, Sarah Nuttall has attempted to bring entanglement as a cultural state and as an analytical strategy from the wings to the center of scholarly practice: “Entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited. It is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or set of

social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle.”⁴⁴ Nuttall’s project was to illuminate not only the entanglements that shaped South Africa’s cultural landscape, but also those that conditioned its historical emergence, highlighting the “intricate overlaps,” “seams,” and connective membranes that generated contingent but powerful forms of connection which frequently remained unacknowledged and uninterrogated.⁴⁵

Such work has resonated beyond South Africa. Lynn M. Thomas’s examination of the politics of reproduction in Kenya, for example, has deployed Hamilton’s arguments about the entangled nature of colonial formations as a way of foregrounding the continued uneven interplay and interdependence between “local and imperial” concerns and forces.⁴⁶ Thomas’s stress on the unevenness of these forms of interdependence is useful. We can think of the entanglements that reshaped communities and places as knot-like structures which laced together various vectors of motion and different lines of cultural influence.⁴⁷ But, of course, knots are not necessarily symmetrical and stable: they can be messy and uneven; they can join threads of uneven thickness and strength together; they can exert differential pressures on different elements of the juncture; and they can ultimately slip and fail or, alternatively, cut hard into a particular cinch point. Given the inequalities that structured empires, the operation of these points of convergence and conjuncture often enriched and empowered the agents of empire in the long term and destabilized or undercut the indigenous formations that had been laced into the expansive world of imperial connections.⁴⁸

Thinking through entanglement has powerful possibilities in the New Zealand context, where racial identities (Māori vs Pākehā) and the opposition between the “Crown” and Māori (or particular tribes) produce neat dichotomies that shape contemporary political debate and continue to undergird much historical writing. These oppositions reflect the ways in which ideologies impose clear meanings on messy cultural fields; any careful reading from the archive destabilizes such tidy pictures of the present or the past. As I argue, it is almost impossible to define any common set of “Māori interests” in the north of New Zealand that unified a large number of kin groups between 1814 and 1840, as complex and shifting connections and conflicts structured the life of the indigenous communities. Long-standing grievances and rivalries, new power blocs shaped by uneven access to European weapons, technologies, and food-plants, and the deep rifts between powerful chiefs and large populations of slaves molded the ways in which various Māori individuals and kin groups responded to evangelization. At the same time, the Europeans who settled on the frontier before New Zea-

land's formal annexation in 1840 were also riven by religious and class differences, and there were especially prominent conflicts between the men who came to New Zealand as sealers, whalers, sailors, and runaways and the "respectable" Europeans associated with missionary activity and, at a later stage, the British Residency. Tracing the lines of fracture and reconstructing the fragile ties of common interest that structured this social landscape are central concerns in my account of "bodies in contact." Throughout the text, I underscore the continual changes that shaped and reshaped these social formations, emphasizing the ways in which key events—from chance meetings to massacres, from unexpected deaths to the building of ships—could have a host of unforeseen outcomes and could seemingly speed up time itself, as important social processes and their outcomes accelerated.⁴⁹

A Plan of the Book

This volume is not a traditional narrative history of the development of missionary work, even if there is a chronological progression from the first chapter, which deals with the period up to the middle of 1810s, to the last chapter, which focuses on the period between 1830 and 1840. I explore certain key problems that troubled missionaries and fundamental points of cross-cultural engagement: housing, work, trade, sexual transgressions, illness, and death. Therefore, I discuss certain important events at several points in the volume, as I analyze their meanings for different debates or social dynamics. In part because this is not a narrative history, I have not framed it as a prehistory of New Zealand as a nation, leading up to 1840, when those islands were finally formally absorbed into the British empire (even though my analysis does end around 1840). *Entanglements of Empire* is fundamentally a work of British imperial history, which examines the relationships and processes that incorporated the north of Te Ika a Māui and the Māori communities of that region into British commercial and imperial networks long before formal colonization began. At several points, I explore other parts of Te Ika a Māui and Te Wai Pounamu, where important developments elsewhere impacted on the north or broadly reshaped the ways in which Māori or New Zealand were understood. In a similar vein, my primary focus is on the CMS mission, but I do discuss the activities of the Wesleyans (whose mission was formally established in 1823) when they illuminate key aspects of missionary work or the dynamics of cross-cultural engagement. In keeping with my earlier work on the British empire, I reject a narrow analytical frame that prioritizes British and "Britishness" and, therefore, attach substantial analytical weight to

indigenous social formations, cultural practices, and histories.⁵⁰ At the same time, however, I have not framed this volume as a history of *hapū* (subtribes; clans) and *iwi*: I do not use *whakapapa* (genealogy) as an organizing analytical tool, even though I stress the importance of genealogy at many points. My understandings of the development of cross-cultural engagements and the progress of missionary work in and around the Bay of Islands does draw heavily from works produced within a tribal frame, primarily Jeffrey Sissons, Wiremu Wi Hongi, and Pat Hohepa's landmark study of indigenous kinship and politics, *The Pūriri Trees Are Laughing*.

I begin *Entanglements of Empire* by offering an assessment of the ways in which both imperial ambition and the evangelical aspiration to remake the world shaped European, but especially British, visions of New Zealand, its resources and peoples, until around 1820. In chapter 1 I offer a brief sketch of European exploration of the southern Pacific and the early contacts between European expeditions and Māori. In addition to establishing the historical context for the remainder of the volume, I set out in this chapter two very important arguments. First, I suggest that during the later eighteenth century, Europeans developed a body of information and a set of arguments about "New Zealand" that were framed by an insistence on the islands' potential as a site for imperial extraction and colonization. This knowledge fed imperial interest in New Zealand, and from the 1770s on, various propagandists, including Benjamin Franklin, elaborated schemes to enable the incorporation of New Zealand into the British empire. Most important, this developing imperial discourse on New Zealand was central in shaping the plans of Samuel Marsden, who was initially appointed as assistant chaplain to the colony of New South Wales and who subsequently became an influential architect and manager of British missionary activity in the Pacific. I demonstrate how Marsden's assessments of both Māori and New Zealand drew on long-established discourses of "civilization" and "empire," as well as trace how Marsden's establishment of a CMS mission in 1814 was enabled by the commercial structures, institutions of governance, and bodies of knowledge established by British imperial endeavor in the Pacific from 1768 on. Second, I suggest that the genesis of the New Zealand mission must be also be understood within the framework of Māori history, especially the shifting political and cultural landscape of the far north of New Zealand's North Island. In particular, I reconstruct the relationships that influential rangatira such as Te Pahi and Ruatara established with Europeans as they attempted to harness the new technologies, skills, and commodities that they could access through cross-cultural trade, in order to cement and extend their chiefly

influence within a fractious and highly competitive world of indigenous politics and warfare. I highlight the divergence between Marsden's aspirations and the motivations of these Māori leaders, but ultimately suggest it was willingness of these rangatira to extend their protection and patronage to Europeans that was absolutely foundational to the beginnings of Christianity in New Zealand.

Where in chapter 1 I highlight the place of the body in European arguments about the ability of Māori to embrace Christianity and "Civilization," in chapter 2 I turn to explore the development of mission stations in the Bay of Islands in the 1810s, 1820s, and early 1830s. In offering a reading of these institutions as distinctive spaces, I focus on the ways in which evangelicals envisaged mission stations as embodying Christian ideals of social relationships and religious practice. I show how these models reflected a powerful set of evangelical ideas about space and the marked divisions they envisaged between sacred and mundane spaces, public and private realms, the domains of men and women, the worlds of children and adults. In chapter 2 I demonstrate, however, that the pressures exerted by both the limited resources of the mission and the persistence of Māori ideas about space meant that mission stations were never exemplary sites of Christian life or European civilization, but rather were culturally mixed spaces whose boundaries and meanings were always open to contestation.

In chapter 3 I offer a close reading of the failure of Marsden's plan to uplift and convert Māori through the introduction of the "civilized arts" to New Zealand. I highlight the absolute centrality of the body in Marsden's vision of socioeconomic transformation and reconstruct the ongoing battles over labor on the mission stations. My analysis places particular emphasis on the importance of time-discipline in Marsden's vision of the civilizing process and how the ability of Māori to dictate their terms of employment on mission stations until at least the mid-1820s undercut Marsden's plan. I conclude the chapter, however, with a discussion of the growing impact of missionary models of cosmological time in the late 1820s. Some Māori communities in the Bay of Islands and Whangaroa began to accept the authority of the Sabbath when missionaries were finally able to achieve a degree of economic independence and increasingly positioned themselves as agents of cultural change whose were no longer dependent on chiefly patronage.

In chapters 2 and 3 I really offer critical readings of the limited nature of the disciplinary regimes fashioned by missionaries and the accommodations that they were forced to make as they negotiated an often precarious series of cultural bridgeheads. In chapter 4 I extend this line of argument,

revealing the moral precariousness of the mission and its deep anxieties around sexuality, status, and race through an analysis of missionary sexual transgressions, especially the contentious case of William Yate. Yate was alleged to have formed an “unnatural” affection with one, or perhaps two, fellow male travelers sailing back to the Pacific from a visit to Britain. These allegations encouraged Yate’s brethren in New Zealand to investigate the nature of his relationships with his Māori pupils and congregationalists. This investigation revealed substantial evidence that Yate had established ongoing sexual connections with a large number of Māori boys and men, relationships that had a commercial nature as Yate dispensed “gifts” of tobacco to his intimates. In chapter 4 I sketch the outlines of Yate’s transgressions, before offering a sustained reading of the extended debates over intimacy, conjugality, and sexuality that his actions set in train. These anxious exchanges between British evangelicals, Marsden, and missionaries on the frontier reveal core moral values and deep-seated assumptions that structured evangelical understandings of family, faith, and sexuality. With regard to Yate, I place particular emphasis on how his former colleagues dwelt on Yate’s betrayal of the particular moral responsibilities that were seen as a fundamental aspect of missionary work and how they sought to sever all of the mission’s tangible connections with Yate, as they constructed Yate as a subhuman and unnatural figure. Most important, I demonstrate that while the transgressions of Yate were very real challenges to the theory and practice of missionary work, missionaries in New Zealand invested great effort in reinscribing the boundaries that he crossed, reaffirming the absolute centrality of the Christian family in the religious and social order.

In the final two chapters I shift from the questions of bodily discipline to consider the cosmological and political questions raised by illness and death on the frontier. In chapter 5 I focus on the contest over death on the frontier in the 1820s and 1830s. The question of death was crucially important to the missionary practice because it raised both profound cosmological questions about the nature of the body and a complex set of problems relating to the rituals surrounding death and the management of human remains. I begin the chapter by exploring the place of death within evangelical thought and the profound difficulties that the missionaries grappled with as they attempted to transplant their established deathways to New Zealand. In charting these compromises, I uncover significant new insights into the cultural dilemmas at the heart of evangelical work at the edge of empire, as well as into relationships between missionaries and Māori. I then turn to re-

constructing the development of missionary knowledge about Māori deathways, suggesting that the open and “public” nature of many of these practices were of particular value to the missionary project of conversion because they offered an important window into Māori cosmology when many other customs and beliefs relating to the supernatural were difficult for the missionaries to access. I conclude by exploring the ways in which missionary narratives around Māori illness and death were “composed” and ordered for metropolitan readers, revealing the very different ends of knowledge-making in the metropole and at the empire’s edge.

I extend this line of argument in chapter 6, where I examine the imperial politics of death. My particular focus is the production and dissemination of images of suffering Māori and the growing political significance of this form of representation within metropolitan politics in the 1830s. By this time, the dominant image of Māori circulating in Britain was that of an “enfeebled” people, wracked by disease and conflict, and exposed to the “vices” of whalers, traders, and convicts. In addition to reading these “humanitarian narratives” against the backdrop of a particular evangelical form of the culture of sensibility, I highlight the political utility of these accounts by humanitarian reformers and evangelical propagandists. These narratives were initially used to oppose the extension of imperial activity in New Zealand, especially the plans of the “systematic colonizers” who hoped to plant substantial settlements of Britons in New Zealand. I emphasize the profound political outcomes of this form of representation, arguing that the insistence on the “enfeebled” nature of Māori ultimately provided a powerful rationale for colonization, as the extension of British law and the construction of supposedly highly ordered colonies were seen as important instruments that would “protect” Māori interests. The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, in February 1840, reflected this understanding of colonization as a form of “protection,” protection that came at a high price. New Zealand was finally formally incorporated into the British empire, and the sovereignty of Māori chiefs was highly circumscribed.

In traversing a wide array of themes and reconstructing a sequence of expansive cross-cultural debates over the body, I have written this book as an extended exercise in the type of “multiple contextualization” that George Stocking advocated.⁵¹ Because I am committed to recovering the polysemic nature of the body, in this volume I think beyond sexuality, to grapple with the histories of space and time, faith and work, illness and death. Thus, *Entanglements of Empire* offers an expansive history of the body, traversing a wide range of thematic contexts in its attempt to recapture the manifold

significance of the body in these meetings between Britons and Māori, but it is also framed by a desire to rematerialize the complexity and richness of these cross-cultural engagements. Each chapter is substantial and draws on a diverse array of archival and published material. Most important, each chapter is underpinned by a shifting and mobile analytical gaze that enables us to follow lines of communication and movement between New Zealand, Australia, and Britain, as well lingering on particular places (from Rangihoua to London, from Port Jackson to Paihia) and communities (from the evangelically inclined parishes of West Yorkshire to Te Hikutu hapū in the Bay of Islands).

Framing my analysis within these multiple thematic, geographical, and social contexts not only highlights the diverse range of actors and influences that shaped the social entanglements that began to knit Britons and Māori together on New Zealand's frontiers, but it also recognizes the distinctiveness of each of these sites. The "new imperial history" has emphasized the manifold connections between the metropole and the colonies, as well as emphasizing the hybrid nature of imperial social formations. *Entanglements of Empire* works within this tradition, yet at the same time it places a very strong emphasis on the particularity of each of these sites and communities. The dense webs of exchange fashioned by imperial activity connected disparate points across the globe into new and highly uneven systems of interdependence, entangling previously disparate communities in new and often fraught relationships. As I demonstrate repeatedly in *Entanglements of Empire*, the work of these integrative networks did not produce a homogenizing "global overlay."⁵² The engagements and entanglements generated by these connections shaped and reshaped the particularities of each locale within the empire. At the same time, new forms of difference were generated out of the frictions that were attendant to the routine forms of cultural mobility, conversation, and translation that underwrote life in a global empire.⁵³ The impact of such imperial networks and exchanges on British culture has been much debated over the last twenty years by historians of empire, but even as it is an important intellectual and political endeavor to rediscover the diverse imperial linkages that shaped Britain, that project must not overshadow our commitment to understanding the cultural impact of missionary work and colonization at the edge of empire, nor the costs and consequences of empire-building for colonized peoples. In writing the history of the British empire, we must not privilege the metropole or British perspectives and lose sight of the weight, complexity, and specificity of the history of non-European locations and colonized communities. This book is

animated by a desire to rematerialize the local histories as well as global connections that shaped the engagements between Britons and Māori and to recover both the accommodations and conflicts that arose when two radically different bodily cultures came into contact at the most distant frontier of the British empire.